

THIS IS ONEIDA THE ONEIDA SPIRIT

In last week's article, I mentioned some things I had not anticipated in my first year on the job. Another thing I did not anticipate was the challenge involved in maintaining all of our faculty/staff housing. When one family or staff member moves out, often a family is in the pipeline ready to come as new staff members who need to move in as quickly as possible. Some of our departing staff leave their housing in excellent condition, but some places need quite a bit of work, often due to normal wear and tear and the long period of time someone has lived there.

Recently after a staff family left, I quickly offered the housing to a current OBI family. We frequently wait on the arrival of a faithful volunteer group to help rehab a house before someone moves in. In this instance, we had no volunteers on campus and very few scheduled for the following week--and most of our staff was on vacation. I told the family moving into the house that they could do some cleaning, painting, and rehab themselves or wait longer for volunteer help. The following morning I stopped by the house and was delighted to find nearly a dozen staff members cleaning and painting. While I am sure it was not exactly what those folks wanted to do with their day off, all seemed to be glad to pitch in and help out another family.

We spent the better part of the day working. Since our cafeteria was closed that evening--which is rare--I sent Angie off with a credit card and some instructions. I realized placing a credit card in Angie's hands was risky, but I rolled the dice and sent her off for pizza from our local Town Market. Angie gathered up some donated drinks and chips, and managed to pull off a pretty economical meal for the work crew. We enjoyed a great time of food and fellowship, but then back to work we went.

The next afternoon I saw a gentleman who helped on this rehab project. He is well into his seventies, but he could outwork most younger men on our campus. I asked him if he was sore. He said, "Yes, but it's a good sore. It's the kind of sore that comes from helping someone." What a blessing this gentleman and his wife are to our ministry, and what a blessing all those who helped out that day are as well.

I am privileged daily to observe so many servants of God laboring in this small but wonderful place for the Lord and for young people. Whether it's cleaning and painting school housing, mowing a yard, teaching chemistry, feeding our guests, or something else, it is a blessing to see ordinary folks perform ordinary tasks and to see God do something extraordinary with their offering of love. Please pray for our faculty and staff as a new school year has begun!



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*First printed in the Western Recorder August 26, 2014.
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