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November 2020 Newsletter

“We live by faith, not by sight.”

1 Corinthians 5:7

Happy Thanksgiving! We realize this letter will most likely arrive in your mailbox after Thanksgiving has past, and we hope that you were able to celebrate the holiday in meaningful and special ways in this strange year. If God has taught me anything in 2020, it has been to hold onto my plans very loosely, knowing they could be changed right up to the last minute :) Doing so has caused my illusion of control to dwindle, and I am seeing more clearly how God desires me to live by faith and not by sight. Living in greater dependence upon my faith and giving up trying to plan things out has actually brought a deep sense of freedom into my life. It's not up to me to make things “work” or to orchestrate situations for a good outcome. I can rest in the knowledge that there is One greater than me whose plan is in motion, and whose purposes are loving and kind. So even if everything that I have penciled into my planner gets erased (especially in this season we are in!) I can rest in the truth that God will work for my good and His glory in those situations. I am praying for you as I write this, that God will give you understanding of how He is growing and teaching you in 2020. We are thankful to be on this journey with you!

Connecting In

As you may know, the way we structure our ministry here is by empowering students to reach out to their peers. Each week Colby and I both lead a group of men and women who we call our “core” leaders. This faithful group of student athletes meets with us to receive training in God's Word and in ministry skills so that they in turn can lead their own weekly discipleship groups.

It's in those discipleship groups that many students are being introduced to and growing in their relationships with Christ. Often as AIA staff we don't get to hear about all the stories of God's faithfulness in people's lives through the discipleship groups, as our core leaders have a front seat to those encouraging stories.

However, this week at our zoom large group gathering, we were able to hear from Hannah, a freshman on the track team. She gave a short testimony of how connecting in with a discipleship group this semester has been *the* highlight of her freshman year so far. Being able to discuss scripture and life with the women in her group has not only helped her grow with Christ, but also has given her an opportunity to meet other students in a time when meeting students has been somewhat difficult.

We have been studying the book of John this year and Hannah also shared with the group a few of the lessons God has been teaching her there. In John 5, Jesus asks the man who has been paralyzed for decades if he wants to “get



Hannah & Simone, who is also in the track discipleship group

well”. Hannah shared how Jesus' question propelled her to think about sin areas in her life and if she truly wants to find healing in them. Praise God for using His Word to challenge students and for the courage of students like Hannah who are willing to share about His work in them!

Operation Christmas Child

One of the year's highlights for our family and our students has always been our participation in Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse collecting shoeboxes full of gifts and supplies for under-resourced kids around the world. Every year we have a HUGE wrapping party where tons of students come to fill and wrap their boxes, as well as kick off the Christmas season with music and Christmas goodies.

Well, Covid changed our wrapping party plans this year and we had to think creatively about how we were going to get the job done! Our strategy changed to distributing empty boxes to students and then driving around to pick up completed boxes...and praise God it worked!



Amidst a global pandemic and strict social distancing guidelines established by the university, the Michigan student athletes packed 159 shoeboxes full of gifts! Colby and I were beyond encouraged as we went from student house to student house collecting the boxes. The students were beaming as they placed their boxes in the back of our van...it truly is more blessed to give than receive!

Another hugely encouraging way this project impacts our AIA ministry at Michigan is the way new students are brought in to participate. Olivia, pictured to the left, sent a text out to her swim team to ask about who might want to help her pack boxes, and she received an answer back from Victoria, an upperclassman who has never attended an AIA event. Long story short, Olivia and Victoria were able to have a great conversation about God as they packed, and Victoria joined us on our monthly zoom call this week. Go God!

Please pray...

...for our core student leaders as they faithfully lead their discipleship groups each week — Olivia, Lauren, Lauren, Aubrey, Jessica, Natalie, Amber, Cole, Colton, Josh, Job, Roland, Mitchel and Sam.

...for Hannah and the other roughly 100 other student athletes who are currently in discipleship groups. Pray their love for God would increase and that they would become disciple who make disciples.

...for Natalie, one of our core leaders who has been experiencing extreme health issues. Pray for wisdom for doctors as they attempt to diagnose her symptoms, and for complete healing in her body.

...for Victoria, that she would continue her involvement in AIA, and that she would clearly hear the gospel and respond in faith.

...for our family to love each other well and experience Christ in our home.



During this season of Thanksgiving, we are especially mindful of YOU! Thank you for all you do to support the ministry here at UM!