

Athletes in Action

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

March 2017

937.902.1767 colby.keefer@athletesinaction.org

937.681.6533 sarah.keefer@athletesinaction.org

“Then He said to them, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?’” Luke 9:23-35

Greetings from our home to yours! It’s been another full month of life and ministry around here. We began the month taking a group of students to Detroit on a spring break mission trip. It was fantastic in so many ways, and you can read more about it on the other side of this page. Then the month continued on with the structure we have been implementing this year of our staff ministering to the Core student leaders, and then those leaders in turn ministering to the discipleship groups they are leading with their teammates and peers. I wish you could sit down with these Core group leaders to meet them and hear how God is working in their lives. Not only are they learning life lessons of walking with God, persevering through trials, and seeking Him for their futures, but they are also seeing God use them in remarkable ways in the lives of other students. We’ve been studying the book of Acts together this semester and the student leaders have been just eating it up! Don’t you just love it when God mightily uses His Word in peoples’ lives? ? Blake, a sophomore on the track team, shared the other day that Acts is literally changing his perspective on what is important in life. Where his focus used to be on prosperity and how he could put himself in a position of affluence in life, Blake was sharing that he is seeing how being a part of the Great Commission and bringing the good news of Christ to others is the primary “prosperity” that he longs for. What a privilege it is to walk alongside these students in such a pivotal time in their lives! And thank YOU for walking alongside them with us!

Carrying the cross

We usually split the genders when we meet with the Core group leaders, but every so often we get all 14 of them together to share stories with each other of how God is moving in and through them. Last week was one of those get-togethers, and I left our time full of gratitude for changed lives.

Nate is a junior on the rugby team here at Michigan and was sharing the other night about an analogy his rugby discipleship group came up with at one of their studies together. They were studying Luke 9 where Jesus says to pick up our cross daily and follow Him, and the bible study materials talked about how it is an honor to be a “carrier of the cross”. The group made the analogy that just like it is an honor to be a Michigan athlete and wear the block M, it is an honor to be a Christian and wear the cross of Christ. They talked about all the student athletes who had gone before them to pave the way for their rugby program...the hours those men had put in, the sacrifices they made, the legacy they left. And then they thought about all the Christians who had gone before them in the faith — those in Acts and throughout the centuries — and the marveled at what an honor it truly is to carry the cross of Christ.

Please pray for Nate and the believers on his rugby team who are carrying the light of Christ to a culture that seems so opposite. Pray they stay strong as they live out their faith!



Nate and Kali, one of our other Core leaders

Spring Break Detroit!

In the past on our U of M spring break travels we have ventured to Los Angeles, Orlando, New Zealand and Puerto Rico, so this year when we announced our trip would be to the exotic destination of Detroit we were unsure of the student response we would get :) However God raised up an incredible group of students who were interested in learning how to engage well in under-resourced communities as we partnered with a church and community transformation organization, Mack Ave Community Church and MACC Development who God is using to do amazing things in the city.

For a week these students made themselves available to the church to be used in any way that was needed — picking up trash, stuffing envelopes, helping a family move into the neighborhood. All the while, they were being taught about God's heart for the poor and underserved, and what it might look like for them to be a part of community transformation for a lifetime.

Adeja, a junior on the volleyball team at Michigan, absolutely loved her time in Detroit! In fact when she returned she couldn't stop talking to her team about it, and now many of them want to take a weekend trip there with us at some point. Here is what she had to say about her experience over spring break...

"The most impactful moment for me during the trip was helping move the two families into their new homes. Being able to lend an extra hand and help them get acclimated to their neighborhood really put things into perspective for me. What we did as a group was God's work and I enjoyed every moment of it. One element that I thought was very interesting was that the community was very involved in restructuring how people view the city of Detroit. There's so much diversity and culture within the city but with that comes a divide that we as disciples of God can fix by teaching and sharing our love for Him."



We were told by the church that they have never had a group work as hard as our group did that week. I guess that's what happens when you put a group of Michigan athletes to work!

Please pray...

...that the momentum we feel with the discipleship groups would carry over to the summer and into the fall semester.
...for students as they share their faith with their friends and teammates. Pray many would come to know Christ.
...for time of refreshment for us amidst a busy schedule.

God's Word is going forth here...and YOU are a part of it! Thank you for your investment!



Moriah jumped at the chance to miss school and join us for a day of serving! Here she is

with a few of the neighborhood kids who came out to help us clean up. On the right is Adeja, Kali and I.



This is a fun picture! It is of Zeke and Ben, two former Michigan AIA students, and their wives Ashley and Hilary. Zeke heads up the MACC Development organization we partnered with in Detroit. And Ben and Hilary now lives in Detroit near where we were serving. We were able to connect with them over dinner one night. How encouraging to see our former students still walking with Christ!