

Dear Friends,

You are having an incredible impact on students in Boston and beyond. And because of that, I wanted to share a story and **ask for your help again** as we reach the end of 2023.

You might remember a bit about my friend Luke, a sophomore at BU. I met him the spring before his freshman year on Instagram.

I asked Luke if I could share his story with you. Here's what he said:

“When I got to BU for orientation, I felt alone and truly scared. There was only one person from my home state that I knew was at school here. And to my rescue came an Instagram DM from Brian, who invited me to a summer fire pit in his backyard and there I met Tim, who was my orientation RA, and a lot of other amazing people were there too.

“Tim invited me to church pretty much every week for all first semester, and I always came up with an excuse to not go. But second semester came, and I finally went to church. I joined a G3 [a micro-discipleship group of 3-5 students], which I technically never signed up for.

“My freshman year of high school, I ate lunch alone every single day in the hallways. By my junior year, I had made a few friends and got out of my shell. But when I came to Boston and I had nobody, and I could feel myself reverting back to when I was alone, which was terrifying. And I do not ever want to be that kid again.



Luke (L) and Tim (R) at “Lobster Night” at BU. He’s not eating lunch alone anymore!

“God, through Cru, has given me community to help get me through all kinds of hard. And he put amazing people in my life to help me through it and comfort me. I got to spend quality time doing amazing and fun things with awesome people.

“I believe that God puts people in our lives to help guide them to a relationship with him. He did this for me and helped guide me. **I do not know where I would be without that one fateful Instagram message from Brian, but I'm so grateful that I never had to find out.**”



In every step along the way of Luke coming to Christ, you have played a critical role:

- **You prayed** for Luke and those like him before we even met him.
- Luke found us on Instagram because **you've supported** us as we try innovative new ways to reach out to new students.
- **You've helped** us buy “welcome bags” and throw dinner parties to help make the real-world connection and get students from digital connections to seeing people face to face.
- Luke experienced the body of Christ because **you've helped** create an environment where community happens – think of the crackling warmth of the fire pit, the aroma of roasted marshmallows, and the comforting sounds of shared laughter and conversation.
- Luke heard the Gospel proclaimed because **you've supported** us as we run evangelism training courses to help students and staff learn to do this effectively.
- Paying for dinners each week gave Luke time to process the gospel and experience it in community.
- Luke heard the Gospel in many forms, and from many people, such that none can take the credit. But your partnership meant that we could give scholarships to freshmen like Luke to come to our Fall Retreat.
- **At the core, it's your prayers** that helps bring, eventually, not just a “decision for Christ”, but entry into God's family and the Kingdom of God



Luke (L) and Sam (R) at our fall kickoff retreat



As you can see, *you have a critical role to play at each step in the journey.*

Because you've been praying for us and giving in the past, I'd love to ask you to give a special gift of \$, \$, or \$ to keep reaching students for Christ. Your gift will help Malisa and me stay on the front lines of reaching college students in Boston and beyond.

Brian and Malisa Ellis



We want to be there for the next generation of Lukes (and for the next Sam, Tim, Hannah, Anna, and Caroline – students that we’ve been working with lately). And that’s what we’re asking you to give toward - a future of changed lives.

Why can you trust us? Because **we’ve been doing this for a long time** (over 20 years for me and over 23 for Malisa). New is good. It’s why we try to innovate on IG, TikTok, pop-up picnic tables, soularium, 20 minute coffees with D1 Athletes, etc. But experience is good too. And experience lets us focus on changed lives. We’ve been doing this long enough that we have seen cycles. We have seen generational shifts. But we have also seen God’s spirit moving across Boston and all of New England. And we think this is an exciting time to be reaching college students for Christ. Don’t you?



Tim (L) and Brian (R) in our back yard at a fire pit (you can see it blazing in the background).

And so let’s give in response to the Spirit moving.

We send a letter like this every year at the end of the year. **Every year, you and many others like you respond so generously.** Is it because it’s fun to be a part of seeing God change lives?

Let me make it plain: it is stupidly-expensive to live in Boston. But that’s where the students are. And for us to keep reaching students for Christ together with you, we need to stay here. That means **we are trusting God for \$40,000 in special gifts as we come into the end of the year.** Every dollar you donate will help us reach another student like Luke, who is searching for purpose and meaning in their life.

A gift before December 31 lets Malisa and I keep meeting up with students to share Christ, disciple student leaders, send students to the world, and keep innovating to reach the next generation with the good news.

Loving our Adventurous Lord,

Malisa + Brian



P.s. I hope you'll join us in making a difference in the lives of these students. You can give online at www.brianandmalisa.com or by returning the included card. Your gift by December 31 will have a lasting impact.



Yes!

Malisa and Brian, I'd like to invest in changed lives like Luke's, and I'd like to give to help reach students in Boston and Beyond this year.

Here's a gift of: \$ _____

I've included a check made out to "Cru", or given online at www.brianandmalisa.com

