

# Athletes in Action

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“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”  
Acts 4:12

Greetings from Ann Arbor! As I sit down to write this newsletter today, my heart is full as I think about how God has been moving in and through the Athletes in Action movement here at Michigan. I say that because we are hearing often about how students are having spiritual conversations with their friends and teammates, planting seeds of the gospel in people’s hearts. One of those hearts is a sweet girl on the field hockey team who has been asking spiritual questions to her friend Lauren, our student leaders on the gymnastics team. Just the other day God gave me the opportunity to sit down with this girl and walk through the gospel, answering her questions and encouraging her to consider the claims of Christ. I wish you could have been there with me. You would have seen a young woman who is wrestling with big questions in her life, and whose teary eyes spoke of God’s work in her heart. She left our time together with a desire to seek more understanding of who Jesus is through reading the New Testament. I am praying she encounters Him there, and chooses to talk to me or Lauren about what she finds in His Word. Thank you for being a part of these students’ spiritual development. Lives are being changed for eternity here, and God is using you to do it!

## Coming full circle

The pictures to the right tell a great story. The one on the left is circa 1996 or so when I was playing volleyball at Michigan, and the little girl with me was one of the “ball girls” who worked our games. The picture on the right is of that same “little” girl now grown up, having played volleyball at Michigan herself ten years after me, and who also now works in full-time ministry!

Sarah Santini has been in my life for the past 25 years, and we were overjoyed to have her as the guest speaker at our AIA meeting this month. She spoke from the Word and from her heart about what it means to follow Jesus and make Him your true treasure. Here’s what a few students had to say about what they took away from the night:

*“I am learning everything is just so temporary, and I need to not let those things (whether it’s finding an internship, stressing about my sport, or studying for an exam) lord over my life and ultimately steal my joy.”*

*“Something that really spoke to me was her saying that my faith isn’t marked by being perfect, but rather continually running back to God. It is very easy for me to think about things that can lord over my life, and I want to be continually realigning myself with God.”*



The energy in the room at our Monthly Gatherings is electric! Here we have the students lined up for “speed dating”, asking each other a few get-to-know—you questions before Sarah spoke.

## Winter Retreat 2020

This month we took a group of Michigan students to join over 300 other student-athletes from around the region at our annual AIA Great Lakes Winter Retreat. It was a weekend of meeting new people, being challenged from the Word, worshipping together, and just having fun!

A highlight of the retreat for us was how on the first night the speaker gave everyone an invitation to receive Christ into their lives. And with everyone's heads bowed in prayer, he counted 24 students who did so! Then throughout the weekend when students were given opportunities to share from up front, several of them referenced being "one of the twenty-four" and were met with wild applause.

Well, at our Monthly Gathering back at Michigan this month, we gave our students who went on the retreat a chance to share about their experience. One of them (Matt) got up, and after sharing a few of the main speaker's words that ministered to him, then shared that *he* was one of "the twenty-four"...we had no idea! Go God!!

We asked Matt to write a few words about what he learned at the retreat and how God used it in his life. What he had to say is to the right.



The students LOVED the worship at the retreat!

Please pray...

...for the precious girl on the field hockey team here who is seeking truth about God. Pray God would reveal Himself mightily to her and that she would come to faith.

...for our students as they continue to reach out to their peers with the love and truth of Christ.

...for those students who went on the retreat to stay strong in their faith. And for Matt to be strengthened and grown in his new faith.

...for our kids' hearts to be drawn to Jesus.

...for God to protect our marriage in this busy season and for Him to minister to our hearts.

*You are SUCH a blessing to us! May God bless you in the giving of your prayers and finances in advancing His Kingdom here at U of M!*



Blake, Taylor, Matt, Colby and Sarah

*"Let me begin with this...my short weekend at the retreat opened up my eyes to a whole new sphere of life. I finally developed a relationship with God that gave me so much reason and purpose to give my life up to Him for the first time ever. What happened at the retreat brought me a whole new-found purpose that I take with me every day. I'm so excited to further my relationship with God and use what Davey [the speaker] preached to make myself available to Christ more and more."*

~Matt



The other day one of our AIA staff was sitting at a Michigan women's basketball practice and noticed a group of school age kids in attendance. While striking up a conversation with their teacher, he found out they were from a Christian school and they were wondering if there were any Christians on the team. After practice, he pointed them to Priscilla (one of our student leaders) who then shared her testimony of faith with the girls. So fun! This reminded me of the verse in 1 Peter 3 where we are told to always be ready to give an account for the hope that is in us. Go God!