

# Athletes in Action

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“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

2017 greetings to you! Gosh, it feels like a long time since I have sat at this computer to write to you. Taking the month of December to send along our Christmas card in lieu of a newsletter makes it seem like there is so much to catch up on! Where to start...we finished up a busy semester in December by bringing in the couple who leads our Athletes in Action ministry to professional athletes to speak at our monthly meeting. He, a former NFL player, and she, a former all-American gymnast, captivated our students with their story of coming to faith in Christ and how they have lived out that faith since. The line to speak to both of them afterwards was quite long, as students who resonated with their story wanted to process further...so fun. Then after evaluating the semester and planning for the next with our staff team, we packed up the family van and journeyed to Minnesota to celebrate Christmas with my mom and dad. Besides the joy of being with family, the Mall of America, ice skating, and a trip to the state park for a winter hot dog roast and snow shoe adventure were highlights of our time there. Then it was back to Michigan to spend time with Colby's family in his hometown of Holly. More ice skating, 4-wheeler rides, and crazy cousin adventures highlighted our time there and we left with full hearts. Now we are back in Action here at the U of M, picking up where we left off and trusting God for even more changed lives. Thank you for being a part of all of this with us! Knowing you are behind what we do provides encouragement and joy along the way!

A little bit of winter break fun...on the ice and riding a roller coaster at the Mall of America!



Blake and Jeryne (both on Michigan's track team) with Corwin and Kim Anthony, the AIA staff leading our ministry to professional athletes.



## Discipleship Group Highlights

As you may remember from this year's past newsletters, our primary way of discipling our students and helping them grow to become "disciples who make disciples" is through groups. Colby and I both lead what we call our Core leaders in discipleship groups each week. This group of 7 women and 6 men then in turn lead their peers each week through the same content we teach them. It has been so encouraging to see how God is blessing this process, not only allowing our groups to grow in numbers, but also allowing our Core students to experience the blessing of being used of God to minister to others. Here are a few highlights...

- ◆ *"Hi Sarah, just had a great bible study session with Sam [name changed]. We have the best conversations about God — I am so happy she told me about her interest in Him and this study!! The questions that she asks each week really show how much she has been thinking about God in her everyday life. Such a cool transformation for me to be seeing."* This is a text I received from Abby, one of our senior Core leaders, about one of her fellow seniors on her team. Sam reached out to her about wanting to learn more about God, but being a bit intimidated to join one of the discipleship groups. So, Abby suggested they meet one-on-one to go over the material that everyone else is doing. I LOVE that Abby is getting a taste of how God can use her in people's lives!
- ◆ As we came back from winter break, Nicky and Sarah, two of our Core leaders on the soccer team, were looking for a new venue to host their discipleship group. They were trying to avoid the interruptions that can come at a coffee shop or at a house full of other students. Then they remembered that Jenny [name changed], one of their soccer teammates, had her own single apartment. Now Jenny had never been to any AIA events or shown any interest in spiritual things, but Sarah and Nicky decided to ask her anyway if she would consider letting them use her place their soccer-focused discipleship group. Not only did Jenny say yes, but she has opted to be a part of the discipleship group herself! Sarah and Nicky are so excited to see someone who they thought was perhaps "unreachable" be interested in God...yay!
- ◆ After being a bit discouraged last semester by the poor attendance in their discipleship group, Erin and Kali on the cross country/track team decided to reboot their group this January. They realized they had failed to ask the girls for a commitment to come each week, as we had outlined for them to do. Their fear last semester was that challenging people to do so would drive them away. But by faith, they started fresh this semester asking their group to commit...and people did! There is something to be said about giving people an opportunity to rise to the challenge to be consistent in growing in their faith. Now, we look forward to seeing how God will work in these precious lives.



Nicky & Sarah

Kali & Erin



*Deepest gratitude from our crazy crew to you for all that you do to support us in our outreach to these students! You are loved and appreciated more than you know!!*

Please pray...

...for our Core group leaders —men and women — as they take steps of faith to lead their peers. Pray God would be ministering to their hearts as they reach out to others.

...for those students who are "checking out" the faith. Pray they would put their trust in Christ as their Savior.

...for our annual Winter Retreat in Chicago Jan 27-29th. Pray for God to mightily intersect the lives of all who attend.

...for our hearts to be refreshed by the Lord.