

CONNECTION

chi alpha

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 6 FALL 2012



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FOOTBALL FEEDING FRENZY

BY STEPHANIE PETERSON

As God would have it, a Winona State football player was the first student to walk unto the building called “The Edge,” which is home to Winona State Chi Alpha. A new Christian, Chris had an excitement and passion to win the lost. Largely because of him and his passion for God and people, we ended up starting Chi Alpha a year earlier than scheduled. Throughout the first year, God gave both he and I a big heart for the football team. By the following summer, we had talked about many ideas to reach the team.

One Sunday morning in early August, I was walking around the campus praying because we have church on Sunday night at The Edge. I ran into two new football players and started talking with them. They already knew who Chris was; so I went on to tell them about Chi Alpha. I told them about The Edge Student Center, the coffee bar at The Edge that is open for students all week, and invited them to the evening church service and Thursday night Chi Alpha. They were kind and said they might show up sometime. I walked away thinking they would never come. It almost took me by surprise, as I am a visionary and a very positive person. Suddenly, I realized we had to quit talking about reaching the football team and start doing it. How do we do that? Show them love. How do we show the team love? Feed them!

I whipped out my cell phone, called Chris and said: I just met two football players and invited them to the Edge, but I think we need to get them in there somehow before they will actually walk in on their own. How about you see if any of the players would like to come over for pizza

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CHI ALPHA

GOALS FOR 2015

1.

500 Chi Alpha Groups

2.

1,100 Chi Alpha Staff

3.

50,000 Chi Alpha Students



CHI ALPHA CONNECTION

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GUEST EDITORIAL

BY CURTIS COLE

The Apostle Paul said, "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some," (1 Corinthians 9:22 ESV). Today, as in Paul's day, reaching out to various people groups remains a crucial responsibility of the Church. The university campus is packed with multiple subcultures that require unique approaches to ministry. Impacting the student athlete represents a challenging opportunity.

In 2010, more than 490,000 students participated in NCAA and NAIA intercollegiate athletics, totaling nearly eight percent of the average four year campus enrollment. Athletes commit an average of twenty hours a week to their sport. Some receive the royal treatment that includes preferred housing, special cafeterias, assigned tutors, adoring crowds and generous scholarships. Others practice on their own, compete in obscurity and receive no remuneration. And yet, all of them seek excellence in their craft and desire a place in the winner's circle.

Chi Alpha believes each student athlete also deserves a Gospel witness. They need to be introduced to "...the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 3:14 ESV). Several Chi Alpha staff serve as team chaplains and receive privileged access to practices and meetings. They walk the sidelines on game days, lead team prayers, conduct team chapels, host pre-game meals and offer athlete Bible studies throughout the week. For some athletes and coaches, this is the only in season spiritual resource they avail themselves to.

During my years as a local campus missionary, I served our school's football program as the team chaplain for ten consecutive seasons. Hanging out at practice, leading team prayers, and conducting chapels on game day opened up many doors to minister to the hearts and lives of players and coaches alike. Players routinely requested prayer for protection from injury, and coaches asked for prayer regarding self-control. Each week, I opened up the Bible at chapel and encouraged the team with stories of Old Testament military battles, challenged them to develop character like King David or invited them to consider the ultimate prize in life that comes by following Jesus.

This issue's feature story highlights the genesis of Chi Alpha's outreach to the Winona State University football team. It began with a pizza feed and has grown into a full-fledged Winona State Football Ministry Team. Led by campus missionary Stephanie Peterson, the local Chi Alpha chapter has adopted a ministry of loving and serving. Along the way, players, coaches and their families have discovered the power of Christian community and come to faith in Christ.

In Chi Alpha, we continue to follow the Apostle Paul's example by striving to become all things to all the people groups of the university so we might reach the lost.

Curtis Cole serves as the Administrative/Operations Director of Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, USA. From 1991-2004, he and his wife, Delyn, pioneered and led Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship at the University of Montana-Western in Dillon, Montana.

FOOTBALL FEEDING FRENZY

after church tonight. Just invite them and let me know how many you can get to come over.

He loved the idea, saying there was a team meeting in a half-hour, and he would ask the guys then. I hoped he could get maybe 20 guys to come to our 100-year-old church building across from campus.

Imagine my surprise and no small amount of panic when Chris called me back in less than an hour and said, “Steph, the entire Winona State Football Team and the Coaching Staff are coming to The Edge for pizza tonight.” I was both thrilled and terrified that about 120 football players plus their coaches would come. I got on the phone and frantically called pizza places and everyone I could think of to see if they would chip in for a pizza or two. Eight hours later, I experienced the first of what has now been four years of WSU Football Team Pizza Feeds. There are not words to describe the emotions I have when I see these massive young men devour pizza while visiting with The Edge staff and WSU Chi Alpha students.

Since then, three WSU Coaches have made The Edge their church home for their families and four others have attended various services or functions. Some of the players have made The Edge their church and attend Chi Alpha, and a few have led and helped with men’s small groups.

Last year when I called Coach Blazek and asked if we could do it for the third year, he said, “Steph, The Edge Pizza Feed is no longer an ‘if.’ It is a part of our Winona State Football Program.”

This year, God called me to step it up a notch when it came to the part of the evening where I invited the guys to church and Chi Alpha. To be honest, I was pretty lame telling the team about our worship services the first three years, very casually and quickly throwing out the invite to those events. This year the Lord said, “You tell those boys that this place can be their home and haven from the storm, just like it is for nearly 200 other students at WSU.” So this year, with no small amount of fear and trepidation, I challenged the guys not to neglect their spiritual life and personal growth while they were in college for these four years. I told them nothing would fill the place inside that can only be filled by God if they really wanted to know why and what they are here for. A creating thing can only know its purpose of what it was created for by asking the One who created it.

You could have heard a pin drop. They were listening like they never had listened before in previous years. I wasn’t sure if that was a good thing or not. I was worried what the coaches and players would think about being too forward. But the players totally surprised me and presented me with a game helmet signed by all the starters,

which is something they only do about three times a year. Head Coach Sawyer and Coach Blazek thanked me for being more direct about what the guys could receive at The Edge. They told me they were glad I told the guys clearly what we had to offer, and they appreciated it. Player after player genuinely told me they were going to check out Chi Alpha and The Edge this year.

When God called us to start a church and Chi Alpha at WSU, I never would have thought it involved ministering to the football team. I was scared to death the first year to step out and do this, but when God speaks, we must answer. When He provides us with the tools and opportunity, we need to step out and do it. Because of this event, we are now starting another new ministry team in Chi Alpha. “The Winona State Football Ministry Team” will start this fall and be led by a student who fully devoted her life to the Lord a year ago. She plans to lead a team that bakes cookies and feeds the team throughout the year. They even have a shirt idea: the front will say, “WSU Football Mom” and the back will say, “Because these boys need to eat!”



Steph Peterson is the Chi Alpha Campus Pastor at Winona State University and the College Pastor at The Edge Church, where her husband Chuck is the Lead Pastor. They have three children: Reid, 17; Ellie, 11; and Calvin, 8.

TIME OUT FOR JESUS

BY BOB ELFERS

KEY POINTS:

Care for each person you minister to by taking the time to stop, give eye contact and listen.

Know your mission field, and let those in your mission get to know you. Be available for them, even if it’s inconvenient for you.

God has ways of opening doors, so be ready when He does!

Ask the athletes and coaches you meet with about their lives and their families, and follow up with them later about that subject. This shows them you care.

Let the coaches you are doing pre-game chapel for be involved in its planning.

Jesus’ ministry was often in the marketplace, so don’t back off sharing and praying in places where it might be strange or frowned upon. It will be worth it.

Start a Bible study for your coaches and another one for your athletes, too.

If Jesus opens up the door to work with athletes, then let Jesus use you. You will be amazed at what happens.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHAMPIONSHIP



**SHE WANTED SOMETHING
MORE TO LIVE FOR**



THE FIRST TIME I MET ALI*,

I was just about to graduate high school. I was figuring out where I was going to college and had to choose between two scholarship offers: one to play basketball in Wyoming, and the other to play volleyball in Montana. Ali was from Montana and played volleyball, too. She even played the same position I did. We met, played together with the team, and spent the night with her and her roommate in the freshmen dorms that night. I asked God where He wanted me to go to college, and I didn't anticipate what His plans for Ali and I would be.



I ended up taking the scholarship in Montana, and Ali and I weren't exactly instant friends. In fact, we never hung out together outside of volleyball practice and functions. She went to parties and I went to Chi Alpha. I never thought a girl like her would ever be interested in being close friends with me. Besides, she had plenty of popular friends to spend time with.

Just before my junior and her senior year of college, that all changed. Ali and I were working together on a project for a girls' volleyball camp when she opened up to me. I sat in amazement and sorrow as she told me about how her brother passed away in high school, and she still held onto all the guilt, anger and grief. She also talked about how she was tired of the parties and the guys. She wanted something more to live for and asked if she could try coming to church with me. This was the moment I saw prayers answered. God really could change hearts, even if it seemed impossible for me to do anything.

GOD REALLY COULD CHANGE HEARTS, EVEN IF IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO DO ANYTHING.

During her first time at church, she cried from the first worship song to the final "Amen". It was the "Amen" that brought her into the Kingdom of God when she gave her heart to the Lord. Ali asked to pray with me again later and wanted me to show her how to read her Bible. I will never forget that Sunday. It not only marked the first day of volleyball season, but also the first day of freedom for Ali.

Teammates, coaches and fans noticed something different about her. The joy and freedom she found that day was evident in her eyes and her smile. As her teammate and friend, I was privileged to watch her rise to the top as one of the best middle hitters in the NAIA.

here's an idea for reaching ATHLETES

BY OUIDA BRADFORD

We all know the sports that get a lot of buzz on most of our campuses. They likely are football, basketball and baseball, and you probably know them in that order. These teams get more attention and generally have more ministries reaching out to them. Let's not forget about men's and women's soccer teams, the field hockey team or any of the other countless teams who are deeply committed but have small fan bases. They are incredible opportunities for outreach and ministry.

Have your Chi Alpha large group or small groups adopt one or several of these teams. Become their "super fans" by regularly showing up to their games or matches. Believe me, you'll get noticed. Over time, you'll have a great opportunity to build relationships, connect with the athletes and connect them to Christ, too. Plus your students will have a blast spending time together. It's a win for everybody.

Today, Ali is an accountant and shares Jesus with her co-workers. She also recently married, and I was blessed to attend the wedding as her matron of honor. Ali and her husband are now building a family on Jesus as their Rock. Praise the Lord!

*Not her real name



Haylee Petrusha, a graduate of Carroll College, is a CMIT at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho. She is passionate about reaching students for Christ. Haylee often uses horses to minister to the women she has the pleasure of investing in. God has shown her his grace, power, and joy through relating to horses and she loves to share it with others! Haylee is a new wife of Nick Petrusha, who is also a CMIT at Idaho State in Pocatello. Together, they hope to become campus pastors and reach out to the campus for Christ for a lifetime.

JUST+HOPE CAMPAIGN



“We all seem to forget that there are people in need and help. They are in need every single day.”

Chi Alpha alumna Brittney Moffatt, a track and field athlete and recent graduate of St. Cloud State University, decided to lace up her shoes and run for a good cause this summer. Brittney participated in the Venture Expeditions Run Free event to raise money to fight human trafficking, oppression and injustice.

Brittney met Venture Expeditions Executive Director Paul Hurckman at the annual SALT Conference in Sioux Falls, N.D. last January. Paul shared the story of Brian Elliott’s run across Minnesota summer 2011. Inspired and challenged, Brittney kept in contact with Paul and decided the Run Free event was something she wanted to do.

“I think one of the biggest things that Ventures Expeditions does that’s a lot different from other organizations is they sacrifice

physically,” she says. “I mean, we’re not talking about a 5K. We’re running almost a marathon every day.”

From June 24 to July 5, Brittney, Venture Expeditions Co-Founder Aaron Smith and two others ran 220 miles across Minnesota, averaging 20 miles a day. Each runner personally raised at least \$1,000. The money raised from the event benefited the Just+Hope Campaign, International Justice Mission and Eden Ministry. According to the Venture Expeditions website, the goal of the campaign is to see the body of Christ work together to fight issues of poverty, human trafficking, the use of child soldiers and other forms of oppression.

“The Just+Hope Campaign is basically what we are raising money for,” Aaron says. “It addresses oppression and injustice by

“It’s not just a day, a week or a month that they are suffering. It’s their life. It’s what they live. They are suffering and just need a helping hand.”

connecting a local church in the U.S. with churches overseas to provide resources to address these issues in their communities.”

During the event, the team connected with local churches and communities along the route, educating them about the realities of injustice and shared steps on how everyone can bring hope to end the injustice. Two days into the run, a local farmer offered the runners water, heard about the event and wrote a \$150 check to help.

“I think it’s really easy to get wrapped up in day-to-day life,” Brittney says. “We all seem to forget that there are people in need and help. They are in need every single day. It’s not just a

day, a week or a month that they are suffering. It’s their life. It’s what they live. They are suffering and just need a helping hand.”

She encourages people to consider what they can do individually to help these causes. “I think that everyone is able to help in some way or another,” she says. “For me, it’s running. I don’t really have a lot of finances as a recent college grad. I don’t really have the ability to travel around the world. I don’t really have a lot of experience in talking in front of big crowds but I can run. So that’s what I can do. So I would just like to challenge people to find what they can do personally to help.”

Jennifer Taylor, a graduate of Evangel University, is a freelance writer/editor in Springfield, Missouri. She volunteers with children’s and women’s ministries.

CAMPUS NEWS



NEW RESIDENCE HALL MORE LIKE A HOTEL

NIU’s newest dorm in 44 years hardly be called a dorm with its \$6,500 per semester cost that includes a fitness center, outdoor basketball and sand volleyball courts, fireside lounge, wireless gaming area and even a beanbag area.

<http://www.suntimes.com>
SEARCH: niu new residence hall



MORE CHRISTIAN COLLEGES SUE OVER CONTRACEPTIVE MANDATE

Grace College and Seminary in Indiana and Biola University in California are suing the Obama Administration because of its mandate requiring faith-based companies to provide insurance for contraception and abortion-introducing drugs to its employees.

<http://www.christianpost.com>
SEARCH: contraceptive mandate for colleges



UNC FOOTBALL SCANDAL INVOLVES ACADEMIC FRAUD

The University of North Carolina’s football program has been involved in an academic fraud scandal that includes student athletes, mostly football players, who were enrolled in classes where unauthorized grade changes, forged faculty signatures, and questionable class time were permitted.

<http://www.thecollegefix.com>
SEARCH: unc football scandal



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