

# Athletes in Action

Colby and Sarah Keefe 4695 Sycamore Dr, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

937.902.1767 colby.keefe@athletesinaction.org

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937.681.6533 sarah.keefe@athletesinaction.org

“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”  
Matthew 9:37-38

Happy Spring! As I sit down to write to you, my mind is flooded with images and memories of our week on the other side of the world in New Zealand earlier this month. My heart is full thinking about the Lord’s faithfulness to us there and the work He did in and through each of the five AIA staff and six students that went. So I guess without further ado, here’s a recap of our time there...

**“Thank you so much for coming. You could not have come during a more strategic week on campus for us.”** Those were the words of Jono, the AIA campus director at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, as our team was preparing to come home. Our group from the US had just locked arms with their NZ staff team in getting the word out about AIA to a ton of students in what was their first week back on campus after the summer break.

Our Michigan spring break just happened to line up with this critical first week on campus in NZ, allowing us to “man the table” in the orientation week rush on campus. From 10am until 3pm we worked our Athletes in Action booth: challenging students to a push-up competition, playing too many games of corn-hole to count, and making connections with other clubs at Auckland Uni. As you can imagine with a big group of Americans all wearing the same t-shirt, our table was buzzing! Our goal was to get the word out about AIA, have the students fill out surveys indicating their interest level, and then be able to call those interested later that night in the hopes of being able to sit down with them individually.

The Lord really blessed that time at the table as we ended up with close to 500 students filling out surveys! The most fun part, however, came when we were able to meet with those students and share the gospel with many of them. Auckland Uni is a very diverse campus with students from literally all over the world, so we were meeting people who came from many different cultural and spiritual backgrounds. I think that is what made it even more encouraging when we saw a handful of students place their faith in Christ! A young student from China’s comment to one of our staff after he prayed to receive Christ was, “You were a very important person to meet!”. I love it!

I also love that we were able to leave our NZ AIA staff with a lot of work to do :) Because of the number of surveys that were filled out that week, our staff will have plenty of work to do in the coming months following them all up!

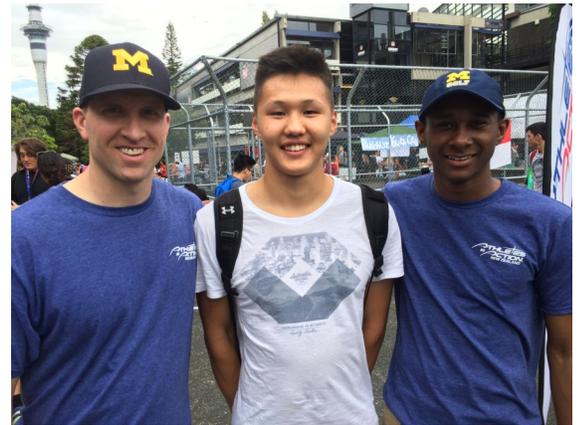


Above: Here we are manning the AIA table at orientation week. Below: The NZ students got so excited to see their names on the board for the push up challenge!





The picture on the left is what I referred to as our “mission control center” :) For three evenings we all got together and dialed our phones to connect with those students who filled out surveys. All of our appointments were put up on these white boards so we knew who was meeting who when...it was definitely an energetic atmosphere!



Left: This is me and Kelsey, a former American student of ours who is now on staff with AIA in NZ. It was so fun to see how she has grown through the years and how she is now being used by God to bring Kiwi's to Himself!

This is Ghana, a first year student from Mongolia. Colby and Darius (Michigan student) befriended him and hooped it up on the basketball court with him. By the end of the week they were able to have a spiritual conversation with him and learn that he is an atheist. Please pray that Ghana's heart would be drawn toward the Lord.



One of the most rewarding parts about this trip was seeing our Michigan students take steps of faith and jump into ministry. Here's what a few of them said about their time in NZ...

*“One of the highlights for me was definitely having Marino, a student that I met with, pray to receive Christ. I will never forget it. The smile that he had on his face as we went through the gospel was indescribable. When he said yes to want to pray to receive Christ into his life, I couldn't contain my excitement. The trip allowed me to grow in my faith as well as my boldness. God showed me that I can have this same boldness back on campus.”* Darius.

*“One thing I was really reminded of in New Zealand is how God's constantly at work, even when we can't see it. And how he lets us play a role in the great story that He is writing! It was so fun to come alongside the New Zealand AIA team and serve and learn from them!”* Allie

Please pray...

...for the AIA ministry in NZ. Pray for our staff there as they follow up all those surveys. Pray they would get many opportunities to share the gospel.

...for those students who became Christians while we were there. Pray they would grow mightily in their new faith.

...for our Michigan students that went. Pray they would be continue to be bold in their faith on campus here.

...for fruitful ministry here at Michigan during this last month of the semester.

...for wisdom as we begin to put together summer plans for the ministry and even look to the fall.



Who wouldn't want to come home to these smiling faces?? We are SO thankful to Sarah's parents for holding down the fort while we were gone. What a blessing to be able to go together!

*Thank you, thank you! You are appreciated!!*