

April – June Ministry Highlights



Ohio Galaxies Soccer Club U-17 Teams



Over a three week period in April, we were able to host all five of the Ohio Galaxies Soccer Club U-17 teams on our high course. The 44 boys and 17 girls from these teams had a great time of bonding and building stronger team chemistry through their time on our course.

During the debrief times for the boy's teams, one of our staff members, Luke, shared his testimony with the athletes and really challenged them to avoid the trap of comparison that many men struggle with. It was cool to see Luke speaking to them and exhorting them man-to-man.

We also had the opportunity for one of our staff to share her testimony with the women.

In May and June, we hosted several of our AIA summer teams on the challenge course. Each team is preparing to minister to many people through their sport either here in the States or overseas.

One highlight for me was watching our AIA Xenia Scouts Baseball team conquer the wall. In this activity, the entire team must assist one another getting over a 12 foot wall. Only, the way the activity is completed requires that when they get to the last person, no one on the ground can help with lifting them. So they have to figure out how to get the last person up and over the wall. This team decided to use the "human ladder" system, where the next to the last person was hanging down from the wall for the last person to climb over him.

After the final two people got up on the wall, the whole team cheered one of the most loud and manly cheers I've heard in awhile. After the activity, we had a great discussion about how they all came together to conquer this challenge and how that same unity can help them conquer walls they may face this summer & in real life.



Praises

- ❖ We have had excellent ministry with multiple teams and groups on the challenge course over the past few months.
- ❖ Our adoption process is moving forward without set-backs
- ❖ Hannah is beautiful, easy-going, sleeps well, is healthy and continues to grow & develop! We feel so blessed by the addition of this sweetheart in our family!

Prayer Requests

- ❖ God to move in the hearts of the youth who attend the AIA/Cru Inner City and Cru High School Ultimate Training Camps (June 21-27 & June 28-July 4)
- ❖ Quality ministry with our summer challenge course groups as well as other groups using our Sports Complex and Retreat Center
- ❖ God's favor for Brandon, who is currently raising support to join our staff part time to take over many of Debbie's responsibilities. Pray God will quickly provide his partners.
- ❖ Safe travel, refreshing time and renewed vision as we attend our bi-annual Cru Staff Conference in Colorado July 12-21. (No bike accidents this year! ☺)
- ❖ For wisdom for us as we continue growing as parents



Some friends gave us a bike trailer. We figured out a way to secure Hannah's car seat in the trailer. She enjoys going on rides with us on the bike trail.

Gersch Adoption Update

Ed and I continue to be elated as Hannah's parents. She is such a great baby! We can hardly believe she turned four months old this week. She eats well, has been sleeping through the night for over a month and loves to smile and play. We feel like God really blessed us with a good-natured and healthy girl. We are both enjoying and adjusting well to parenthood.

A couple weeks ago, the birth parents signed papers to terminate their rights. This permanent surrender order became official this week. So, now the parents have fourteen days to file an appeal. We don't think they will appeal, because they have continued to reconfirm that they are happy for us to be Hannah's parents. We have had several visits with them over the past few months, which is helpful for them in their grieving process.

After we return from Colorado, we will be able to sign the adoptive placement papers with our agency, which will change our title from being foster parents to being adoptive parents. The final step in the process will be for the adoption to be finalized with the state of Ohio, which will take place after August 26 (the date that completes the mandatory 6 month waiting period).

We look forward to being able to post photos of her after the adoption becomes finalized. Thanks for all your prayers and support of us in this process!

From The Heart (by Debbie)

One of my biggest challenges in adjusting to being a mom has been trying to balance motherhood with continuing to serve at our challenge course. I still enjoy facilitating for groups who use our course. But, I also see raising Hannah as my ministry. So, whenever I have to leave Hannah to work at the course, I feel torn, because both roles are enjoyable to me and important.

We have been blessed with several other AIA staff moms or moms from our church who have graciously offered to watch Hannah when I have to work. This has been so helpful and makes it easier for me to leave her because I know she is in good hands. However, I miss being with her. I know that God is not finished using me at the course, so I am confident that He will continue to give me the wisdom and strength to serve at the course as well at home with Hannah!

Ed and I want you to know how much we appreciate your partnership with us in this journey. God is certainly at work in our lives and in the lives of others around and through us. Thank you for your investment in God's work!