

Athletes in Action

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

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937.902.1767 colby.keefe@athletesinaction.org

937.681.6533 sarah.keefe@athletesinaction.org

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.”
Psalms 67:1-2

Happy summer! Doesn't it feel great to be in flip flops and t-shirts? I know around our house it does! Colby was in Poland for the first few weeks of June with an Athletes in Action basketball team (more on that on the back), and while he was gone the kids and I survived by keeping ourselves busy. Fifth grade and kindergarten graduations, visiting family and friends, having students over for dinner, and running around outside in the summer heat are a few of the things we did to keep my sanity while daddy was gone :) I had a few days to myself during his trip when Grandma Keefer very generously took the two little kids for two days. I told Colby that you can tell I'm an extravert, because what did I do with my time while the big kids were at school? Fill it with lunch dates and coffee appointments on campus with students! God has been reminding me over this past year how much I love campus ministry. To be able to enter in with students hearts as they go through such life-shaping years as the college year are, is such an incredible privilege. From talking about boys, to future jobs, to roommate problems, to family dysfunction...the Word of God intersects all that these precious women experience. Thank you for making it possible for us together to help point the future generation to Christ.

An Unexpected Text

“Hi Sarah, my name is Claire. I got your email about AIA bible study for the summer. I've been getting AIA emails all year, but haven't gotten the nerve to come. I want to further my relationship with Christ this summer and what better opportunity? If there is room for one more in the bible study, I would really like to join. Thanks!”

This is a text I received out of the blue at the end of May from Claire, a senior on the track team. Before receiving it, I had never met Claire and had no idea she was on our email list. My first thought after reading it was “of course there is a spot for her”, and my second thought was “gosh, I can so relate to her feeling of nervousness”. Her story of feeling intimidated to walk into a Christian meeting echoed my experience my freshman year at Michigan.

So needless to say, I texted Claire back and invited her to come out to the bible study the next week, and she has come faithfully every week since. I sat down for coffee with her on my “kid-free” day and heard a bit more of her story. She grew up in the church, but decided to put her faith “on the back burner” for her first three years of college. After living apart from pursuing Christ for those years, she is experiencing a void — one of purposelessness and despair. It has been fun to watch her scribble down notes as we go through bible study, soaking in God's Word. You can literally see her countenance shift as we talk about the Lord together. So fun!

Below is a picture of some of the summer bible study gals. Claire is in the front left.



Our fifth grade and kindergarten grads!



Basketball Tour– Poland

June 3rd to June 16th I traveled to Poland as the discipler for a men's basketball team. This was my first trip with basketball and I was excited to see what God would do on our team of 9 NCAA Division 1 players. We had players from Baylor, Gonzaga, Valparaiso, Ohio State, UAB, and Mercer. The purpose of our trip was to increase exposure and opportunities for our Athletes in Action staff in Poland through competing well in basketball, while investing deeply in the



lives of the players and coaches on our team.

The weeks leading up to the trip I put together the teams discipleship notebook with materials I planned to cover and prayed for the men by name. I was excited to get to know them and share with them some of what God has taught me. As we departed from Chicago, I could see the challenge that lie ahead as many of these young men were not too interested in pursuing God and several were skeptical about our spiritual "team times." Thankfully, God had prepared me for that possibility and I had some tools on hand to try to help them connect with each other. One tool is called Solarium, (<http://crustore.org/soularium2.html>) which is a set of 50 cards with random pictures on them. We laid them out on the floor and asked the guys to choose a card that best described how they felt about the trip, and then moved as the days progressed and asked them to choose cards that described their view of God and their feelings about Him. It was great! As they started opening up, we



moved into some Bible studies on sport and talked tangibly about how God desires to move and work in and through our lives for His glory. I think the Bible began to become relevant to their lives and their sport. By the end of our time together, several guys indicated that they were interested in pursuing what it might look like to have a relationship with God...Praise God!

TJ, pictured to the left with me on the plane, shared with me that our team times had really challenged his motivation for competing. He had begun to realize that he could invest the gifts and talents God had given him in basketball to compete as a form of worship to God. TJ was beginning to understand that God's love for him was a motivation for him to compete with the desire that God would receive the glory.

Below is the picture of my kiddos waiting for me at the train station...what a blessing to return home to them!

Please pray...

...for the men who traveled to Poland with Colby. Pray that the seeds of the gospel that were planted would grow.

...for our AIA Poland staff. Pray God would use the influence the US basketball team to further their ministry there.

...for us as we travel with all the kiddos to our biannual Cru/AIA staff conference in Colorado July 13-22.

Pray for equipping, refreshment and encouragement for our hearts, and for the Lord to meet us there.

...for our family as we spent a week of vacation in MN after our staff conference.



We hope you know how loved and appreciated you are by us! You help make this ministry possible, and for that we are eternally grateful!