



Colby and Sarah Keefer
 4695 Sycamore Dr. Ypsilanti, MI 48197
 Colby—(937) 902-1767
 Colby.Keefer@athletesinaction.org
 Sarah—(937) 681-6533
 Sarah.Keefer@athletesinaction.org

August 2020 Newsletter

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...’” Jeremiah 6:16

Hello! It’s good to sit down and write to you again. This year marks the 22nd fall I have been working with Athletes in Action, and I can’t tell you enough how much your partnership in ministry means to me! Some of you have been with us for that whole time, and some are newer partners, but in a lot of ways you all feel like family. We have been hearing from some of you over these past few months of the pandemic and it encourages us to no end to know that you are in this battle with us! You pray, you give, you encourage. Thank you. So, when it comes to writing to you each month, it feels like catching a good friend and partner up with what is going on around our home and on campus. This fall both of those places are going to look a lot different. At home we will have six online-learners, and I honestly don’t even know what to expect with that! “One day at a time” has been my mantra over the past few months, and I can see how it will continue to be that way in the foreseeable future :) On campus things will look a lot different, too. Coaches and administrators are asking the student-athletes to really limit their in-person interactions with people other than their teammates and housemates. Yet, we are hearing from our students that there is a huge need for them to be in face-to-face community with each other. So we walk a fine line in trying to meet that need for fellowship and community, as well as honor the athletic department’s safety recommendations. All of it makes me sometimes want to throw my hands up in the air and wonder what in the heck we are going to do! Then that familiar still small voice tells me that He is still here, He is still in control, and He still has a plan. I came across the above verse in my study of Jeremiah the other day and was reminded that there is rest awaiting my soul as I walk in His ways — loving others, serving them, setting my heart on Christ. May we all find that sacred rest as we walk with our faithful, loving, all-knowing God through this pandemic. To Him be all the glory!



This past month we were able to travel to my hometown in Minnesota to spend some treasured time with family. Lots of fishing and fun! On our way there and back we stopped in Green Bay and Chicago to tour a few potential college campuses for Mikayla...yikes!

God is still on the move!

Amidst this crazy Covid zoom call ministry time, I have been so encouraged to watch God continue to do His work in people's lives. Not knowing how we are going to reach out to freshmen without a large physical presence on campus, God has already brought us two incoming freshmen women who want to continue to grow in their faith while in college. Naomi, a gymnast from Phoenix and Claire, a swimmer from mid-Michigan have joined us on our summer zoom calls after they asked their believing teammates about how to find Christian community in Michigan's athletic department. Being just a few years out from having a kiddo in college ourselves, it is all the more near and dear to our hearts to provide a place for students who grew up in the church to continue to have fellowship and growth opportunities.

Along with the encouragement of those freshmen, I was also recently encouraged to receive this text from Rylee, a young woman returning to Michigan for her junior year:

"Hey Sarah! I know it's been a while and I've been very distant (which I apologize for) but I have been really struggling with my faith and I really don't know who to turn to and your persistence with me has meant a lot and I figured I would reach out."

My heart immediately went out to sweet Rylee, who had been involved with AIA her freshman year, but then was quite sporadic in her participation her sophomore year. I remembered her telling me freshman year how she loved her time in her church youth group throughout high school, and how she desired to continue in her faith during her college years. So, I picked up my phone and texted her and we met for coffee a few days later.

Through tears she told me about choices she had made to walk away from God her sophomore year and how now she lays in bed at night wondering about her purpose in life. As I listened to her, God brought to mind another scripture I had recently meditated on in Jeremiah: *"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."* Jeremiah 2:13.

We talked about how only God brings life and refreshment to our lives. We can try to find substitutes for Him, but those substitutes will always have holes in them that leave us feeling destitute. Whether that is alcohol, drugs and sex, or an orderly home and obedient kids, a life attempted to be lived void of the true Living Water will always have a sense of dissatisfaction.

Please be praying for Rylee as she turns her heart back toward Christ this semester and once again gets into community with other AIA students. Undoubtedly there are others like Rylee returning to the University of Michigan this fall who have experienced the ache of trying to live apart from God, especially during this pandemic season. Let's trust God together for their precious hearts!

Please pray...

...for Rylee, that she would see and experience the Lord as the fountain of living water that He truly is.

...for Roland, Mitchell, Lauren, Natalie, Jessica, Sam and Job, our returning student leaders. Pray also for those that we are challenging to a leadership role this year. Pray they would receive the Lord's blessing, be protected from the evil one, and have many opportunities to shepherd and lead others to Christ.

...for wisdom as we navigate what ministry looks like in the age of coronavirus. Pray for favor for us in the athletic department, that they would see us as a resource for the student athletes amidst the strict safety measures.

...for sanity around our home as all of our kids will be home distant learning this school year :) Pray for family devotionals we plan to incorporate into the school day.

...for a strong, Christ-centered marriage.

We hope you are well physically, mentally and spiritually during these trying times. God bless you in your partnership! Thank you!



Roland, Mitchell and Lauren...three of our amazing returning student leaders. We are excited for them and the other core leaders who will be equipped to reach out to their peers this year!