

July 1, 2016

Brian & Malisa Ellis – Serving with Cru in Boston

Change Boston



Hi sweet friends,

Thanks so much for praying for our time in the Middle East – it could not have gone better. Our little girls did amazing with my parents. There was the usual adjustment when we got back: they could no longer have ice cream whenever they wanted. When I asked my mom whether she said “Yes” every time the girls asked for ice cream, a joyful smile stretched across her face, “Grandmas have to do that.”

We did two things in the Middle East: we connected with friends we have met over the past six years; we led a debrief for our “Stint” team of 8 recent graduates who have just spent a year doing ministry here (it’s like the one I was a part of 15 years ago in Slovenia). You can go to www.brianandmalisa.com/MiddleEastTrip for more about our work with Syrian refugees and our sweet time leading the debrief. You’ll also be able to see a bunch of pictures of our time.



Two summers ago, there was this bright-eyed full-of-smiles girl who seemed to show up everywhere our team gathered. She came to every picnic in the park. She came to all the crazy tea parties in our apartment. She even asked if she could come to our last team dinner

A long awaited reunion with this friend from Breakthrough

together. Her name was Güzel and, although she was super fun-loving, we weren’t sure how interested she actually was in Jesus.

I am reminded of Jesus’ parable of the sower (Mark 4). We tossed the seeds of the Gospel widely that summer with university students and also refugees not being completely sure what type of soil they had landed on. With Güzel, we planted lots of gospel seeds in many hours of conversations over small cups of very strong tea.

Güzel represents so much of what is true about this Middle Eastern culture. First, she was committed to being friends over the long run. As we have travelled back to America, that has meant keeping up with us over social media. Secondly, God is working powerfully in the hearts of some of the 70 million people in this country. Güzel has continued to ask really good questions about Jesus and what His Word says.

This year’s Stint team formed something called, “The Society of Spiritual Women” for Güzel and a handful of other women who wanted to grow more in their understanding of Jesus. We got to see Güzel again the first night we arrived in the city (which we call “Breakthrough”). We went to a friend’s birthday party, and there she was – all full of smiles and joy but with a bit more maturity and a fierce heart and desire to continue to grow in her understanding of Jesus.

In this country, it takes an average of 2.5 years from the time someone first hears the Gospel to when they understand and grasp Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

As Jet-lag got the best of us, Brian and I walked to the subway to head back to our room for some sleep but had a really fun conversation reflecting on the sheer number of friends like Güzel who were at the birthday party surrounded by many friends who also believe in Jesus.

Loving our Adventurous Lord,

Brian & Malisa



Brian and I with the STINT Team during our morning of reflection in the middle of the desert. (more pictures and some prayer requests on the back)



Malisa with the STINT team girls, ironically we were waiting on the guys that night.



Sydney our oldest at her preschool "moving on" celebration. We loved her little preschool and are looking forward to Eliza attending in the Fall.



- For all our Friends in the Middle East that the Peace of Christ will rule in their hearts, minds, and souls. He is the only one to offer true Peace.
- For the Breakthrough STINT team that has just returned to the US for the summer. To have strong community and encouragement as they transition to next year (most will return to Breakthrough for a second year).
- Güzel and her friends in the "Society of Spiritual Women" to embrace Jesus.
- For our Refugee friends in the Middle East who are growing in their understanding of Jesus.
- For our Family as we are in Boston and DC this summer connecting with Ministry Partners. **We would love to see you if you are in the DC area (we will be there the end of July/Beginning of August).**



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Info on how to give to our ministry at www.brianandmalisa.com