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November 2024 Newsletter

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” Philippians 1:3-5

Happy Thanksgiving! We hope this letter finds you and your family well, enjoying the beauty of this season. We just wrapped up what I have been calling “event month” here. November saw us throw an Operation Christmas Child packing party on campus, serve an early Thanksgiving dinner to Michigan international student athletes, attend another such dinner with EMU international athletes, and host two different freshman lunches in our home (one for UM & one for EMU). Phew. I am not an event planner by vocation, but it sure felt that way sometimes! A few things God taught me along the way this month were: 1) When I organize an event, I am just laying the groundwork for God to be at work in and through it. The conversations I overheard and the fun students had were not things I could manufacture in my planning. They were birthed in the hearts of the people there by God, and by His grace, spiritual seeds that were planted can grow. 2) Event planning goes a lot more smoothly when you invite others to serve alongside you! For example, a friend and her small group frosted 360 Christmas cookies and provided other festive snacks for the wrapping party. Beautiful people from our church provided almost all the Thanksgiving food as we hosted the international student athletes. And our friends who are local pastors hosted the entirety of the EMU international Thanksgiving! Delegation has never been my strong suit, but I am learning to appreciate not only the blessing it is for others to be involved, but also the relief it can bring to a very busy season.

Please enjoy these pictures from November’s “event month”. Your partnership is what is making these events possible. The lives of many young people are being impacted with the gospel of Jesus Christ and we are so very thankful for you!



The Michigan freshmen who were able to come for dinner



Above: Jadyn & Elle. Elle, a freshman on the soccer team, told me over coffee a few weeks back that she was hoping more freshmen on her team would get involved in AIA. She threw out an invite to them to come to the dinner...and 2 of them did! She was so encouraged! Jadyn, a sophomore leader for us, was there to share about the impact being involved in AIA her freshman year made in her life!



Left: After we ate, the students were divided into small groups with questions. “What has been a highlight of your freshman year so far?” was one of them. “This freshman dinner!” replied Eric on the baseball team pictured here with two girls from the Michigan dance team.



Left: The Eastern Michigan students who were able to attend the freshman lunch. Jayden, a baseball player from Canada, approached me as our time was ending and shared how he had become a Christian just two years ago through the influence of a friend. He had been looking for a group where he could be involved in evangelism and discipleship and was so excited that AIA is on his campus!

Below: Pictures from our annual Operation Christmas Child wrapping/packing party. The gym was packed with UM & EMU athletes getting into the Christmas spirit and packing an astounding 367 shoeboxes full of gifts for underserved kids around the world. Go God!



We had two wonderful evenings this past week with international student athletes from EMU & UM for early Thanksgiving meals. To be able to hear stories about their countries and families was so fun and the meals opened up doors to further relationship with them. Costa Rica, Ukraine, Nigeria, Canada, Greece, New Zealand, Australia, England and The Netherlands were all represented!

*Please pray...
 ...for the freshmen currently involved in AIA. Pray God would build Christian community among them, and that He would use them to reach out to their peers.
 ...for the kids around the world who will be receiving the shoeboxes. Pray they would get a chance to hear the gospel and respond.
 ...for the international student athletes who shared a Thanksgiving meal with us. Pray their interest in Christ would be piqued.
 ...for wisdom and stamina for us as we lead on both campuses.*

In this season of Thanksgiving, we are mindful of our gratitude for you! May God bless you richly!