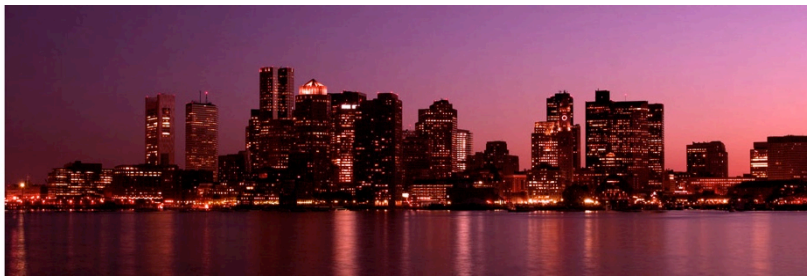


May 1, 2024

Brian & Malisa Ellis – Serving with Cru

Change Boston



When Creativity Strikes

How do you make a space where Christian students can spend time with friends who don't yet know Jesus? This is a question that Brian and I frequently ask ourselves and those that we lead.



We had a new idea this year that we're calling "When Creativity Strikes". The genesis: our God is a creative God. Because we're made in his image, every one of us can create and be creative. We don't have to be experts at painting or calligraphy or drawing or crafting but **we all can create**. And when we do create, it's a reflection of God inside of us.

And having a "maker space" or a "creative space" seems to be something that students are drawn to. So **"When Creativity Strikes" is an outreach that creates a space for people to come together and create together and have spiritual conversations.**



We tried this during finals week in December at Boston University and then in April we did it at New England Conservatory and Simmons University with some tweaks (we always want to learn). Our Simmons students found a date and a location and advertised on Snapchat to every student in the University. We brought the art supplies and the snacks. We opened the room to welcome people and what happened was

beautiful. Students who weren't super involved or weren't sure about their relationship with God came and brought friends. Student leaders brought friends they've been journeying with for years. And then because of the social media blast, other random

people just wandered in and sat down.

Because we were creating a shared experience, the friends stayed around, and we had space to talk.

Here was a space that was warm and invitational. They could sit down at different stations:

1. Paint an encouragement rock - I bought rocks and paint markers and they would paint on them a little encouragement for their peers and then our students put them around campus afterward for people to find.
2. A sketching station for drawing
3. Canvases and oil paints for painting

In addition to the experience, we give our guests a present: a Cru bag with watercolors, a nice pen, some colored pencils, a sketch book, and a short gospel-centered card sharing a bit of how art and creativity can point us toward Jesus. It's not a full presentation of the gospel, but it's meant to be intriguing and leave room for us to follow up.

Anyway, the heart behind this is that **we needed to create a space where there was longer time for our students to journey with their friends and classmates.**

We invited one girl that wandered in to sit down and join us. She grabbed a canvas and went to work with some oil painting and sat for a good hour interacting with us about art. You can see her sunflower still life below.



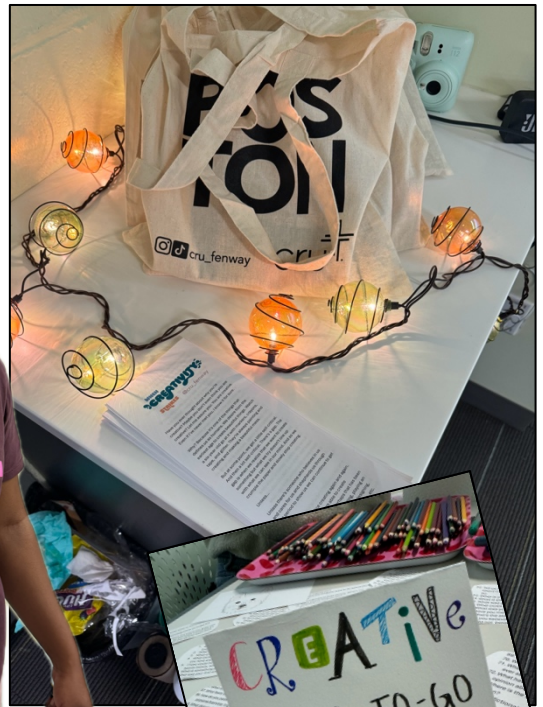
Another student, Emma, was a believer when she came to college but was really not growing for her first 2 years. Then she started showing up and joined a discipleship group with me. We walked through the essentials of the gospel and she began to have a heart for others to know God. Each week, I would ask her "Who has God been leading you to this week?" And Emma always had stories. **She told me last week that "When Creativity Strikes" was the highlight of her whole time involved with Cru.**



Emma, Faith, and Malisa

Would you pray:

- Praise God: we had a car given to us by some generous supporters! THANK YOU for praying!
- For the incoming class of 2028 as we reach out over the summer to welcome them
- For some good rest and rejuvenation for our family this summer



As she looks forward to graduating, she's also looking forward to getting plugged into a church in her new town. And she's taking the lead for getting her whole family plugged into a good one.

Loving our adventurous Lord,

Brian & Malisa



Malisa & Brian Ellis

87 Stowecroft Rd.
Arlington, MA 02474
malisa.ellis@cru.org, (617) 800-6844
brian.ellis@cru.org, (978) 828-8024
Info on how to give to our ministry at
www.brianandmalisa.com