

THE HARVESTER

AUGUST 2018



Dan & Heather Litchfield
PO Box 993
Mount Desert, ME 04660
(207)266-6628
Dan@intothewilderness.org

TEN DAYS, TWELVE WOMEN, AND AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

“Britney talked nonstop from the time we picked her up in Minneapolis to the time we got her back to her apartment in Marshall. Over 2 hours of drive time. ☺ She LOVED everything about the expedition. We enjoyed hearing her stories of adventures and of how she pushed herself,” wrote Britney’s mom in an email to me following our Acadia Women’s Expedition.

Britney especially loved actively witnessing. The students engaged people in spiritual conversations in town and also handed out McDonald’s gift cards in place of the

lunch that we fasted. Both of those opportunities generated meaningful gospel discussions and excited the ladies to do more. Devin gave away her Bible to a waitress that we had a long conversation with during dinner, and all the women got to invest in local teen girls (including my daughter, Emma!) by hosting a discipleship group on purity through our church. “When I go home I want to take the initiative to use my strengths for God’s glory and look for a younger girl to mentor and pour into,” Kelsey said afterward.

This year’s expedition emphasized

eternal perspective. Our goal was for the women to leave having a bigger view of the eternal reward we are striving for and how that vision affects our hope, our obedience, our witness, and our love for God.

The students, hailing from all over the U.S., began to recognize the immeasurable, unrestrained love God has for them. “God is so intentional with everything” Kourtney marveled. “God gives us peace and rest... the anxiety I’ve felt is not from God,” Britney grasped in wonder. “This changes how you live day to day” Grace agreed in awe. Yes! It does!!

THE LAST HURRAH: The Women’s Expedition has been one of my favorite things about Lifelines. It was the perfect, and bittersweet, last event. Tomorrow we will no longer be Cru staff. My next newsletter will be from Thrive, our new ministry. Pictured here are two women that I discipled when they were in college: Steph, my Lifelines co-worker, and Anna, my peer and co-laborer here in Mount Desert. These friends joyously represent our past, present, and future. We praise God for each part!





The physical challenge of the expedition lends itself to lots of character growth. Many of these students had never tented before, much less rock climbed or kayaked. For Sylvia, from Miami, sleeping nose to nose on the ground was a brand new experience. ☺ The women took huge steps of faith physically, relationally, and spiritually. They shared wounds in their lives and were purposeful in sharing their faith. Many saw porpoises, seals, eagles, and deer, and cooked lobster for the first time. Hiking up Cadillac in the dark to see the sunrise, paddling for twelve miles to remote caves, having solo time with the Lord on an isolated beach... “Despite being exhausted, hungry and sunburnt, this is an easy context to be joyful,” Grace exclaimed. “Yeah, this project should have been exhausting but instead I feel so filled!” Maddie concurred during our final debrief. *“The joy of the Lord is your strength,”* (Nehemiah 8:10)



What you don't see in these beautiful faces is that these godly Christian leaders have suffered every kind of abuse... physical abuse, neglect that has led to sexual degradation, cutting and planned suicide, struggling through the shame and fear of rape, fathers that have abandoned the family, eating disorders that have wreaked havoc on self-concept, parents in the midst of divorce, drugs and alcohol and on-campus partying that has left a wake of destruction... the temptation and evil in our world is a real and daily challenge. Most of these women had never shared any of this pain with anyone. For the first time, these women experienced the grace and truth of Christ and the love and growth of the Body. “I've learned that I am valued by others and important,” Devin shared. “God wants a relationship with me that is intimate and so much more than I've been going after,” Maddie confessed. They were amazed at the healing, hope, and relationship that happened in just ten days. “We need to speak life into each other,” Kelsey urged her new sisters in Christ. These students are so full of life and so easy to love—at last they are beginning to believe that.

THE BIKE RIDE FROM HE...HEAVEN?

On day 8 we biked for 25 miles up and down the hills of Mount Desert Island. Around mile 22 I pulled everyone together for a chat. Standing on shaky legs I faced the, sore, red-faced and huffing women. After a word of encouragement I gave them the big news: that night we would be staying at a hotel with real beds, showers, and a pool, and we would be taking them out for an elegant dinner. One student burst into tears. All were shocked, then erupted in squeals of delight and disbelief. Despite a grueling uphill, the last few miles flew by. Over dinner, our debrief paralleled the day's experience with our vision of heaven and how the knowledge of heaven changes everything. None of the girls had any picture of heaven at all. We talked through Scripture about the real and exciting reward that awaits us. They were shocked at what they learned, and thanks to biking, they *felt* the thrill!!