



Your ministry update from Ed & Debbie Gersch  
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Wow! This year is zipping by. I don't know about you, but I can't believe it is already April. We are excited to share with you some highlights of what has happened in our ministry over the past couple of months.

In February, Ed and I had the opportunity to drive a van full of supplies to New Orleans for our annual Super Bowl Breakfast. While we were in New Orleans, we both assisted with various behind-the-scenes roles to help with the Super Bowl Breakfast and a weekend event that was run by our Ministry Advancement department, in which Ed serves.

A highlight for me (Debbie) was seeing how God provided over 50 volunteers to assist with the Breakfast. As you may remember, even a week before the event, I was very concerned, because I only had 15 volunteers signed up. But, in the end, God provided the people we needed and they all did a fantastic job to help create a welcoming environment for the Breakfast.



At the Breakfast, Dallas Cowboy's tight end, Jason Witten, was awarded the Bart Starr Award

in front of a crowd of over 1400 people. He showed tremendous humility and gratefulness in his acceptance speech and interview conducted by emcee, Brent Jones (former NFL tight-end). During his interview, he even fought back tears as he responded to a question Brent asked about his faith.

Ed's highlight for the weekend was the privilege of showing God's love through serving a group of men who wanted to experience firsthand what AIA is all about. Some of these men brought their sons with them, and from their



participation in the events over the weekend were able to create memories that will last a lifetime. In an e-mail after the event, one man wrote, *"Thanks again for your incredible hospitality. You and your team made the weekend extra special. So many wonderful memories. Please send a special thanks to Ed from the Valentine boys."*

In his book "Quality Friendship", Gary Inrig wrote: "Important as programs and institutions are, love never loses sight of the individual. Love is concerned to create an environment in which people are sheltered and cared for, in which needs are recognized and ministered to and hurts are taken seriously." 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 provides the foundation for this quote and is the reason for our partnership in ministry: to love people in the name of Christ and see lives changed.

We hope you recognize the critical role you play in the process as well. The love you have shown



us enables us to serve God with this ministry and love others who as a result of the love shown them will become partners with AIA for the purpose of sharing the gospel everywhere.

## Snowy Spring Ministry

The lack of spring weather did not hinder the use of our challenge course last month as we hosted several groups. We moved indoors with some of the groups for their low course experience, but we also held our first high course experience in the snow.

The Madison West high school baseball team from Madison, Wisconsin came to our retreat facility for a 5 day spring break trip and were able to get in 3 practices on the baseball field before we were hit with 5 inches of snow.

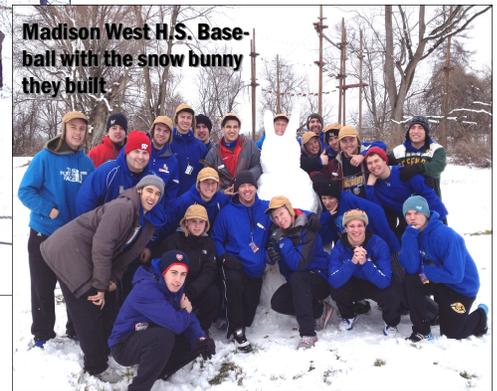
The morning after the snow fell we held their low course team-building experience inside and then opted to do the high course out in the snow the next day. In spite of the cold, the boys had a blast pelting one another with snowballs as each one came down the zip line or the giant swing. One of the coaches even said, "this was the most fun I've had in my life."



Madison West H.S. Baseball players help a teammate through the Spider's Web



Athletes blasting their coach with snowballs as he went down zip line



Madison West H.S. Baseball with the snow bunny they built

### Praises

- ❖ Fruitful ministry is happening with groups who have used our Retreat Center
- ❖ Effective ministry that took place while we were in New Orleans...lives were changed!

### Prayer Requests

- ❖ Wisdom and favor as Ed continues making calls to people who requested more information at the Super Bowl Breakfast, the All Star Breakfast and the Final Four Breakfast.
- ❖ For the Holy Spirit to move in the lives of many individuals who will be attending retreats or other events at our facilities over the next few weeks
- ❖ For the lives of 150 urban youth to be changed as a result of the Anthony Munoz Impact for Eternity football camp hosted at our facility (April 4-7).
- ❖ Safe travel for Ed and Debbie as we drive to Oklahoma April 22-30 to visit ministry partners and seek some new partners.

### From The Heart (by Debbie)

*The past few weeks have been rather stressful for me as I have sought to balance completing the coursework for another seminary-level theology course along with managing my responsibilities with the sports complex and challenge course. Our sports complex has been quite busy over the past month and one of our staff has left for maternity leave. This has added a little extra work for each of us.*

*However, even in the midst of the whirlwind of activity, I am finding peace in God's presence. He continues to show His grace and handiwork in ways I would never have imagined. I'm especially grateful for the Holy Spirit who fills me, empowers me and guides me through each day.*

*Ed and I are deeply grateful for the love you show to the Lord and to us through your partnership with us in the Gospel! Together, God is using us to change lives for His Kingdom! Thank you for your prayers and support! We appreciate you! May the Lord shower you with His many blessings!*