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September 2020 Newsletter

“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14

Beautiful fall greetings from our home to yours! Earlier this month I found myself quoting these famous words from the book of Esther as I gathered with our new group of AIA women’s core leaders for the first time. The isolation and loneliness that the overwhelming majority of students are feeling on campus coupled with the lack of opportunities for them to meet new people have caused an acute ache in student’s hearts to be in a community where they are known and loved. As our student leaders are reaching out and gathering their peers to be in small discipleship groups, we reflected together about how God has uniquely positioned and called them to lead at “such a time as this”. Their friends and teammates are hurting and lonely and these leaders have the great privilege and responsibility to walk alongside them with the hope that only Christ can offer. And now in the first few weeks of campus life we have been seeing God move mightily, drawing students to be involved in AIA in ways we haven’t witnessed in past years. Students from the freshmen class, who we had no clue how we were going to reach out to, have been jumping on our zoom calls and wanting to know how they can be a part of AIA. Furthermore, our student core leaders have been running into the “problem” of too many student-athletes coming to their discipleship groups, as the university only allows up to 10 people gathered at one time. It truly has been amazing to almost feel like we are sitting back and watching God do what only He can do amidst a pandemic, reminding us that He can use any situation to bring Himself glory. Thank you for how you are partnering with us in these unprecedented times. Let’s continue to trust God together to use them to glorify Himself here at the University of Michigan and beyond!

Faithful Leaders

Meet Aubrey and Lauren, two of our faithful student leaders. They, along with four other women and seven men, make up our team of AIA core leaders. These incredible student athletes have all committed to not only gather weekly with Colby and me to invest in their own spiritual development, but also to lead a discipleship group of their peers every week.

Both Aubrey and Lauren are new to our core leadership this year and very enthusiastic and eager to lead their groups. When I first asked her, Aubrey



was a bit hesitant to commit to being a core leader this year, as she has a very demanding schedule with her rowing team and studies in the business school. But after praying about the decision, she felt the Lord nudge her to remember what is most important. Yes, her academics and athletics are of great importance, but she knew she wanted to leave a spiritual legacy behind here at Michigan. She would make the time to invest in the Kingdom. Go God!



God Calling?

I'm not sure if you can tell what this picture is to the left, but it is an image of an old payphone. In the past few years we have used images such as these to foster sharing and communication with our students. There is a collection of images in an app called "Soularium" which oftentimes we will ask students to scroll through and choose one that best describes an aspect of their life.

A few weeks ago Lauren, one of our student leaders, asked her group which image depicts the current reality of their spiritual life, and one of her teammates picked this phone. She said something to the effect that she has felt God has been calling and calling her over the past year, but she keeps refusing to pick up the phone — and now she senses she should pick it up.

Praise God for hearts like hers who are responding to God's initiation in their lives!



In case you are wondering what school looks like around our home, here is a little peek at two of the six work stations we have set up around our house. All six Keefer kids are virtual learning for the foreseeable future :) I can honestly say it hasn't been as bad as I had imagined before it all began!

Please pray...

...for our core leaders — Jessica, Aubrey, Amber, Natalie, Lauren, Lauren, Roland, Mitchell, Sam, Job, Colton, Cole and Josh. Pray God gives them wisdom as they lead and that they would grow in their intimacy with the Lord.

...for the around 80 or so student athletes in discipleship groups this year. Pray God opens their hearts and minds to who Jesus is as we study the book of John this semester.

...for God's hand of protection to be on the university preventing a Covid outbreak here. Pray students would be flexible as discipleship groups go back and forth from in-person to virtual based on who is in quarantine.

...for freshmen who are feeling very isolated and alone.

...for God to move in the hearts of our kids to love and pursue Him!

Be encouraged to know that God is using your partnership to grow His Kingdom! Thank you for all you do! God Bless!



For those of you who have been partnering with us for a while, you may recognize this beautiful bride. Dee was one of our first students at the U of Dayton 20 years ago, and we have worked alongside her in AIA in Ohio and Michigan in the years since. I was beyond grateful to be able to witness her marriage vows in Colorado this month. What a joy it has been to journey with her through the years!