

Athletes in Action

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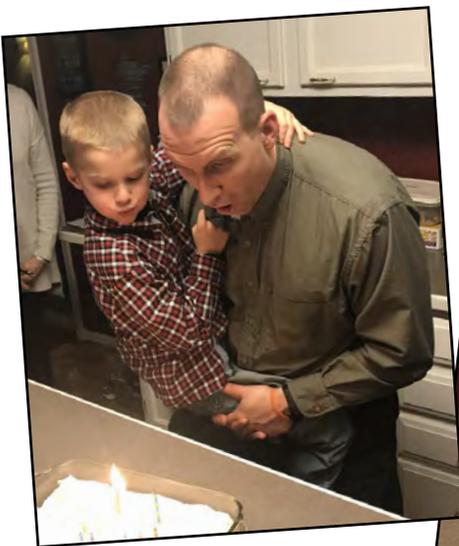
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"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight," Ephesians 1:7-8

2018 greetings to you! As I was typing the date into the header above, it dawned on me that 2018 marks the twentieth year that I (Sarah) have been on the staff of Athletes in Action. When I joined AIA staff in 1998 as a fairly new believer fresh out of college, I never dreamed that I would still be on staff twenty years down the road! And here I am six kids later, married to a wonderfully God-fearing man, ministering at my alma mater...could life be any more blessed?? Just last week I sat in the Michigan student union sharing my testimony with a young freshman and was able to affectionately point to the room where the gospel was first shared with me my freshman year. God has radically transformed my life since that day in the student union all those years ago. He took me from a girl who wondered about her purpose in life, to a woman who can say resolutely that God and His Kingdom purposes are what life on this earth is all about. He has taken me from someone who hopelessly tried to find acceptance through academics, athletics, and friendships, to someone who now lives in the reality and truth that I am fully accepted and included in Christ. What an incredible journey this has been for me...and I feel even more blessed to know that I have shared it with many of you over the past twenty years. You have faithfully read our letters, given sacrificially, and most importantly have gone to the throne of God in prayer for us. We don't have the words to adequately thank you. Know that you are loved and appreciated by us!

Family Update!



Colby and the kids have been enjoying the winter fun outside (this MN girl has had enough of the cold!). We went up to Colby's hometown over Christmas and had a blast on the ice. I think Colby tied and untied skates about 100 times while we were there!



In December we celebrated two birthdays...Moriah turned 9, and Colby turned...well, let's just say more than that :)

Our family life is full with kids enjoying church and sport activities almost nightly. I think we are in for a busy next season of life, as there seems to be no end in sight of running kids around to places!

New Energy

'I brought a new person with me tonight,' this is what MacKenzi said as she walked into our Training Table meeting last week. Once a month we have "Training Table" where students can come who want to receive extra training in ministry skills. We've tackled topics like a biblical perspective on discipleship, how to share your faith and personal testimony, and what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Given that the meeting is geared toward a little bit more of a mature believer, I was a little leery about MacKenzi bringing a new person with her :)

The "new girl" turned out to be Erin, an early enrollee freshman on the volleyball team ("early enrollee" means that she left high school a semester early to start her college career before the fall semester...so, "new" really meant *new* as she has only been on campus a few weeks!). It turns out that Erin was very engaged at Training Table and seemed to enjoy her first AIA experience.

When we reminded the students that night about our AIA Winter Retreat coming up Feb 2-4th, I asked Erin if she might possibly be interested in going. She shyly said she would ask her mom about it.

Well, the next day when I checked the retreat registrations, Erin had signed up to go!!! She is going without any of her teammates or people she knows. I am super excited by her desire to grow in her faith and can't wait to get to know her better!



MacKenzi, Erin, Katherine & Lauren

Another freshman pictured in this photo is Lauren from the gymnastics team. She has been faithfully coming to not only our larger group events all year, but also to one of our student-led discipleship group each week. I got the chance to sit down with her the other day over coffee and was so encouraged to hear about her strong upbringing with the Lord. She comes from a solid Christian family and desires to pursue her faith and to be used by God to an even greater degree in college. In fact, she said that she views her involvement in gymnastics as a mission field that God has placed her in, praying to be vessel to point others to Jesus...what freshman says that??

Please pray along with us for Erin and Lauren and others like them here at Michigan. Pray that God would bless their desire to grow and be used by Him. To God be all the glory!

Please pray...

...for the AIA Winter Retreat in Ohio February 2nd-4th. Pray for the 10 Michigan students and the many others from around the region who will be in attendance. Pray God would use His Word and the fellowship of other believers mightily in these students' lives.

...for Lauren & Erin and other freshman believers here at Michigan as they seek to walk with God amidst a culture so opposed to Him. Pray for courage and boldness to stand strong in their faith.

...for our students and staff as we reach out to those who don't know Christ here. Pray God would lead us to people whose hearts He is working in.

...for perseverance for Colby as he is in his last semester of seminary...yay! Pray for wisdom in his classes and for balance in his schedule.

...for our kids to know and walk with Jesus.

...for God to protect our marriage and lead us as we lead our family and ministry on campus.



We are beyond blessed by the ways you partner with us! May God bless you richly in 2018 as you give of your prayers and finances!