

## Blazing a New Trail by Ed Gersch

*“Against the grain should be a way of life  
What’s worth the prize is always worth the fight  
Every second counts ‘cause there’s no second try  
So live like you’ll never live it twice  
Don’t take the free ride in your own life”*  
from “If Today Was Your Last Day”—by Nickelback

I am sure most of you may have never heard of the rock group called Nickelback; I didn’t either until I heard the song, “If Today Was Your Last Day” on the radio. The lyrics of the entire song are a reminder or question about how we should be living our lives.

A couple of years ago I had to answer a very important question: “Are you looking to be successful, or do you desire to do something significant?” I had to decide whether or not being a trucking owner/operator would really allow me to do something significant with my life or was God calling me to something else? For me the answer was to sell my business and join my wife on the staff of Athletes in Action.



**Emcee, Brent Jones (former NFL athlete) interviewing Indianapolis Colts players at the 2012 Super Bowl Breakfast, which is one of AIA’s 4 Annual Events**

as we began to pray about and investigate my possibility of joining staff, I saw something here that reminded me of my time in the Marines. I saw the same “esprit de corps” in this organization that I saw in the Marines.

Why Athletes in Action? It was not just because Debbie had been on the staff of this ministry for so long. It is because

I saw dedication to the vision of *seeing a Christ follower on every team, in every sport, in every nation* lived out every day in everyone from the president on down. I wanted to be part of a team whose desire was to be the best at what they do: leading people to a life-changing relationship with Christ.

Although AIA is very good at reaching people for Christ, for a very long time, due to a lack of man-power, the ministry has been lacking the ability to adequately follow up with people who may have an interest in being involved with the ministry because of what they experienced at an AIA event.



**CBS Sports Analyst, Clark Kellogg was one of two recipients of the Hall of Faith Award at this year’s AIA Night of Champions., another AIA annual event. The other two annual events we do are the All Star Breakfast and the Final Four Breakfast.**

So, when I reported to the Ministry Advancement Department in February of this year, I was given the responsibility of developing a new role, which is overseeing AIA’s Game Changer partnership. My role is to follow up with people who attended one of the four major events we host annually, who would like more information about our ministry, or supporting Athletes in Action. I also follow up with people who have sponsored someone who participated on an AIA Summer Opportunity,

At times, my role can be challenging because of the great amount of record keeping that is required in order to make sure follow-up is com-



**Ten out of fourteen of these youth soccer players indicated a decision to place their faith in Christ.**

## Prayer Needs & Praises

### Praises:

- Forty people began a new relationship with Christ after hearing the Gospel at our challenge course this summer
- Two X-Project Interns are planning to join staff with AIA in the near future.
- One X-Project Intern has returned to work at our Sports Complex this fall

### Please pray for our ministry with these upcoming events at our challenge course:

**Sept. 21:** St Brigid Catholic School 8th grade on Low & High Course

**Sept. 24-27:** Incarnation Catholic School 7th grade on High Course

**Sept. 29:** Univ. of Dayton ROTC on High Course

**Oct. 4:** St Christopher Catholic School 7th grade on Low Course & Power Pole

**Oct. 5:** St Christopher Catholic School 8th grade on Low & High Course

**Oct. 12:** Ohio Dominican Univ. Men's Basketball on High Course

**Oct. 13:** Grace Evangelical Lutheran Youth on Low Course

### Other Prayer Requests:

- For Ed's phone calling to be productive...that he will actually be able to talk to people and that God will open the hearts of those people to desire to be involved in our ministry.
- Wisdom for us as we are still seeking the Lord's direction in regards to adopting or becoming foster parents.

pleted in a timely manner, and to be able to provide necessary reports about what has been accomplished. However, I am grateful to be fulfilling a role that is greatly needed to make sure that the ministry can continue to build spiritual movements all over the world.

Athletes in Action does not want to become a monument to things that have been done. We want to continue building spiritual movements by reaching towards these strategic objectives:

- ❖ *Open AIA movements on 100 more college campuses (would like 20 of those new movements to be at historically black colleges)*
- ❖ *Launch AIA in 20 new countries by 2020 (ten by the end of 2013)*
- ❖ *Expand our ability to train and equip athletes for ministry here at our World Training and Resource Center in Xenia, Ohio.*

Our Game Changer partnership is an important part of providing the resources that help make reaching these objectives possible.

I want you to know that I am honored and humbled by your support of Debbie and I. You are a huge part of Athletes in Action being able to touch more lives! Because of your partnership with us, I am blazing a new trail within AIA that has been greatly needed. Thank You!

### *From The Heart (by Debbie)*

*Have I mentioned how proud I am of my husband? He has adjusted so well to life in full-time ministry. He is a very hard worker and has made over 550 phone calls in the past five months. On top of that, he did a great job of building relationships with the X-Project Interns whom we mentored this summer.*

*I feel so blessed to be able to serve together in this ministry with Ed. And I feel doubly blessed by all the partners who come alongside us to help make this ministry possible.*

*Thank you so much for the sacrifices you make to partner with us in advancing God's Kingdom! We hope you have a fantastic fall!*