

## **THIS IS ONEIDA NEW BEGINNINGS**

As my family and I begin our ministry at Oneida Baptist Institute, I am reminded of 2 Corinthians 5:17--"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" New is not always better, but being a new creation in Christ is better than anything this world has to offer. Please allow me to tell you about the new beginning someone received at Oneida that means so much to me.

In August of 1985, a beautiful but broken little girl arrived on the campus of Oneida Baptist Institute. She had lost her mother to a drug overdose. Her father was an alcoholic. Before coming to Oneida, she would return home most afternoons to find no adult or food in her home. Her sister would later suffer the same fate as her mother. She needed Oneida.

While attending Oneida, this broken little girl found the Lord. She found people who loved her and made her a part of their family. She found food and shelter. She found stability and structure. She found a great education. She found a goofy little middle school boy that she would chase all over this campus. She found a new beginning. That once broken little girl is now the mother of three wonderful children, a loving wife, and a key part of our ministry at Oneida Baptist Institute. Perhaps she still needs Oneida, but now Oneida needs her as well. That once broken young lady is now my wife and my best friend. I am so thankful she found Oneida and that Oneida helped her find a new beginning. Our three children, Larry Allen, III; Madison; and Alexander, are also thankful that the Lord, working through Oneida, gave their mom the chance in life she needed to become the loving and caring mother that she is today.

My wife and I found the Lord, each other, and lifelong friends and lessons while we attended Oneida. As we start our 2013-14 school year, many young people from all over the country and world have arrived at our little campus here in the hills of eastern Kentucky. It is my prayer that each of these young people will find the same things my wife and I found here, and possibly so much more.

This month is a new beginning for my family and it is also a new beginning for so many young people on our campus. Whether it be dorm life, the classroom, the work program, fine arts, athletics, working on our farm, attending daily worship services, or any other activity here at Oneida, we pray our young people also have the opportunity for a new beginning in the Lord. The old no longer matters so much and the new is full of possibilities for brighter days ahead. Jesus Christ gives each of us new life if we are simply willing to receive that free gift. I am so grateful for God's indescribable gift through His Son, Jesus Christ. Oneida Baptist Institute is a time tested and proven ministry that the Lord used to give me so many wonderful gifts that I did not deserve. Please join with me in prayer that our young people will simply receive the gift of a new beginning that the Lord has for them here at this special place we call Oneida.



**Larry A. Gritton, Jr.**  
**OBI President**

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