

Northern Illinois & Northwest Indiana

MINISTRY UPDATE FROM BYRON & MICHELLE GRAHAM

March 2013



Josh, Alice & Will at Winterfest 2013

Transformational Experience

Josh (left) sat with his staff worker, HC, in November talking about what it meant to be a Christian. Although he had grown up in Catholic school and had gone occasionally to church with his parents, he had never really understood that Christianity was an identity, and the question "What does it mean to be a Christian?" profoundly bothered him. Later in that same conversation he asked, "How do I become a Christian?" But the answer HC gave him left him unsatisfied because he was looking for an experience of something real, not just an answer. It had been a rough first two quarters at Northwestern for Josh – he was struggling in his studies, and he was not as popular as some of the other students - and this left him insecure and alone. He was in such despair that the weekend before Winterfest he took some pills and some cough syrup, hoping to dull some of the pain and emptiness he felt.

Then he went to Winterfest 2013. AND HE MET JESUS. He realized that Christianity is more than a list of rules, that it's more than just being a good person. It included the truth that Jesus was with him, that Jesus loved him, and that Jesus would never leave him. As Josh grabbed on to this truth and accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior, the insecurity went away and the loneliness and depression disappeared. In the presence of God, he was finally happy because he knew that he was unconditionally loved, accepted, and secure. Praise God for the miracle we witnessed in Josh! Will you join us in **praying for the 400 students who attended Winterfest**, that God would solidify the commitments and next steps they took in their relationship with Him?



Celebrating what God did at Urbana '12

96 participants decided to *follow of Jesus for the first time*
3,740 participants decided to *recommit to following Jesus*
7,058 participants committed to *serve and learn in a global or cross-cultural setting*
5,744 participants committed to *short-term service* (less than one year)
3,071 participants committed to *mid-term service* (one to two years)
4,224 participants committed to *long-term service* (more than two years)

Graham Family

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it".

This is how our household feels like sometimes. The last few months our family has enjoyed snow forts and sledding, indoor softball, 5th grade basketball, Chicago Soul soccer game, Winterfest 2013, visits from Grandma & Grandpa, Daddy/Daughter Dance, Superbowl Party, practicing our Español, the Chicago Blackhawks point streak, losing first teeth (Tyson), and choosing classes for (deep breath) high school! We've also started "Dinners Around the World", where for one week at a time we choose a country to learn about and pray for while eating their food at dinnertime. (Super fun – ask us about it!) It's also been a joy to pursue more serving opportunities at church.



Josh (above on right) with Bball buddy



Daddy/Daughter Dance (right)

Thank you. . . for your faithful financial prayer and support to the ministry of InterVarsity!

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Memo: Byron & Michelle Graham

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Prayer Requests

- For commitments made during Urbana 12
- For the 12 students (including Josh) who made first time commitments to Jesus at Winterfest 2013
- Pray for student Spring Break trips in March:
 - Chicago Urban Program
 - Soul Surf (evangelism experience in Florida)
- For wisdom as we interview 6 new staff candidates
- For God to provide staff for the many unreached campuses in Chicagoland