

Athletes in Action

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

September 2016

937.902.1767 colby.keefer@athletesinaction.org

937.681.6533 sarah.keefer@athletesinaction.org

“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

Ephesians 6:19-20

Happy Fall! We are about three weeks into our Fall routine here and it is starting to feel a little less crazy :) Those of you with kiddos know that the start of the school year comes with much excitement, anxiety, forms to fill out, and schedules to wrap your mind around. I think this is the first year that having six kids has caught up to me...I just can't keep up! This was made most evident when our elementary kids received an email earlier this month informing them of who their teacher was going to be, and I didn't receive one for Mia, our incoming kindergartener. Come to find out, I had forgotten to register her for kindergarten — oops! Thankfully, it all worked out, and God reminded me through it all that I, even more now than ever, need to trust in Him. Trust in Him for my identity apart from how I “perform” as a mom. Trust in Him for the growth and development of my kids. Trust in Him for the grace I need to sustain me through my days. We are called to walk by faith and not by sight, and when things seem out of control I need to lean into that truth even more. We are definitely leaning into that truth when it comes to our campus ministry this year. We will explain in this letter how we are switching things up a bit around here in the hopes of reaching more students with the good news of Christ. Please pray for us as we bring the gospel to these precious students, so that they might taste the richness of our God and bow their hearts to Him. It is an honor to serve alongside you in ministry.

Kicking Things Off

At the start of the Fall semester we like to have a party to kick things off with our ministry. It is a great time for our returning students to reconnect, as well as invite their freshmen to see what we are all about.

After hearing from the athletic department that there were no scheduled conflicts with the day we picked for our party, we found out two days before that around half of the teams were required to go to a workshop, and were unable to attend...boo!

But, God in His faithfulness brought about 40-50 student athletes to hang out, eat pizza and play games with us that night...yay! It was especially encouraging to see a bunch of incoming sophomores show up. These were people we were reaching out to their freshmen year, praying they would “stick” their sophomore years.

Three of those sophomores that seemed to have stuck were on the men's gymnastics team (pictured with Colby to the right), a team that we have had little or no representation on the last few years. They showed up interested to know how they could be involved this year, and we are excited to see what God does on their team as they get involved in the discipleship process.



Discipleship Groups!

Like we mentioned earlier, this year we are trusting God with a new structure to our ministry here at Michigan. In year's past we have had a weekly meeting where we would gather people from the different teams to connect, hear a message and discuss how it relates to their life. In addition to the weekly meeting, we had a men's and women's leadership bible study where we saw consistent growth, and small community groups with students not involved in the leaders group. While the leadership groups had strong commitment levels, it was trickier to get students to commit to the other community groups. With the busyness of the student-athlete's schedule, we were finding it more and more difficult to gather momentum through the weekly meeting, which meant we were having less regular touch points with students.

This year, in a effort to reach more students with the gospel, we are forming smaller discipleship groups on the different teams that will be mostly student led. Like Jesus called and spent time with His disciples, we have invited and challenged some faithful student-athletes to be in what we call our Core discipleships groups. Six men and seven women have stepped up to the call and have been meeting weekly with Colby and I for preparation and training to lead their peers.

I wish you could hear the excitement in their voices as they talk about reaching out to their teammates. Nicky and Sarah on the soccer team were sitting in our Core group the other day writing out the names of their teammates and sorting out who was going to invite who. Taylor, another soccer player in the Core group said, "I think Nicky and Sarah can handle our soccer team. Would it be OK if I reached out to the softball team?". Of course I said yes, and in the next week she had commitments from five softball players to launch a discipleship group on their team.

On the guys side they are excited, too. They all plan to lead a group with teammates or other guys on campus. Please be praying as they take steps of faith to invite teammates and friends to engage discipleship groups.



Back: Taylor, Kali, Abby, Nicky. Front: Adeja, Sarah, me, Erin



Back: Robbie, Nate, Collin. Front: Blake, Adam, Austin

Please pray...

...for the discipleship groups that are starting up in the next few weeks. Pray that many students would take the step of faith to be in a group, and that God's Word would go forth mightily. Pray specifically for our staff as we lead: the men's and women's Core groups, women's track, women's basketball, women's water polo, and men's gymnastics. ...for these student-athletes who are leading their peers: Nicky and Sarah leading women's soccer, Taylor leading softball, Abby and Adeja leading volleyball, Erin and Kali leading cross country, Collin leading men's swimming, Robbie leading men's soccer, Adam leading wrestling and baseball, Austin leading cross country, Blake leader track and field, Nate leading rugby

God is at work here, and we are thankful YOU are a part of it. You are a blessing to us. May God's richest blessings be with you!



Our school age kiddos: Mikayla (7th), Jackson (5th), Jaydon (4th), Moriah (2nd) & Mia (K). Jairus is not pictured...he is 3 :)