

# Athletes in Action

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**June 2020**

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“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3:21-23

Hello again from our family to yours! We hope things have been going well in your home...we certainly have all been spending quite a bit of time in our homes lately, haven't we? While I have been thankful for the slower pace of life and the increased time with our family, I am definitely feeling the itch to get things back to normal, whatever that means in this season. However, I don't see “normal” happening anytime soon. So in the meantime, I continue to trust God and lean into His daily provision. The account of the Israelites in the desert and how God provided manna for them daily, brings a lot of comfort to me. They couldn't store up the manna He gave them or it would be rotten the next day. They could only rely on what God gave them each day for their needs. I want to live that way, trusting God for the patience, wisdom, strength and perspective I need on a daily basis. Nothing looks “normal” right now — school, sports, ministry, vacation, and even grocery shopping. And on an even more disheartening note, the recent events highlighting injustice in our country have grieved our hearts on new levels. But, by faith I want to trust that God is using this unforeseen, unprecedented and tumultuous time in our country to grow and mature me in ways that wouldn't have happened otherwise, and to help me understand how I can better love those around me. Know that we have been praying for you during this season, that you would be sustained physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually. May we all come out of this with a closer walk with Christ as we depend on Him in new-found ways.

## Conversations

Over the past few months we have continued to meet weekly over zoom with our student-leaders, equipping them to lead their discipleship groups with their peers. We have also been meeting regularly for virtual discipleship with students, discussing God's Word and how it applies to different aspects of their lives.

One of our priorities has been to lament and mourn the brutality toward people of color in our nation. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, the use of White power in false accusations against Christian Cooper in Central Park and the disproportional impact of Covid-19 have provided critical lenses to view systems of injustice and racism that exist in our country. These systems are not honoring to God and dehumanize those He has created. It is our desire as AIA staff to see God's children rise up to stand in unity (John 17:20-23). We desire to see the White church repent of its historical silence toward racial oppression and to listen, empathize and fight for just solutions. Please take some time with us to listen, pray, and allow God to strengthen our hearts to love one another sacrificially and seek systemic changes that honor God. .



Big milestones around our home!



Jackson moves on to high school next year, Moriah to middle school, and Jaiurs celebrated his 7th birthday.

## UTC Every

Ministry goes on here amidst the unrest and pandemic! One of the most encouraging things that has gone on lately is our Michigan student-athlete participation in Athletes in Action's virtual Ultimate Training Camp (UTC).

Along with just about every other camp in the country, AIA's summer camps were also unfortunately cancelled. But that didn't stop our UTC staff from creating a way to do it online! UTC Every provided over 800 student-athletes a virtual five night camp at the end of May. Students heard talks about how to connect God, life and sport, and participated in athletic "labs" designed to help them apply the principles there were learning. We began to pray that 30 Michigan student-athletes would sign up. To be honest, that seemed like an insurmountable feat, as the busy schedules of Michigan athletes usually prevent them from participating in AIA summer opportunities. But God, in His faithfulness, raised up 37 Michigan students to be a part of UTC Every!! It was so fun to connect with them throughout the week and hear how their lives were being challenged and impacted. In a follow up zoom call the next week, we were able to hear more from our Michigan students about what they learned.

The UTC Every camp met for two hours each night. The first hour involved worship and a talk and the second hour the students broke into small groups to discuss how to apply what they had heard in the first hour. It was such a praise to hear how God used this virtual platform! Lauren, a freshman on Michigan's track team, said she has never related to a group of girls more than she did with her UTC Every small group. And Abby, a sophomore on the gymnastics team, said that her group connected so well that they are going to continue in bible study together all summer. Yay!



Above: We had the treat of being led in worship during UTC Every by the band Run51.

Below: One evening the featured speakers were two former AIA staff that we trained at the U of Dayton, Jon and Tree Demeter



Please pray...

...for healing to take place in our country in regards to our sin of racial discrimination. Pray that we as AIA staff will be used by God help bring about that change.  
...for our Michigan student-athletes who participated in the UTC Every. Pray that the seeds that were planted that week will grow.  
...for our student leaders as they continue to reach out to their peers and lead them in discipleship groups. Pray that the truths of the book of James we are studying would penetrate hearts.  
...for wisdom in what the next few months of campus ministry will look like.  
...for our kids to love Jesus more deeply and understand His example of loving our neighbor sacrificially.

One of the nights of the week was dedicated to helping student-athletes understand their motivation for playing their sport. Our desire was to help them see that God and His love for us can be our primary motivation for all things in life and thus sport can be a platform to worship Him because of His love for us! Knowing we are fully loved and accepted by God can enable athletes to compete free from seeking to perform for love or trying to impress others. They can simply thank God through their performance. Here's what one of our athletes said about that:

*"UTC is AMAZING!! Last night we talked about what is our 'why' and I seriously haven't thought about that in so long. I was reflecting on it again today and it was interesting to see how much my 'why' has evolved over the years. It's also been awesome to learn about why it's so important to and how to bridge faith and sport. It's something I've always wanted to bridge together, but I've struggled to understand how to."*

The flexibility of homeschooling has allowed up to sneak up to Grandma and Grandpa's lake a few times...yay!



The kids have been helping Colby and his dad to remodel our deck :)

*Amidst these turbulent times, we are ever mindful of your generosity and support. May God bless you richly as you give of your prayers and finances!*