AUTHENTIC
LIFE
If I had to give someone advice it would be to spend time and money on experiences and relationships with others rather than material things. We always remember our experiences and relationships over all else.

- Bennet Schimmelpfennig

Trust in Jesus with everything, absolutely everything. The Lord has surpassed all of my expectations, and that just proves He is faithful. The one major life changing experience in my life is when my sister was killed by a drunk driver, New Years Eve 2009. I always believed in Jesus but it was my sister’s death that brought me to have an actual relationship with my savior. I would not redo anything in my past, because I truly believe that God takes all of the broken pieces, all of the hurts, and the scars and turns them around. He uses them for good. My past and losing my sister has helped me be able to minister to people and connect with those who are hurting. My past allows me to talk about the redemptive work of Jesus. Not to mention finding Jesus changed the trajectory of my life completely. See, when I look back at my life so far, I see all of the dark parts, but I also see how God has shown light through those painful rough patches. Pain, suffering, and struggle leads to the beautiful renewal through a God who truly is alive.

- Gabriella Mejia
As I’ve grown in faith, I’ve realized that joy is an emotion much more spiritual than simple happiness or pleasure. Joy is finding delight, contentment, and assurance in the fact that whether bad or good, every aspect of life is in God’s hands. Joy is choosing even when you are going through a painful experience, to praise God and find rest in him. What brings me joy is honestly seeing God work through those around me. It’s one of the greatest experiences, being able to see difficult situations transform people because of their joy-filled and faithful hearts.

– Olivia Ruhberg

If you’re too busy trying to be someone else, you’ll never be able to be who God created you to be. Yourself.

– Robby Harjo
MOVE IN DAY

F ew things can parallel the excitement of freshman move-in day. Teaming up to welcome the new students to campus, Resident Assistants, Connections Mentors, Student Ambassadors, ROTC, ASC members and other campus leaders helped the freshmen move into their new home away from home.

"It was awesome to see that they were so excited to be here," said spiritual Life leaders Katy Maurer and Jessica Putnam, "just like we were."

Each of the freshmen came to campus with a unique story of how they ended up at Olivet. On this day, older students watched as the new students' stories began to intertwine and become a part of each other's, just like theirs did when they moved in.

"When I moved in as a freshman, I was excited to start the year," said sophomore Lauren Matson, who helped many freshmen move into their new rooms. "Today, I felt like I saw a lot of myself in them as they started their new year."

Many freshmen spoke of the excitement of ending one chapter of life and starting a brand new one in an unknown place, with people who start off as strangers but might soon become like family.

"I'm kind of excited to get to meet new people," said freshman Jacob Clark. "And have a fresh start to be who I want to be."

Although the day has plenty of anxious moments and tearful goodbyes, the upperclassmen assured the freshmen of the exciting journey to come.

"I came in as a freshman really confused," said Danielle Maranion, who served as an RA on Parrott 3rd Floor. "But now all I am is excited because I know what is ahead of them."

The RAs had the chance to finally meet the young men and women they had been praying for all summer and help them move in their new dorms. Long before the 22nd arrived, preparations were made so that everything would go smoothly on that day.

"I have been here since August 5th for early move in," said Williams RA Jessica Emmons. "I've been putting up artwork and asking God to lead me in my selection of the floor's theme for this year."

The freshmen were given the word "Empowered" to represent them as a class.

"I think it will give them confidence," said upperclassman Kayla Albrecht. "And remind them that they can do much more than they realize. In all the new things, "Empowerment" will hopefully be inspiring to this class of students."

"I AM EXCITED BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT IS AHEAD OF THEM"
KICKIN' IT OFF
Block Party

With giant inflatables, carnival food stands, and a high-energy crowd, the annual block party had the student body in high spirits as they had a chance to reconnect with their friends at the start of the school year. For the freshmen, after a crazy week of move-in and their first college classes, the festivities with fun, food, and fantastic games came as a welcome end to their week.

“I think having the block party this early in the semester really helped,” said Dr. Blanchette, professor in the School of Theology and Christian Ministry, who has attended the block party every year since he began working at Olivet. “Everyone was excited to meet new people, and it was a good time to connect. I hope the freshmen felt like this is a fun place, and that they were glad to be here. They might have been a little overwhelmed, and this was probably not what they expected—in a good way.”

As a large group of students break out into the “Whip” in the middle of the field house, junior Grace King, who is a member of ASC, agreed that the freshmen were probably feeling overwhelmed.

“But it was such a great opportunity for students to come together and debrief after the first week of classes,” King said. “It was fun to see all of the students have a good time.”

The cotton candy and cold snow cones tasted even better to the students after intense obstacle course races and games of twister.

“It was so much fun,” said freshman Nathan King. “It was good that there were events like this at the beginning of the year to engage freshmen and kick off the school year.”

“It was such a great opportunity for students to come together and debrief after the first week of classes”
BACK TOGETHER

OLLIES FOLLIES ATHLETIC COMPETITION
Fellowship, sportsmanship, and community. As bonfires lit up and s'mores were made, the Athletic Competition kicked off the school year, and a reunited family could be seen across the field. "The opening for Nascar every season is the Daytona 500," said emcee and host of the games Matt Smith, in his eighth Ollies Follies. "It's the biggest thing they do. I think Ollies Follies is the biggest thing we do. It just sets the tone for the rest of the school year. I love seeing students coming together and having the freshmen feel comfortable."

Although soccer, baseball, frisbee, football and volleyball drew students to the Intramural fields, fellowship seems to be the core reason why this tradition is still alive and well. "The thing about Ollies Follies is the fact that while it's a huge competition, it brings unity to our campus," said Michaela Maris, senior and Vice President of Women's Residential Life. "I really want to see that upheld in the coming years."

Students had the chance to compete, reunite with old friends and meet new ones. "I thought it was a blast having people all come together to meet new people and to have them play games," said freshman soccer player Joshua Woodard. "Everyone was very supportive, and people wanted you to get involved."

The Athletic Competition kicked off the exciting Ollies Follies triad, setting the stage for the Wacky Games and the Variety Show. "As we look back on our life at Olivet, we see friendships, pictures, memories, and snapshots—a big part of them are from Ollies Follies," Maris said.

"While it's a huge competition, it brings unity to our campus."
As hundreds of white balloons filled the sky, the senior class gave a breathtaking finale to their grand entrance, letting students know this night would be one to remember. As one of the most beloved traditions at Olivet, the Wacky Games did not fail to make a lasting impression, especially for the senior class.

"After we released the balloons it hit me," said senior Alissa Homoelle. "Wow, it’s really senior year. When we were freshmen the Wacky Games set the tone for what our experience at Olivet would be like — fun and exciting. Coming full circle to senior year, we have lived and experienced this night together for the past three years, and this year was our last time. Realizing that just made for a really special moment and an exciting start to the year."

In another twist to the night, after the much-anticipated games like Tug of War and Tubes were finished at Matt Smith announced there would be one last game. In Smith’s introduction of the Fish & Egg Game he said, “this is a resurrected game that we played when I was a student here, and we’re going to try it tonight to see what you think of it.”

His call to action brought 24 competitors from each class to the battle field. The premise of the game was as follows: a girl with a rubber fish rode on the back of a guy with an egg taped to his forehead. She used the fish to smash the egg taped to the head of opponents. The class that finished the round with the most intact eggs won that round.

The fast-paced explanations and resulting chaos left some, like sophomore Rachael DeGraff, “very confused” and strategizing for the hopeful return of this formerly popular game.

“It was a lot of fun to be a part of,” said sophomore Taylor Coble. “I wish we could have used real fish like they used to.”

While the game did not get quite as much enthusiasm from the student body as the legendary game of ‘Tubes’ did, students believed that next year could be a different story.

As the games came to a close, the freshmen took last place, the juniors third, the sophomores second, and the seniors rightfully took home the overall win — the perfect ending for their #onelonelasttime.
The power of expression. The concept of releasing the essence of self through a form of art. It can create a burst of laughter or strike a chord in the heart. The Variety Show did all this and more as the classes came together to showcase their phenomenal talents, the freshmen going “By Land”, the sophomores “By Space”, the juniors “By Sea” and the seniors “By Air”. Undoubtedly, the senior class made the night truly unforgettable with their unprecedented emotional performance “Time Flies”. All agreed, the senior’s performance left the biggest impression that night, as it captured the class of 2016’s past three years together. “The seniors did an incredible job of articulating the Olivet culture through their eyes,” said the show’s co-host Spencer Cook. “They told the story of Olivet; they shared the narrative by going back through the past few years in an emotionally convicting way,” Cook said. Many creative minds were behind this sentimental production, and the message that they wanted to portray was astounding. “I think the biggest thing, especially with Ollies Follies, is that it is such a celebration of community,” said senior Brandon Maranion. “Our show was a big testament to that. As I look over these three years and see all the different experiences that I had, I see this common thread of genuine, authentic community that has really instilled this confidence in myself to do the things that I love and to take part of the passions that I want to take after,” Maranion said. Community. Such a familiar word that has been used to describe the purpose that Ollies Follies brings. “A lot of people say that Olivet is a bubble, and that we are preparing to send you out into a world that is 100% different,” said senior Joe Mantarian. “And while I think that may be true, I think that we are also living in a community where we can take what we have learned here and plant this somewhere else.” The Variety Show provided a perfect wrap-up to the Ollies Follies events, and reminded everyone to cherish these times because they truly did fly.

“I SEE THIS COMMON THREAD OF GENUINE, AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY”
ON FULL BLAST
“We really pumped up the crowd and took it to next level. It was amped.”

Rec City Color Run

On the morning of the Color Run, hundreds of students showed up wearing white t-shirts, white sunglasses, and white bandanas—but not for long. As the 5K runners took off, they took on the challenge of running 3.2 miles, all while being splashed with different colors along the way. The atmosphere was amped and from start to finish Rec City kept the party on full blast.

“I loved the color run,” said junior Jessica Johnston. “The best part was the adrenaline rush when passing through each station and getting covered in the color powder.”

The decision was made to shift from the annual Paint Wars event, to alternating Paint Wars and the Color Run each year.

“I am thrilled that we made the Color Run a bigger event on campus,” said junior Maddie Buseth. “It was a great event for the Rec Center, and you could tell everyone really enjoyed it. From competitive running, to walking it with friends, everyone approached the run in a different way while all having the same goal—to have fun.

“The color run was an awesome event,” said junior Luke Salomone. “It gave us students an opportunity to have some fun running (or scooting) around our beautiful campus.”

Salomone can often be spotted riding his scooter from class to class and the 5K was no exception. In addition to the 5K, participants also enjoyed a Zumba warm-up and a Color Party.

“Zumba was a blast,” Buseth said. “People love going to the classes throughout the week, but having at an all-school Zumba party was different. This year for the Color Party we really pumped up the crowd and took it to next level. It was amped.”

All agreed that the combination of getting active and having a blast with friends made for an unforgettable Saturday morning.
In an explosion of events that brought Olivetians of past and present together, Homecoming Week again gave students and alumni a chance to celebrate the university they love.

"Alumni find the event of significant importance because they get to come home," said sophomore Rebecca Dembkowski, who was involved in the concert for Alumni and the President’s dinner.

“I love that the Alumni are gathered back at their alma mater to walk down memory lane and share their memories with current students and faculty,” Dembkowski said.

The campus opened to all, giving an opportunity for many people to reflect on their memories, visit family, or just enjoy the events provided throughout the week. From the football game, to the glow run, to the athletic class competitions, to powderpuff football, to coronation, to the famed Free Pancake Dinner, students enjoyed the time they spent with alumni and classmates in celebration of their university.

In addition to the festivities, Tenth Avenue North and the Sidewalk Prophets provided entertainment and a time to worship the Lord with a concert in Centennial Chapel, bringing the weeks’ events to a close.

“The concert was amazing,” said sophomore Sarah Zornes. “All the bands together put on a great performance. I really enjoyed them just being themselves on stage. I think it was a great part of homecoming week because we all gathered together and worshipped the Lord.”

Students and faculty described this beloved tradition as one that brought the community together, and reminded them of the incredible life at Olivet.


Glittering lights, white dresses, soft music, warm smiles, affectionate hugs, and thankful prayer made the 2015 coronation unforgettable. The homecoming court consisted of ten men and women known for their love for God and each other. The ladies on the court said they were all good friends, and they were excited to share this experience with one another.

“We all supported each other and were in it to ultimately show God’s glory,” said Jessica Dirkse, who was crowned queen, “not our own personal glory.”

The students on the court shared that they loved and supported each other making the homecoming events throughout the week fun.

“We truly had an amazing group of ten people gathered that night, and I still feel extremely honored and blessed to be a part of them,” Dirkse said.

Women’s Residential Life (WRL) hosted the event.

“I love being able to honor all women of the senior class in one beautiful evening,” said vice president Michaela Maris. “Overall, making the evening beautiful on multiple platforms makes it very special. Not only did it look beautiful, but I hope it made people walk away feeling beautiful on the inside. We have the opportunity of honoring women for a special night, but more importantly, we have the opportunity of honoring the Lord,” Maris said.

Dirkse says she was especially touched when her name was announced.

“I just remember feeling extremely humbled, honored, excited, and blessed. The sense of love that I felt was overwhelming that night. Seeing my family, who mean the world to me, and friends standing up and cheering for me and the life I’ve led thus far was a moment I’ll never forget,” Dirkse said.

The court members said it was very humbling to be selected among many in their class for all the reasons voted for, and it shows the power of the Holy Spirit.

“My prayer is that He is continued to be seen through me,” Dirkse said. “Even at times when I didn’t feel equipped or ready to be used or shined through, God still made it happen. Not a moment is wasted. What a faithful God we serve.”

The men and women shared their thankfulness for everything that made coronation truly a night to remember.
“**We all supported each other and were in it to ultimately show God’s glory, not our own personal glory.**”
Give Your Life Away

Team World Vision

“Be the salt and light of this world, go out into the market place and serve.”

Hundreds of students took this command to heart as they attended the Missions Fair, and many passionate kingdom workers were able to bring awareness to issues that are going on in the world.

“I absolutely loved doing it,” said junior Victoria Carbonell, who volunteered at the fair. “My team and I went to India with MIA in May, and we witnessed the need for Christian pastors to provide income to their families. To help support them and their congregation, we sold chai tea at the fair.”

As another way of giving their lives away, many ran the Chicago marathon this year for Team World Vision. Junior Grace King led the team for Olivet, and when asked about their experiences, many runners told of life-changing ones:

“This was my second year doing the marathon for Team World Vision,” said junior Elizabeth Jenkins, “and everyone is always so encouraging. It is such a bonding and emotional experience, building community with people you don’t even know. Spectators and runners alike, we were in that race together.”

Others can agree that it was a challenging decision but worth every moment.

“The race was honestly the most challenging things I have ever committed to,” said sophomore Olivia Ruhberg, “but in the end it was incredible. It’s something that you really have to give to God.”

Those who did not participate in the race but stood by to support their friends said that it was definitely an incredible sight to see people unite under one cause.

“I love things that bring people together,” said sophomore Angel Gaikwad, “and this was definitely one of those events. I was so proud of everyone that ran for World Vision, even for the people I didn’t know. Seeing them press on despite the amount of pain they were in was inspiring. One of my friends was injured during the race, but she kept going until she was finished.”

Many students were encouraged and inspired by their brothers and sisters that stepped out and into the places of those who needed help the most, dedicating their time, energy, and finances so that others could have a brighter future.
GIVE IT UP
CANDY COSTUME PARTY

"The Candy Costume Party this year will have people waiting for the one to come next year."
NOT YOUR AVERAGE TRICK OR TREAT

Candy Costume Party

Revamped. Dropping the traditional “test” and adding a “party”, the Candy Costume Party was the first of its kind, and students raved about the exciting change up. “I thought it was completely amazing,” said senior Coleman Sesson. “The way things were this year made me wish it had been this way all along.” Adding performances, a DJ and a space for dancing, the party made Olivet history.

“What shocked me and what I loved about it was that it felt like a party with the atmosphere,” said sophomore Bri Fisher. “The DJ, the dancing, and the food. Everyone looked like they were having a good time.”

One of the key differences of revamped Candy Costume Party was that students felt a sense of community and bonding with each other. It was a night full of laughter and entertainment, some performing, some dancing, others voting on best costumes.

“I loved dressing up and seeing what other people thought to dress up as,” said senior Kristin Wodka, as she expressed her excitement over the whole event. “It brought a sense of community because my friends and I all planned and worked on our costumes for our Marvel group together. This was the first time we placed, and got we got second place. If I wasn’t graduating, I would definitely go again.”

Students agreed that the revamped event would be one to remember and repeat. “I think the Candy Costume Party this year will have people waiting for the one to come next year,” Sesson said.
"A Night Among the Stars" was a fitting title for this year's Mr. ONU. Hosted by Women's Residential Life, male competitors were chosen by their respective classes to run a creative skit and talent gauntlet with the goal of claiming the crown of Mr. ONU.

"This year Mr. ONU took about eight months to plan," Vice President of WRL Michaela Maris said. "It began with concepts and big ideas, and as the show approached, the ideas turned into details. So many things were already done for the show before we even knew who the contestants would be."

2016's competition did not fail to amaze the audience. The room was packed full of people and the air was thick with excitement. Anticipations were high for the performance acts and competition among the men running for Mr. ONU.

"The event went tremendously this year," Maris said. "The guys had a great time and we had a great time working with them. But most importantly, the audience came together for a night of laughter and enjoyed a show that celebrated Olivet. That was a big success in my book."

This year's Mr. ONU, junior Grant Penrod, commented on his participation in the tradition: "I've probably seen more Mr. ONU events than anyone at Olivet. I have always wanted to be Mr. ONU, even since I was little kid. So when my name was called, it was a flood of excitement and success. It was truly amazing to have won. It was a great competition and I was honored to be it's victor."

When asked about possible advice the contestants would like to bestow on those interested in competing in the future, a couple of this year's contestants had some things to say. Sophomore Daniel Kurz said, "Competing in Mr. ONU comes with great responsibility and even better hygiene. Make sure you consistently floss and clip your toenails." In addition to Kurz's commentary, Grant Penrod added, "Be funny. Make jokes about Sodexo; every year someone does. Don't put too much thought into it. Run it by multiple different people to see if they think it's a good or funny idea. Stick to them throughout. Have fun, oodles of fun."

From hilarious videos made by the participants to creative dance routines and wonderful voices, students agreed the event was phenomenal, and lived up to its theme.
The Saturday night before finals, Ludwig was full of the sounds and smells of Christmas, as the student body came together for the annual All-School Christmas Party. Students lined up almost half an hour in advance, filling the main hall to get out of the bitter cold and get to the delicious food as quickly as possible. The dining rooms were filled with live music and friends enjoying themselves. Santa and Mrs. Claus made their rounds among the merry (and bright) college students. Chaplain Mark Holcomb read the Christmas story from the book of Luke in Common Grounds next to the hot chocolate bar. The narrative of Jesus’ birth was accompanied by the tastes of chocolate, peppermint, and marshmallows. Christmas arts and crafts could be found in the basement as well as Dance Dance Revolution and fondue. Coloring pages and bingo dominated Red Room accompanied by even more Christmas music.

Something that could be seen in Ludwig no matter where you looked were Christmas sweaters. Olivet’s traditional Ugly Christmas Sweater competition brought a wide variety of wild colors and wacky designs. Since “Christmas Sweaters” was the theme of the party, many students shared the story of where their sweater came from. Senior Abby Ragsdale commented, “I got mine at Kohl’s,” while junior Grant Penrod said, “Mine actually came from Ecuador,” and sophomore Brad Fitzgerald gave the answer, “I think I got this sweater from my grandma.” Senior Tiara Long said, “I took this sweater from a donation box for flood relief because I figured no one would want an ugly Christmas sweater.”

The sweaters featuring Christmas trees, cats, alpacas, and gaudy patterns were standouts among a crowd of eye-catching selections. Regardless of where the sweaters came from originally, they all made a big impression at the Christmas party and managed to keep the students of Olivet warm as they braved the northern Illinois winter with spirits filled with holiday cheer.
"I think I got this sweater from my grandma."