

December 7, 2022

Dear friends!

My update letters typically start with how Carmen and I are doing and how life is going. However, so much is happening with the ministry that I can't help but start with that this go-a-around! Carmen and I will have to wait. :)

There has been so much growth over the last couple of months with Red River Youth for Christ. We have added a new full-time employee (Deb) and a new part-time employee (Tim). They have both been a blessing to get to work alongside, but even more to get to know them and their stories. This team of missionaries is starting to feel like family, and I can't wait to see what God does next.

We had our annual "Concert for a Cause" last week, and it was such a great night. We shared a testimony from one of the youth and gave an update on the ministry we are doing in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Jonathan Traylor gave an awesome concert, and we were blessed with donations and people interested in volunteering with us. It was a great night!

I have been going to lunch at Liberty Middle School on Thursdays and Fridays. It has been so fun building relationships with the staff and kids (especially Carmen's students, ha). I proudly wear some of my Eagles apparel, and the kids always give me a hard time because they're Vikings fans. We will jab each other back and forth about sports (Carmen told all of her kids to give me a hard time when the Eagles lost to the Commanders). From time to time, some kids will even ask me about inviting them to church. No kid has come so far, but it is so encouraging to hear kids even ask that question while they're eating lunch with their friends.

There is a praise/prayer request around Liberty. We were asked to come in during the 6th period every day to start a Check and Connect program. It was originally going to be two days a week after school, however, we have been blessed with this opportunity! We have yet to start the Check and Connect program because Liberty has a shortage of teachers, and the administration is having to cover classes because there is also a shortage of substitute teachers. Please pray that God provides Liberty with teachers so we can start this program. They have told us numerous kids are waiting to begin and they just need the staff around them to be able to start the program!

The alternative school in Fargo, Dakota, is definitely a more comfortable place for me. I am able to play basketball twice a week with the kids, as well as help our team feed them lunch one of those days. While our goal is to reach kids ages 11-19, my overall mission is to show the love of God to whomever I come in contact with. I have seen a glimpse of that with the SRO at Dakota. He has shared personal

hurt/things that have begun to affect his family. He has even shared some frustrations with me and thanked me for listening when most people won't. Our weekly conversations have blossomed from something more than "how are you" to real-life conversations.

I have seen the kids at the detention center grow so much over the last few months. I have recently started a bible study with the secure boys' pods. The desire for answers and knowledge has really taken me by surprise. The first couple of times, we met for 10-15 minutes and then played games until it was time for me to leave. However, the desire to learn has outweighed the desire to play games! We spent 45 minutes talking about sins and how our sins separate us from God. There is even a Muslim boy who joins, and he asks



Left to Right Front Row - Myself, Deb, Danielle
Back Row - Tim, Greg, Paige, Sue, & Kim

most of the questions. He is really perplexed by the Christian culture and how it differs from his religion.

I told you we'd come later, and here we are! Carmen and I have been greeted with ice and snow far earlier than we ever had before, but it hasn't slowed us down at all! We traveled to my parents in Virginia for Thanksgiving. It was such a great time catching up with them and enjoying a certain football game that ended 31-30 (Spurs-up) ;) We will be traveling to South Carolina for Christmas for about ten days, and I'm looking forward to seeing Carmen's family and weather above-freezing for a little while! Carmen loves her job, but more importantly, her co-workers. She has begun talking about them the same way she would talk about her Chapin family. That is such an answered prayer for her to have found such an awesome school!



Here are some answered prayers where we have seen God move already:

- Carmen finding such a great job.
- Carmen and I are almost celebrating six months of marriage.
- The community we have been able to build.
- Growth in learning to lean on each other while being so far away from old friends and family.

Here are a few things we could use prayer for:

- Due to some new guidelines in our townhome agreement, we are praying about whether to find a new place or stay in the home we're in.
- Continued prayer for us to lean on each other and grow as a married couple.
- Navigating the winter months that are ahead of us.
- Safe travels to and from South Carolina!

With the New Year right around the corner, many of us take the time to reflect on previous years. Take a moment to think about where you are today. Would you be where you are at today without positive influences in your life? Many of us can attribute those positive changes to people who cared about us while we were young or in later years. Your prayers and support allow us to be those positive influences for today's teens. Thank you for making this possible!

As we enter the Christmas Season, would you please consider supporting Red River Youth for Christ? Since we are a non-profit, we rely on partners like you to fund this ministry. Please prayerfully consider making a financial year-end gift and investing in the lives of teens. Gifts can be mailed in the enclosed envelope, or you can give online by going to www.redriveryfc.com and clicking on the "Give to YFC" link at the top of the page. All donations are tax-deductible, and a receipt will be sent if you include your mailing address.

I am grateful for your prayers and support. On behalf of everyone here at Red River Youth for Christ and the students we work with, thank you!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

