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October 2020 Newsletter

“Ask, and it will be given to you: seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” Matt. 7:7-8

Hello again! We hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the blessings God has put in your life. This is certainly a strange time we are living in, yet amidst all the craziness of 2020 I have been more keenly aware than ever of the gifts God has given me in my life. The time of quarantine and restriction has forced our family to slow down and settle into more refreshing rhythms that allow for not only more quality time with each other, but quality time with God and His creation around us. No longer are we frantically rushing off here and there and hurrying the kids up to get places, but now we linger around the table at meals and the kids are outside playing past dark with their friends. I truly feel we are in a better place as a family. Don’t get me wrong, there are definitely days that I want to shove everyone out of the house and enjoy some peace and quiet, but I am more often than not counting my blessings with a heart that is thankful for the people around me. And there are abundant blessings to be counted on campus, as well. We hope that your heart is as encouraged as ours to read just a few of the stories of God’s faithfulness in our ministry so far this year. May He receive all the glory for the work that only He could orchestrate here on campus! Thank you for being a part of it all.

Quick Answers

To help us get a feel for how much AIA participation we have from the various athletic teams at Michigan, we as staff have created a file listing each team and it’s corresponding athletes who are involved. If a team has no one involved in AIA, then we change the font color to red.

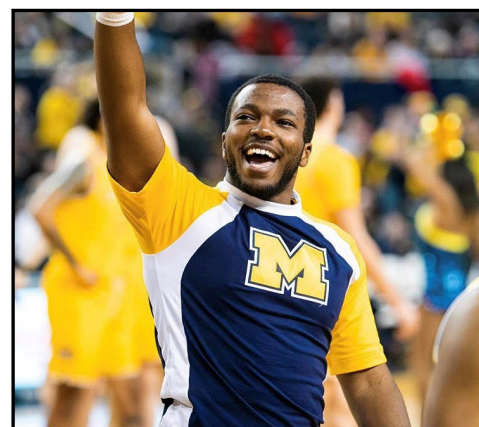
Praying for the “red” teams has been something we have been intentional about doing now for about a month. Well, all I can say is “ask and it will be given to you”, because the next week after we prayed for the “red” softball team, one of the softball freshmen reached out to us via Instagram wanting to know how she could be involved.

Then a few days later, a football freshmen got Colby’s number from one of his teammates and texted Colby. And then this week we heard from one of our Michigan Cru staff (our umbrella organization) that he had met a freshmen on the men’s golf team who wants to be a part of what we are doing! All “red team” athletes. What?? God is so good!

The sweet softball freshmen is already plugged into one of our student led discipleship groups and joined us in our monthly zoom gathering last week. It will be fun to see how God is going to plug the others in, too. Please pray along with us that these three freshmen, along with others God has brought us this year, will become disciples who make disciples here at Michigan. Go God!



Above: Zoom remains our primary medium in meeting up with students! Below: Josh, a senior on the cheer team, is one of our faithful AIA leaders. He has been doing a great job leading his growing group and is sensing a call to full-time ministry in his future.



Helping the Hurting

While there have been unexpected blessings that have come with the slower pace of the pandemic, there have obviously been a lot of hardships that have come, as well. For those in the college age demographic, those hardships have often come in the form of loneliness and despair. In fact, in a recent AIA staff training on mental health, we were informed that a staggering 25% of people ages 18-25 have seriously considered suicide in the past six months...wow.

There are a lot of hurting students here who have had their worlds turned upside down and who are being told to quarantine in their dorm rooms or apartments. If they are found to test positive for Covid or are exposed to someone who is, they are sent to an isolation dorm for two weeks without any in-person interaction. It's been hard on a lot of people.

One of our student leaders, Jess, pictured to the right, has been spending a lot of time with one of those hurting people. Becky (name changed) and Jess have hung out a lot this summer and have talked a lot about life. Earlier this month, Jess felt the Lord leading her to go over to Becky's apartment with the sole purpose of sharing the gospel, the good news of Jesus, with her. Little did Jess know, but after she left that night, sadly and unexpectedly Becky decided to take her own life.



Praise God that Becky was not successful in her attempt and was able to be transported to the ER to be cared for. Since that night, rather than be alone in her single apartment, Becky has been staying in Jess' house with her and her housemates and has been receiving counseling from a trained therapist. As she has processed with Jess about her suicide attempt, Becky shared that Jess and two other Christian friends of hers were the reason why she didn't fully go through with it. She went on to explain that she sees a love in them that she has never experienced before, and she didn't want that love to go away.

My heart just aches for Becky and others like her who are longing for something more in life. We feel like our students are in the thick of an enormous battle on campus being waged for people's souls. They carry in them the treasure of Christ and we pray that God uses them to open up that treasure to those around them. What a privilege we have as believers to take God's hope, peace and comfort into a hurting world.

Please pray...

...for the freshmen class at Michigan. God has provided some freshmen who have come to us, but we are not able to reach out to that class like we normally would. Pray God would draw their hearts to Himself and lead them to places where they can grow spiritually.

...for Josh as he considers full-time ministry. Pray God would lead Him in that decision making process.

...for Becky as she recovers. Pray God would bring physical, mental and spiritual healing.

...for God be an "ever present help in time of need" to the many hurting students on campus.

...for wisdom for us as a staff team as we think creatively about what ministry looks like in this pandemic.

...for our kids to have hearts that search out for God. Pray the seeds planted during our family devotional times would grow.

...for our first love to be Jesus.



I realized I never gave you a grade update on all the Keefer kids this year:

Mikayla ~ 11th

Jackson ~ 9th

Jaydon ~ 8th

Moriah ~ 6th

Mia ~ 4th

Jairus ~ 1st



Your partnership makes what we do on campus possible. We are eternally grateful for your generosity. God bless!