

HALVORSEN MINISTRY UPDATE



Meet Maddie Smith (pictured above, on the far left). This sweet, bubbly, easy-to-relate-to native Minnesotan is the most recent Cru staff I have started coaching during her process of raising financial support. This dear woman is a joy to talk to. She is real and authentic about the up and down journey the Lord has led her through to be unexpectedly, yet clearly, called to staff with Cru. She loves the Lord and is willing to go where He leads.

After graduating college, Maddie used her adventurous spirit and her love of the Gospel by joining a Cru Stint Expedition team in Eastern Europe. This small short-term missionary team of young Americans stayed in a different Eastern European city every month, stepping onto college campuses where there was no campus ministry. There, she and her team became learners of a particular campus for that month, asking: “where to students hangout?” and “what kind of spiritual questions are they asking?” They would be upfront that they were looking for students who love Jesus and like to talk about the Bible, seeking to find at least 2-3 believing Christians on campus who desire to grow in their relationship with Jesus and step out in faith. They then would connect those Christians and train them in how to build Christian community, how to study the Bible together, how to share their faith, and how to make disciples. The Expedition team would make the important connection of this newly formed campus community to the most local Cru staff to continue their discipleship. After a month, Maddie and her team would move to a new Eastern European city to new campuses to raise up a new community of Christians who could continue the chain of discipleship.

Especially that first year, Maddie was blown away by seeing the Lord raise up and use these new student leaders in dramatic ways on campus. Her second year, was a little harder. The team she joined to focus on strategy and coaching Expedition teams brought special challenges, yet, she got to see something powerful happen: she got to pass off her role of leading Expedition teams to Eastern Europeans, so that they can reach their own!

When Maddie returned home after her two year stint, she was challenged by a former Expedition teammate to join him and his newly formed team to do something new: to try the Expedition strategy to reach more students on campuses in the Northeast of the U.S.! What a need that continues to be!

Just last week, Maddie and her soon-to-be team met up briefly in what will be their home base, in Providence, RI. They met with with a four-person Cru team who has *twelve* (!) campuses in their ministry scope. This local team brought them to UConn Avery Point one afternoon, a campus the team has yet to reach. When the Expedition team surveyed students that afternoon, students there quickly told them that they often do not talk about religion. But when asked if they know anyone who does, multiple people responded confidently with the name, “Kylie.” Maddie was able to be introduced to Kylie. This Christ-follower had become a Christian on her own during a rough time in high school but has had no Christian community to help her grow. Maddie learned from Kylie that she had just been asking the Lord how she could start a Bible study on campus, as she is eager to finally have a faith community to grow with! Now Cru staff are working with her to help that happen.

Please pray for Maddie and her new team as they finish raising their financial ministry partners and forming their home base in Providence, Rhode Island. Pray for Kylie as she seeks to grow in her relationship with God and find others who want to do the same.