

Athletes in Action

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

937.902.1767 colby.keefe@athletesinaction.org

February 2018

937.681.6533 sarah.keefe@athletesinaction.org

“And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!’” Romans 10:14-15

Happy winter! We hope this letter finds you well amidst the craziness of this flu season. Despite minor coughs and sniffles, we have managed to escape (thus far!) major sicknesses this season. Unfortunately, that has not been the case for our students, as many of them have been sick, and two had to even miss our Winter Retreat because of it...so sad! It has been a full month of ministry, though, with the Retreat and preparing for our upcoming spring break trip (more on both of those in this letter). Our weekly discipleship groups have continued to meet with our AIA staff leading four different groups of core leaders, who then turn around and lead their peers. God is changing lives through His Word and through the community of believers who are in those groups. The other day I was meeting with my core leader girls and we were reflecting on how our lives are different because Christ is in them. I wish you could have been in that circle, hearing how God has touched each of those women’s lives. One girl, with tears in her eyes, shared how before she came to college and understood the gospel, she didn’t have any real relationships in her life. She went on to say that it was only after understanding God’s deep love for her, that she was able to open herself up to others and receive love from them. She now leaves college in a few months with a tender relationship with God, incredible relationships with her girl friends, and is set to marry a godly man this summer! Thank you for partnering with us in God’s work to change lives like hers here at Michigan. To Him be all the glory!

Spring Break ~ South Africa Style!

Early each Fall, we seek God for what He would have our campus do over spring break. In the past we have taken students to Los Angeles, Detroit, Puerto Rico and New Zealand — all incredible times of growth and ministry. This year as we prayed and sought the Lord, we felt led to go to South Africa, one of AIA’s international partnership countries.

I could not be more excited about the group of people God has raised up to go with us to Cape Town! We are affectionately calling this the “ladies” trip, after all our efforts to recruit men to join us failed :) So 12 of us ladies are going...3 AIA staff, 6 students, 2 Michigan alumni, and our oldest daughter, Mikayla.

While there, we will be working alongside our South African AIA staff to learn from them and trust God to open doors to speak to collegiate sports teams about our faith in Christ. Our team is trained up on how to share the gospel and how to communicate our stories of faith, and we are ready to be used by God however He sees fit!

Please pray with us that God will use us to be a blessing and help establish AIA movements on university campuses. Pray also that He would work mightily in each of our lives as we embark on this adventure of faith!



Our group going to South Africa...back row: Katherine, MacKenzi, Me, Mikayla, Briana, Ramona. Front row: Shaina, Meg, Allie, Taylor. Not pictured: Nicki & Dee

Winter Retreat

Earlier this month we took a group of 7 Michigan student-athletes with us down to Xenia, Ohio for our annual AIA Winter Retreat. While there we joined about 150 other student-athletes from around the region in what was a high-energy, God-honoring, community-building and faith-stretching time.

One of the students who came with us was Hailey, as freshman on the soccer team. When Hailey stepped into our van to ride down to the retreat, I had to introduce myself to her as I had not previously met her. Being brand new to any AIA event, I wondered how the weekend would go for Hailey, but God in His faithfulness intersected her life in a big way that weekend. Let me allow Hailey to share in her own words about how her life was impacted...

"The Retreat was not my main priority as I am a new participant into the AIA community. As a couple of my teammates urged me to come, I finally signed up and became super excited for the weekend. I am usually someone who is all say and won't follow through. Something about this trip was different. I felt God was calling me to come. I can honestly say this weekend was life changing. Being in a community where everyone was so vulnerable in their faith and willing to share their mistakes and issues they have made in their lives was something I have never been a part of. There was no judgement and everyone was extremely supportive of everyone in their faith journey. My favorite experience from the weekend was when the women in the room had their own seminar. We talked about being confident and not feeling like we need a man in our lives to make us happy. We must know our paths and not base our lives on finding a match but rather finding my relationship with God and wait until another man's path may cross mine. As a young woman, it was important for me to reiterate how my purpose in life is to live for God and not for the man who I might be with. Another statement made during the trip that hit home for me was that it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks of you, the only thing that matters is what God thinks of you. This comment is something that I struggle with everyday. I feel like I'm always trying to impress others and live life by receiving affirmation. I need to live for Him and count on Him for getting me through. I shouldn't be counting on anyone else for my self worth. After this weekend, I can already see extensive change in these issues that I struggle with. These moments spent in Xenia have truly changed my perception of myself and strengthened my faith in the Lord." Hailey, soccer



Left: Nicki, Lizzie, Hailey
The three soccer freshmen who came.

Right: Our group from Michigan



Please pray...

...for our spring break trip to Cape Town, South Africa on Feb 23-Mar 4. Pray for spiritual growth in us Americans, for God's blessing in reaching out to South African students with the gospel, and for God to establish AIA movements on campuses there.

...for Colby as he manages the children back home and all of his other responsibilities while Sarah is gone! Pray for wisdom and refreshment for him.

...for God to continue to raise up the needed funds to cover the cost of all who are going on the South Africa trip.

...for Hailey and others who went on the Retreat. Pray the seeds that were planted would not be snatched away by the Enemy, but grow to maturity.

...for students to develop a passion for God's Word as they study it in their discipleship groups.

...for our kids to walk with Jesus, and for God to work mightily in Mikayla's life as she is in South Africa.



Erik and Clare, two former Michigan student-athletes who are now married spoke recently at our Monthly Gathering about godly relationships...such a great evening!

Thank you for the vital role you play in influencing these students for Christ! God Bless!