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## April 2020 Newsletter

“Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.”  
 Psalm 42:5

We hope and pray this letter finds you safe and healthy during this unprecedented time. Maybe you can relate to the myriad of emotions that have been going through my mind this past month — fear, anxiety, anger, exhaustion, despair, grief. We’ve been talking to the college students, as well as our kids, about the importance of being aware of your feelings in this season of our lives. There has been a common theme of loss that seems to frequently come up. Coupled with the tragic loss of loved ones, comes the loss of normalcy, community, school years, sport seasons, freedom, and even fifth grade camp. I have found myself swimming in the Psalms during this quarantine, relating deeply with the emotion that is found there. The Psalmists were not ones to hide their feelings from God, but rather they cried out to Him with their sorrows and fears. They told God what they wanted, not mincing their words to “pretty” them up. And yet, they always came back to the character and faithfulness of God, knowing they could rest in His sovereignty and goodness. That is where I want my heart to rest, too. And when I am disciplined to sit still with God and His Word, I can hear Him whisper those truths to me. I hear Him remind me how He is the same yesterday, today and forever, how to live is Christ and to die is gain, how He has continued to provide abundantly for our family, and how these weeks at home have been a precious gift of time from Him. We hope you are also experiencing the Lord during this season. Please reach out to us and let us know how we can be praying for you. We are thankful to continue to partner with you to bring the love and truth of Christ to these young athletes here at Michigan.

## A New Way

What does ministry look like for us in this age of quarantine? Well, if you recognize the picture to the right, you can see the medium we are most using to talk to the students. Zoom calls, zoom calls, zoom calls! Zoom discipleship groups. Zoom prayer meetings. Zoom one-on-one discipleship. Zoom staff meetings. We feel like we are constantly zooming :)

In all seriousness though, we are *so* thankful for this technology that allows us to see the faces of these precious students as we talk with them about God and His Word.

Before we entered quarantine, Colby was meeting weekly with a group of graduating seniors to talk through and process their transition to the “real world”. They were covering topics such as relationships, getting plugged into Christian community, finances, and creating a personal mission statement. When the virus hit the group was so sad at the thought of ending their time together and they have been continuing to meet ever since.

Our AIA staff are not the only ones using

zoom...our student leaders have also been using it to continue their weekly discipleship groups with their peers. Lauren, our student leader on the gymnastics team, was super encouraged to see her friend Kragen jump on her zoom discipleship group this month. Lauren has been reaching out to and inviting Kragen to be a part of her group all year, but having no spiritual background, Kragen had felt very intimidated. But somehow God used the medium of zoom and the circumstances we are in to help her to feel comfortable to join the group — Go God!



## Virtual Senior Night

Usually the final large group Monthly Gathering of the year is my most favorite Athletes in Action event of the year. It is at that meeting that we honor our graduating seniors by giving them an opportunity to share what God has taught them during their college years...and the night could not be more encouraging!

This year we had to move senior night to a virtual call, but God did not disappoint as we heard senior after senior give testimony to the incredible work the Lord did in their lives here at Michigan. On a typical year we have around 10-15 seniors who share, and this year we were astounded that there were 21 of them who spoke up!

One of those 21 was a young man we asked you to pray for in our last newsletter. Mohan, if you remember, is an international student from China who's first exposure to Christianity was through Sam, his cheerleading teammate involved in AIA. Mohan was able to come to our last in-person Monthly Gathering in March and absolutely loved the Christian community he was exposed to. A few weeks ago, Mohan took a trip to North Dakota to get details set for his future job there, but before he left, Sam made sure he had a bible to go with him. Sam suggested Mohan begin in the book of Matthew, and when Sam checked in with him a few days later, Mohan had finished not only the entire book of Matthew, but he also had read Genesis in its entirety! He was devouring God's Word!

Fast forward a few weeks...when Mohan got on our senior night zoom call he shared with everyone that he had grown up in a Buddhist culture, but never really resonated with that thinking. He then went onto say that he would not have identified as a Christian up until two weeks ago! Praise God! It was so encouraging to listen to him share and to hear him thanking Sam and others for showing Him Jesus. Thank YOU so much for the part you played in praying for Mohan and fighting that battle in the heavenly realms!

Here are a few of the things some of the other seniors shared...

*"I used to tell myself I can do everything by myself. Being invited to AIA changed the way I saw my team and what I wanted to do. I learned life is about being in a community and working with those around me and finding Christ through others, and not just for myself."*

*"God accepted me as I was, but He didn't leave me where I was. Athletes in Action allowed me to rediscover my faith in a really cool environment surrounded by my teammates. AIA took me as I was."*

*"Even though I came from a Christian home, my plan when I got to college was to run from God. However God had other plans for me. He not only drew me in to follow Him, but He also had me become an AIA leader who leads others. As we have studied Jonah this year, I feel a lot like him. I was running from what God wanted me to do, but God showed up and steered me in the right direction."*

Please pray...

...for Mohan's new faith in Christ. Pray that he continues to devour God's Word, and that he would find a church in his new city.

...for our student leaders, that they would be utilizing this down time to seek the Lord. Pray they would be bold in inviting teammates and friends to join their virtual discipleship groups.

...for some of our graduating seniors as some have lost jobs they planned to begin in May and June due to the virus.

...pray for us as we try to be flexible and follow the Lord as He leads us in how to do ministry virtually.

...for our family to enjoy the Lord and cherish this time together.

*Thank you for your partnership in this very odd season of life. Your presence and generosity in our lives is SUCH a blessing! God Bless!*



We have been hanging in there on the home front, persevering through home-schooling, wacky weather, and many, many hours together!

