



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

GIVE.CRU.ORG/0507765

September 2024 Newsletter

“For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

Happy beautiful fall! I am writing this with my windows open and the fresh fall seventy degree air blowing across my keyboard. The weather has been warm and gorgeous, the autumn colors are beginning to pop, and my soul feels so very alive! I absolutely love this time of year, not only because of the weather, but September marks a new beginning in the rhythm of our lives and ministry — new academic years and sports seasons for our kids, fresh faces showing up on campus, new and creative ways to do ministry and reach out to students. I like to think of September as a blank slate, a new season with a canvas that God is beginning to take His artist’s brush and paint...and we are so grateful that you are on this journey with us! Bringing the love and truth of Christ to these college students feels more and more imperative in the past few years. This is a generation experiencing the highest levels of loneliness, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideations than any other in history. Let’s continue to band together, trusting God to show Himself merciful, gracious and powerful in these young lives!



Here are pictures that capture our first monthly large group gatherings at Eastern Michigan & U of Michigan. I wish you could have been there to experience the energy in those rooms as students poured in! Many returners brought new teammates with them and the conversations were lively. We look forward to seeing how God will use the momentum that was started!

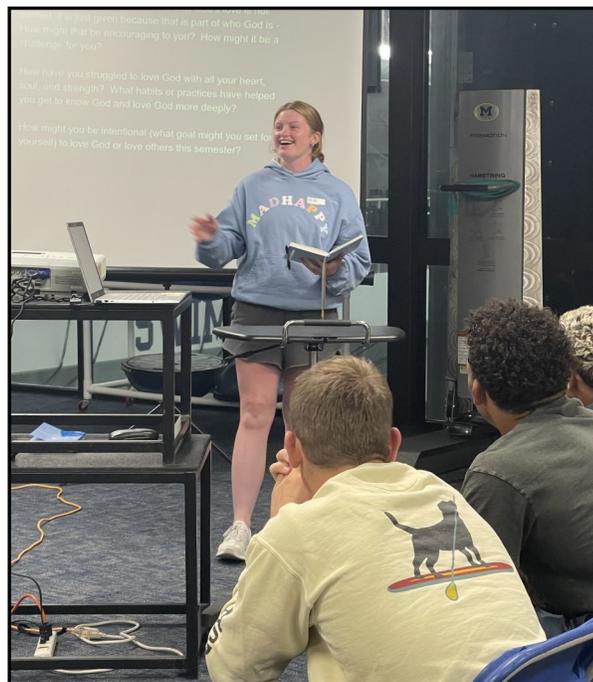
## Discipleship Groups

We are hoping the momentum from the first monthly gatherings will propel students to get involved in weekly discipleship groups (d groups) led by their peers!

To the right is Erin, a senior on Michigan's lacrosse team, sharing about how integral d groups have been in her college faith journey. She first joined one her sophomore year, after feeling a bit lost spiritually when she first arrived at Michigan. We challenged her to lead a group her junior year, and she would tell you that taking that step of faith has brought more growth in her relationship with God than any other time in her life!

D groups on both campuses kicked off about three weeks ago at UM and EMU and I can honestly say that I have never, in all my years of ministry, seen so many students coming out to weekly groups!

I heard someone say recently that the church is the last bastion for true in-person fellowship...and I think that is what we are seeing! Students are HUNGRY for community. They want to be KNOWN. They want ACCEPTANCE. They want to know there is MORE TO LIFE than what they can see. And they are finding all of that in discipleship groups.



Here are just a few of the d group highlights so far this year. I work primarily with the Michigan women leaders, so those are the highlights you get to read in this letter :) Great things are happening with the men and at EMU, too!

- ◆ Erin had three new people come to her group this week (making the total number in her group to 17 teammates!). One was a freshman who is Jewish, who wants to plug into community. She said she started reading Torah again after they met (let's pray she finds Jesus, her promised Messiah!). Another newcomer was a sophomore whom Erin was inviting to come all last year. This girl has some spiritual background and was nervous about joining a group, but she came and absolutely loved it! And the third new person is one of Erin's best friends on the team who has been struggling with life lately and realized she needed something more. Praise God for these three young women who are beginning to seek God!
- ◆ Avery, a senior leader on the soccer team, had 13 of her teammates show up to her group this week. This is double the amount of teammates she had come last year and it is brought a ton of encouragement to Avery's heart, as she has been praying for her team for three years.
- ◆ Jady, a sophomore on the cross country team, has seen smaller numbers of her teammates in attendance, yet the conversations have been rich. Tissue boxes have been passed around as girls have shared vulnerably and openly with each other about their lives. Two of her housemates who are "not very religious" came and loved it..and are coming back next week!



Please pray...

...for our student leaders who are faithfully leading their peers in weekly discipleship groups. There are 12 students leading at Michigan and 20 at Eastern! Pray protection in their faith and that God would expand their influence.

...for students to continue to be hungry for community. Pray many would hear the gospel and respond in faith.

...for God to bless the study of His Word as we look at sections from the Gospel of John this fall.

...for wisdom and endurance for us as we lead on two campuses!

Above: We dropped our son Jackson off at Kalamazoo College for his freshmen year this month. Nothing like your kid being in college to remind you of the importance of campus ministry!

Above left: Some faces from the Michigan AIA kick off party

*Your partnership is what allows us the privilege to minister to these students! Thank you & God bless!*