

Athletes in Action

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“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:20-21

Hello again...as I sit down to write this I realize I have SO much to tell you about! A lot has been going on since we last wrote to you in June. If you remember, July was our big month of travel as we spent a week of vacation with each of our families in northern Michigan and in Minnesota. Then it was on to be challenged and stretched at our biannual staff conference in Colorado. People keep asking me how our trip was and I can't say enough about how God blessed our time. We have incredible memories stored up in our hearts from each place we visited and are so thankful to have had the opportunity to experience all that we did! While we were gone we left our students and volunteer AIA staff in charge of the ministry here at Michigan and we were beyond encouraged to hear about what was going on. Students were leading their peers in bible studies, people were reaching out to their non-Christian teammates, and leaders were staying after meetings for extended times of prayer. Usually our summer meetings tend to fizzle out in July as more and more student athletes head home, but this year attendance actually increased in July and August which makes us so excited for that momentum to carry into the fall semester. Thank you for the role you play in the lives of these precious students. Let's trust God together to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think this year!

Faithful Lauren

“Hey, sorry it's late, but would you guys please pray for Krigen? She's probably my best friend here and has no religious background whatsoever. I've always had a hard time navigating how much to push with her, but ended up asking her to come to church and SHE'S COMING tomorrow! Please please pray for an incredible message and a life-changing experience. We serve such a big God who can do big things!!”

This was a text that Lauren, one of our faithful student leaders on the gymnastics team sent to our group chat last Saturday night. Lauren has such a tender heart toward the Lord and is having an incredible impact on her team and peers as God uses her to bring the light of Christ to them. In fact, at one of our summer AIA meetings over half her team showed up! One of those girls was a senior who told me that she had always wanted to check out AIA, but was a bit intimidated. But now that she experienced the people and teaching, she never wants to miss!

What happened as Lauren's friend Krigen came to church with her last week? Well, here's a follow up text Lauren sent on Monday...*“Guys, it was unreal. At church the pastor was talking about a book about grit and I leaned over and she said*

I've read this book (WHAT?!). Then at the end of the service she was crying. THEN she just came over to my house unannounced and we talked for about an hour all about faith and God and the structure of the Bible and questions and it was UNREAL! GOD IS SO GOOD! THANK YOU FOR PRAYERS!!”

To God be the glory for how He is moving and working in and through sweet Lauren's life!



Some of the gymnasts...Lauren is in the middle!

A Changed Life in the City

This summer we were so excited to send Natalie, a senior on the rowing team, to Los Angeles to be a part of our AIA Urban Project. During the month she was there, Natalie served alongside other student athletes from around the country at different ministry sights in LA all the while learning biblical principles of justice and oneness. I asked Natalie to share a story of how God moved in her life at the Urban Project and this is what she said:

"The first week in LA we attended church in the middle of Skid Row. I saw a level of poverty and brokenness that I had never seen before, but I was also drenched in an outpouring of love and thankfulness simultaneously. As I listened to the pastor's sermon I watched out the open door and saw a mother with her two children, both bare foot, and I thought to myself "where do they go to school," "I want to know their story," "I wonder what their favorite sport to play is." And then I stopped myself and thought about everything that I take for granted, questions that I would deem normal are not their normal. I had to take a step out of my bubble in a completely new way and see God's people for who they are instead of what I have been told to think of them - beautifully and wonderfully made.

That Sunday night my air mattress deflated and I remember laying there and thinking about what I had just seen on Skid Row and how thankful I was to have a pillow under my head, blankets over my body, air conditioning, a roof over my head, and even a deflated air mattress to sleep on. I remember praying for eyes to see what I can't, ears to hear what I can't, and a tendered heart to receive whatever the Lord put before me. As I realize now, that Sunday night was the spark that ignited so many other lights that I began to see not only for the remainder of my time in LA, but everywhere the Lord has lead and continues to lead me.

I quickly began to see the level of spiritual poverty that affects the bottom 10% all the way to the top 1% as I landed back in Detroit and headed straight to coach swimming at the Country Club. The same level of brokenness that was at Skid Row is present on Rodeo Drive and the Country Clubs, it is just masked differently. I was so blind to the level of spiritual poverty that I am surrounded by everyday as I coach swimming, but now I can see how God is using this experience to light the path for each and every child and parent that I interact with."



Natalie with a few of the other students on the Project...she is pictured on the right



The Keefe crew checking into our staff conference

Please pray...
...for Lauren and our other student leaders as they reach out to their friends and teammates with the gospel. Pray God will use them in big ways.
...for God to direct us to freshmen who are ready to hear about Jesus.
...for Brennen and Nicky as they settle into their new lives in East Asia. Pray for boldness and protection as they share their faith there.
...for our intimacy with God to grow ever stronger.

We are so very grateful for you and for all you do for us!



Two pictures of U of M AIA alumni changing the world. Brennen and Nicky just left for East Asia on a year long AIA mission trip. Steph got married last month and she and her husband are working with AIA at the U of Iowa.