

# Athletes in Action

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“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” 2 Tim. 2:2

Greetings from the Keefer's! How did it get to be the end of the semester already?! We just sat down as a staff team this morning and had a time of celebrating all that God did over the past year, and my heart is overflowing with praise for the many lives that have been changed for eternity. As people remembered celebrations, we wrote them on a white board and pretty soon there wasn't room to write much more — around 15 new believers, student leaders growing in their knowledge of God's Word, people stepping out in faith to have spiritual conversations with their peers, outreaches where student athletes were able to share their testimonies, new AIA staff raised up...the list went on. It is incredibly humbling for us to see God use our staff team to make an impact on His Kingdom, and it makes us all the more excited to see what He will do this summer in the lives of the students who stay around campus to train and take class. Thank you for the crucial role you play in what is going on here!

## A Promising Partnership

As we have lived these past five years in Ann Arbor, we have sensed that God wanted to use our ministry to make an impact in an urban context. With Detroit being less than an hour down the road, we have been looking for ways to invest there.

Through a series of events, God has led us to a church in Detroit who is doing some amazing things. Mack Avenue Community Church's vision is to see communities transformed, both spiritually and physically, starting with their own. They have chosen a zip code in Detroit and are seeking the holistic revitalization of it block by block, neighbor by neighbor. It is really inspiring to see how they are restoring houses, meeting physical needs, engaging youth, and are making the gospel known in Detroit.

A few weekends ago we took a group of Michigan students to Mack Ave to serve alongside their church. They cleaned up yards and helped to renovate a house, all the while discussing articles and hearing talks about community transformation. It was so encouraging to see these students come alive as they served in this context. They worked hard and engaged really well.

It is our prayer that God will raise up students who desire to be involved in holistic ministry like this for a lifetime. Please be in prayer with us for the partnership to flourish. We are taking another group of students there May 15-17, and hope to continue to send other groups throughout the summer.



Jaydon turned 8 this month...where did those years go?

## Leaving a Legacy

*"I want to leave a legacy. How will they remember me? Did I choose to love? Did I point to you enough to make a mark on things? I want to leave an offering. A child of mercy and grace who blessed your name unapologetically, and leave that kind of legacy."*

These are the lyrics of a song that came to my mind during our final weekly meeting of the year last week. It has been our tradition to allow our graduating seniors to stand up and share about what they learned from God during their time at Michigan, as well as any advice they would pass on to the underclassmen. This year's class of seniors was a particularly special crew who are indeed leaving behind a spiritual legacy due to their faithful investment into the lives of others.

Three of the seniors who shared that night were from the women's soccer team...Jen, Zaryn and Keyana. I received a text earlier in the day from Nicky, one of the soccer underclassmen asking us to wait for her to arrive at the meeting before any of the soccer seniors shared. (The rest of the soccer team had practice that didn't let out until halfway through our weekly meeting, and Nicky wanted to see if she could get a bunch of her teammates to come.) Long story short, we stalled as much as we could, and just as it was time for Jen, the first soccer senior to share, a group of about 8 soccer players walked in. As Jen began to share, more and more of the women's soccer team came filing in through the door. By the time Jen was done talking, the ENTIRE team had showed up! Now, these are girls who don't normally come to our weekly meetings, but because of the impact that Jen, Zaryn and Keyana had made in their lives, they wanted to honor their seniors by being there to hear them talk about their walk of faith. It was truly a touching moment...one that I won't soon forget.

Later that night, Nicky sent this text to one of our staff..."Our whole team in glowing right now...like everyone is smiling so much right now. And my whole class is acting a little different, too. The house is brighter." I'm pretty sure the "glow" they were sensing was the Spirit of God, don't you think?? I can't wait to see what God is going to do in the lives of some of those soccer women as a result of what they experienced that night. They heard people they deeply respect talking about the difference God has made in their lives, exhorting them to find purpose and meaning in Christ themselves. Isn't this the legacy we all want to leave?



Some of the soccer team that came that night.



Our seniors...Back: Macy, Nicole, Allie, Keyana, Brennan, Zaryn, Kristin, Joel, Darius. Front: Dee, Chloe, Jen, Anthony

Please pray...

...for our partnership with Mack Avenue Community church. Pray God would use us to be a blessing there, and that our students would catch a vision for how they can be engaged in community transformation for a lifetime.

...for our graduating seniors. Pray God would provide them with jobs and churches. Pray they would walk faithfully with Jesus.

...for the women's soccer team. Pray that their hearts would be open to the Lord as we seek to have follow up conversations with them.

...for our first love to be Christ.

*We hope you know how much we love and appreciate you! May God bless you richly!*



Cheering on Nicole, a senior on the basketball team.