

THE LANGFORD LETTERS

SERVING WITH CRU
AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | JULY 2022



WHAT A JOY TO SERVE AND LEAD WITH MY COLLEGE FRIENDS SCOTT & UNCHONG BERKEY; OUR WHOLE CREW ON CAMPUS AT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Hi There, Virginia Beach! We've Missed you!

"Would you two consider stepping in to lead the Virginia Beach Summer Mission again?" Our friend Mark posed this question last fall. Since our last trip there a decade ago a variety of factors including rising costs and dwindling students numbers had led to the need to revamp what was once a thriving 10-week summer project. With our friends Scott and UnChong Berkey we agreed to step in and try something new: a 10-day intensive with a focus on evangelism and foundational ministry skills.

In late March, there were only 4 students interested in participating. Wondering whether to continue or just throw in the towel, we asked God to give us 12 students by mid-April—kind of a "fleece" to see if we should press

on. Within 2 weeks, there were 30 students from MI, IL, MN, and TN who applied to Join us. VA Beach 2.0 was on!

As mid-June approached we finalized out goals, training content, and schedule, connecting with the Cru staff joining us from other campuses. God assembled a terrific group of staff to lead the 19 students who ended up joining us. We were concerned that the group of students would struggle to connect relationally. Many of them indicated that they were "introverts" or had social anxiety. Several of them had only had one or two in-person classes in college. We prayed and asked God to show us how to meet them and help them grow in community. I guess we shouldn't have been surprised when the group bonded quickly, spending hours

of their free time playing games, praying, singing, and getting to know each other. A huge bonus for us was that they quickly included Nick and the other teen staff kid, Ava Berkey. **Mikey** a junior at Northern Illinois University put it this way: "I can honestly say that I wasn't expecting to connect with 20 people in 10 days, but I'm so happy I did. Seeing God move was something I can't really explain other than to say it was amazing."

It was far too expensive for us to stay near the beach, so we experimented by staying at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, a 30 minute drive to the beach. Hoping to find students on campus to talk with about the Gospel, we were disappointed to find the beautiful campus empty! Undeterred, we drove

I learned that the best way to be fully guided by the Holy Spirit is to be fully present with the Holy Spirit through prayer. ~ Eric, MSU sophomore

to the beach at least 6 times in our 10 days there. Our students—Nick and Ava included—embraced the evangelism training, jumped in, and talked with folks eagerly on the VA Beach boardwalk. We were thrilled to hear **Paige**, a sophomore at Loyola University share that “*evangelism isn’t what I thought it was. I love how easy it can be to just talk with people and listen and ask questions. This is something I want to do at school. I know that I can now.*”

Though we initially planned for our training content to be focused on developing as spiritual leaders, it became clear as we interacted with our students that we needed to redirect

THE SPARTAN STAFF WHO JOINED US, INCLUDING 2 SPOUSES WHO ARE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS!

our focus toward more foundational spiritual growth. Like the pros that they are, our staff team reworked their prepared content to meet the needs. Topics we addressed were the greatness of God, growing in community, listening skills, and how to lead or participate well in a small group Bible Study. One of the highlights for many students was learning about prayer. We loved how MSU sophomore **Eric** made the connection between prayer and evangelism: “*I saw God work in my prayer life...I strived to be fully rooted in prayer, praying for strength, perseverance, endurance, and faithfulness in my Gospel conversations. The goal is a step of faith, leaving the results up to God.*”

God worked! Through all the pivots we were able to see His hand guide. Thank you for helping us return. It was a joy to be back and take those steps of faith with students like Eric, Paige, and Mikey.

THE GANG



NICK & AVA TAKING IT IN



TRAINING TIMES



GET TO KNOW YOU



BRAVING THE WAVES

