

THE WOODS

C H R I S T M A S P R A Y E R

We pray you experience the love and joy the birth of Jesus ushered into this world as you worship Him and spend time with those dear to you. He has given us all many good gifts - and you are one of ours!

DECEMBER 15, 2022

TO GIVE A GIFT: GIVE.CRU.ORG/O495875

STAFF GATHERING

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we gathered as a group of 230 (staff and their kids) in Daytona Beach for a time of connecting with each other and being refreshed in the Lord. I helped plan the gathering for staff who live in Georgia and South Carolina. This group of staff are still getting to know each other, so we spent a lot of the time introducing the different teams and sharing stories about the students and faculty they are reaching on their campuses. Our hope was for them to leave the weekend feeling like they know other staff in our cohort better and like they got to connect in a significant way with someone. We had three staff who have been with us for 20+ years share about what keeps them connected to the mission even with the ups and downs that are bound to come. Following every message, we had staff share at the tables was was challenging or encouraging them. Here's what one intern (who is still a student) had to share: *One of my big takeaways was reevaluating why I work with Cru. Having a love for the lost or even a sense of duty is good, but cannot be my main motivation to be in missions. It should be much deeper than that. To keep going, it is more about delighting in the Lord.* Another staff wrote: *The content felt*

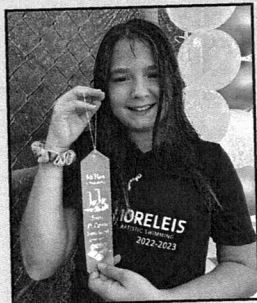


pertinent to my season of life on staff (looking towards longevity). I was encouraged to hear from staff in the cohort and get to pray earnestly for them.

A lot of time and energy went into planning this time, so it's super encouraging to hear that staff walked away feeling like someone understands them; and that we could help provide some of what they need to continue reaching students and faculty with the life saving message of the Gospel.

PERSONAL UPDATE

This month Noah has been recovering from a sprained ankle, which has meant playing less soccer and getting to wear a really cool boot (that attracts a lot of attention and is thus: cool). The twins had their first band concert with Elliana on the trumpet and Jonathan on the saxophone. They were surprised by how much they enjoy playing these instruments and we are so grateful! Elliana also participated in her first competition with synchronized swimming. It was a competition among individuals to see how well they do the different movements, but it was a nice way to introduce her to what it will feel like to compete with her team. She couldn't sleep the night before, but was ecstatic over how it felt when she was done.



As you can see, Ben and I spend a lot of time getting our kids to where they need to be. One new thing for us is we finally found a small group to join at our church. The best part is that most everyone lives within 10 minutes of us. We're very hopeful that getting to know these families will be an encouragement to us; and provide the community we've been missing since returning to America. Thank you for your prayers and care that have helped us feel we are not alone or forgotten. *Ben & Mandi*

