

Captive Free North Central 2002-03 Journal

Date: 9/17/2002

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

9/17/02

A week since commissioning and so much has happened. One of our first bookings was a five hour, caotic lock-in. We were leaders as well as entertainment. Although that is not why we are doing what we are doing, we touched lives. Drew brought to our attention that yeah, it was a little hectic, but he had an awesome conversation with one of the boys, who did not want to be there. That gave me so much hope, we didn't all see that, but God worked through us to make that happen. God really doesn't give us more than we can handle. He offered this experience to allow us to become stronger in our ministry. It seemed to us, at the time, that we weren't making an impact. It is then that you realize, we aren't always supposed to see the end result.

Our next booking, which was a family night program, went extremely well. It left us thanking God for that first experience. We learned not to take the wonderful programs for granted. Our first "autograph" really showed us, what we say, what we do, how we act, and the manner in which we minister really do speak for us. That is what people see, we may be the only Jesus for someone, what better feeling than knowing something you did changed their views, or even their lives. God has brought so much comfort to our team. Of course we have our tough times. Team life is difficult, we are seven people, living together and sharing God's love at times that we can't stand each other. He gives us the strength and the minds to smile and shake it off for the sake of our ministry. I have learned so much about making sacrifices, and "taking one for the team", which is really taking one for God. You can't be selfish and successfully minister the way we are called to.



Nicole Lewis

Date: 9/19/2002

Submitted by: Patrick Torbit

Journal Entry:

Here's to my first journal. I'm not big on journal's and don't do them unless I have to, but perhaps these will keep me in check. I think in a way journals are a way to talk to someone, a person that does not judge or isn't opinionated. Some people need that, some don't. Enough on my philosophy of journals.

Here we go. We are coming to an end of the first week of being out on the road, and it's been a great learning experience. We had a worship service to provide music for on Wednesday night. We were so excited to begin, and then as if it seemed it couldn't get any better, some friends from other teams showed up at the very beginning of the service. We had a great time Wednesday night, and nights like Wednesday keep us encouraged. We have had Thursday and Friday. Time for much needed rest and time off, but in the same sense we are anxious and now well rested to go back to "work". My one tooth has been hurting so much for the past couple days. I am in much pain and am lacking sleep because my tooth keeps me up at night. I am going to the dentist on Monday, which will be great. Nicole has a sty in her eye that was somewhat bothersome, but it looks better, and she believes it's better too. Health wise, a very rough week for us, but besides that, everything has been good. Keep us in your prayers.



Patrick Torbit

Date: 9/21/2002

Submitted by: Rebecca Leaf

Journal Entry:

We've been on the road a week now and it feels like a year. It's amazing how natural everything has felt so far. My host homes have been excellent. I still can't get over the fact that complete strangers can be so welcoming to us. Within a few hours these

people become like family to me. I thought I would get very homesick on the road, but I am realizing that I have a home in every town I come to. God is truly the Great Provider. We're in the van on the way to Jordan, MN right now. I can't wait to see our home church for the year. We get to go to church there tomorrow. It will be very nice to worship as a team. I love leading services in church, but it is a great bonding experience for us to just sing and pray together once in a while too. It's hard to remember that we've only been together a month. I feel so close to everyone on my team. We're like a family. We work hard and play together. Sometimes we fight like brothers and sisters, but we're always right there when someone is feeling upset or homesick. I am very glad for that.

The weather is starting to change. I saw red and orange leaves on some trees today. I'm from Washington where we have one season all year round. Leaves don't change colors like this. And I never knew the temperature could drop so fast!! It was 80 degrees last week and now it's barely pushing 55. But from what I've heard, I'm in for a rude awakening this winter. I've never seen more than a few inches of snow at a time. Thankfully I bought a winter coat at a thrift shop in Minneapolis. I think I'm ready.



Rebecca Leaf

Date: 9/28/2002

Submitted by: Adam Costenbader

Journal Entry:

Well it's been two weeks, pretty much to the day, since we left the home front of Youth Encounter. Even though I missed a few days with the team to go home for my grandfather's funeral it still feels like we've been on the road for months. I'm so impressed by the teams' ability to grow and to improvise on the things that we've had to pull out of thin air. Even though we have tension at times, sometimes more than others, we still find our ways to grow with each other and to become more like a family. Now to say that a family never has conflicts is a dream, so we have had our fair share of minor conflicts in the team but nothing that would make the "head-lines."

We actually just had one of the times that I was truly impressed by our teams' ability to come up with ideas for games and activities. We arrived at the church with the mind set that we would just have a program to do but come to find out that they also wanted us to do a youth activity time. Well no sweat in about five minutes the team had come up with at least an hours worth of activities to do. Let me say that was one of the best programs we've had to do, if not the best. We all had a bunch of fun and the kids as well had a great time. We made such an impact on, not only the youth, but the whole church body that they are going to inquire about having us back in the spring time. Honestly I'm excited about that, and hope it works out for us. I expect to see a lot of growth in our team; I've already seen a lot as it is. Till next time, God bless you.

Adam Costenbader



Adam Costenbader

Date: 11/22/2002

Submitted by: Patrick Torbit

Journal Entry:

So...here's to my second team journal. It's coming a little late, I know. We've been slacking off when it comes to journals. Well, anyway, a lot has happened since my last journal. We have made our way into North Dakota, played and performed at two synod events, had our first Youth Quake and so much more. We have remained very busy. A good busy.

Since my last journal, we have had two members leave. You may have noticed our picture shrinking, no, not in size but in members. That's probably one of the toughest things to have to do. To not only lose members, but to be in that transition as well. It's tough, changing up things that you have gotten used to. But, we keep on trucking and keep on sharing the love of Jesus Christ. I am having a great time. The people, the churches that we encounter are all great to us. The Youth Quake was this past weekend and we had a great time. Shout out to Taylors



Patrick Torbit

Falls. I'm out.

God Bless.
Patrick

Date: 12/5/2002

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

It's been a while since my last journal entry. Maybe it's been the fact that I haven't known what to say. A lot has happened in the past couple of months. Early in October Drew left. Leaving us a 6 member team. Personally, that was very hard on me...and just when I felt adjusted and comfortable again Melissa left also. This is the point where I felt let down and broken. Here I was half the country away, away from everything that brought me comfort, everyone that I love, to do this ministry that I was so confident in, feeling lost.



Nicole Lewis

I started to give up and all I wanted was a break to get re-charged and re-focused on what it was I was doing here in the North Central region of the United States. To be honest I really wasn't quite sure. I let this attitude consume all of the energy that I had left. I started getting short with my team mates and I didn't like fearing the future of my team.

It was then that God truly showed himself to me, actually, I allowed myself to see Him. My team mates really stepped up and everyone started to expand their duties to help keep our team on the road. Rebecca learned the bass, a gift she never knew was there. Sarah learned the keys, with prior knowledge she never thought she'd use. Patrick, who plays every instrument known to man, came out from behind those drums. Adam, who has an amazing voice started to sing more. Oh and I have learned a couple songs here and there on the keys, drums and bass. Yes, Patrick let me touch the drums.

It is amazing to me that God gave my team all of these talents and we never in a million years thought they were the talents we were called to team to use. This experience so far has opened my eyes to see that God is in control, and we are not. He had this in our plan all along.

Thank you to family, friends, fellow teamers and the office for their prayers and support.

Till next time!
Nicole

Date: 1/13/2003

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

Wow...all I have to say is that mid-winter was great; it was so nice to see the rest of the teams. It certainly didn't hurt to know that we were going home in the end. Break was just as wonderful as I had hoped it would be.

We are still having some struggles but God is with us. Patrick broke his knee on the broomball rink....leaving us a four member team from break...till now. Adam has just developed pneumonia, and is on break for a while to recover. Us girls...that's what's left. That has been more than tough for me.



Nicole Lewis

I feel so drained and worn out. I know that God is with us though and we are blessed so greatly. I am taking one day at a time and trying to see what God wants our team to do. He will let us know for sure. There are some options to go out on the road and just do this ministry.

God called all of us here and we are to have an experience. To learn, to minister, to laugh, to cry, to be ministered to...and so much more. We have to open our eyes to really see why we were called here. I didn't think what so ever that I would be going through this right now when I signed my letter of call. It's just a matter of being able to bend the way God wants us to bend. Right now we are not sure where our team goes from here. We have to do something for the rest of the month until we get our boys back with us. We are letting God lead the way and we are waiting for him to show us where to go.

Adam and Patrick we love you and can't wait to see you back!!! Thanks to everyone for their love and support.

Till next time!
Nicole <><

Date: 1/16/2003
Submitted by: Rebecca Leaf
Journal Entry:

WOW what a week!!

I haven't written a journal in so long that I don't even know where to start. It is strange having Patrick at home healing and Adam sick for awhile. It truly makes a person rely fully on God in times like these. As I look around, healthy and content, I realize the blessings God has given to me in my team mates. And when one of them is gone, I actually really miss them as if they were a member of my family.

I can't even begin to explain the peace that I have found the last few days. God has been showing me so many things, including patience, compassion, trust, patience, perserverence, joy, more patience, and a whole lot of other things, including... patience! I am the kind of person who wants to see something happening either for good or bad, just SOMETHING! But all I have heard all week is: wait. So here I have sat waiting on God and what a filling experience it has been.

I have come to appreciate the end of the "Footprints" poem, when a man is walking by God his whole life and looks back. He is confused when he sees only one set of prints during the hard times in his life. I understand when God says "those times that there are only one set of prints, those are the times that I carried you." Sometimes God has had to pick me up, kicking and screaming, to carry me out of the tough situations I'm in. I'm so thankful for those times that I learn how to let go and let God handle EVERYTHING. But I am definately still learning how to do that.

May you also learn how wonderful the peace of God can be.

Love in Christ, Becca :)



Rebecca Leaf

Date: 2/5/2003
Submitted by: Rebecca Leaf
Journal Entry:

It's Wednesday night in Sioux Falls and we girls are hanging out in a Christian coffee house here that is just awesome. It is so fun to meet so many people to just hang out with and kick back a little.

We just had another Quake last weekend. It was such a blessing to me to see all the kids there. We knew about 60 percent of them from churches we've done programs in. Before the event even started most of us had plans to hang out with kids all throughout the weekend. This was such a great way to start back up again.



Rebecca Leaf

Patrick is back (praise the Lord!) and Adam and Nicole (even more praise for our answered prayers!) are feeling better. Sarah and I had a great time together but we were very excited to be back together with our team. The five of us are a whole family again. God has really blessed us with a good transition back on the road.

Well, there is so much more, but I've got to get going. Blessings to everyone reading this. Keep our team in your prayers. God is good!

Love to everyone, Becca :)

Date: 3/6/2003

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

Well...well...well. We have had lots of fun experiences since we've written last. First...CAPTIVE FREE NORTH CENTRAL is back together. Just in time for our Sioux Falls, SD quake (Jan 30th-Feb 2nd). That's our favorite update. After broken bones (Pat), pneumonia (Adam) and all sorts of yukies, we're out there doing ministry.

My personal favorite booking and ministry opportunity was actually just recently. We went to St. Cloud, MN. A pretty populated town with lots of people. We were excited because it was the first large town, in the midst of all the smaller North and South Dakota towns in quite a while. We arrived at this gorgeous church...an acoustic team's dream come true (echo). We started setting up and preparing for this night.

Oh by the way...these people, not one of them, have ever seen, and some of them had never heard of Captive Free before. This was a new thing. Our contact got the word from someone else and booked us. This was a little nerve wracking...now, we've got to make a lasting impression so they have teams back in the future.

After great pizza :) we started meeting some of the people God had brought. Amazing...they came in on buses from other towns, it was neat. Our contact introduced us in the best way ever. He told us to sit down and when he says Captive Free...to run up the stage. None of us tripped :) then we got started.

The program was awesome. Adam did break a string, during the same song, in the same spot he always does...but he does it before a sharing to give him time to change it. We sounded great, had great energy, awesome interaction with the audience, we kept their attention. It was one of my favorite programs yet!

Afterwards, not very many people stayed because they had to head back on the buses. As they left though, they complimented us and what we had done. All I could think is...it wasn't us it was God. It's so cool to work for God, to give our music and our words, make them His and allow Him to use them the way He wants to. That's cool to me.

Big shout out to my PP Andy and all my friends

Till next time...

Nicole<><



Nicole Lewis

Date: 4/24/2003

Submitted by: Adam Costenbader

Journal Entry:

From a long long time ago.in a far away land Adam writes....

Well hey, long time no write! Well we we've done it, we got the band back together and we're back on the road. I'm so glad that we are ALL together again and that we're able to be doing our programs once more, I've missed them so much. I will say though that having pneumonia was quite a treat for the road stories later on in life, but it's all good. My wonderful host home for those three weeks made me feel like I was there own child, thanks Dianna, Mike, and Kali.

We've had two quakes since we've been back on the road both were a great success. Also both of them didn't have too many kids but it was great to get to know all of the kids a little better because of that. It made the whole experience more genuine with everyone. Pretty much all of the kids were our friends by the end, we were already having to ask for our stuff back.

Even though we are in the frozen north we haven't seen very much snow. Actually they have had more snow on Hatteras Island, my home, in one day then they've pretty much had all year here. They had about twelve inches of snow at home, but it only lasted for about three days. Here it snows a little and you'll see it around for weeks upon weeks. Never really in the same place cause the wind will blow the snow around for miles.

Well we're ready to hit the road again, but the next update will hopefully be coming again soon.



Adam Costenbader

Date: 6/6/2003

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

Wow!!! Vacation Bible School rocks!! I have to admit, I wasn't too thrilled to leave training and head out for VBS. I was run down, so was my team, there were a lot of problems, and excitement was not on my list of emotions.

We arrived in Lemmon, SD and talked to our contact and met some of the kids and our host families. Slowly I started to loosen up and feel a little better about all of this. The town is great, a small town, with amazing people. (Their claim to fame is the Petrified Wood Park, and let me tell you it is fun!!)

Monday morning came around and my perspective completely changed. The kids were awesome, so welcoming. They did all of the motions, they sang so loud and so full of joy and spirit. There was nothing we could do wrong. We were rockin!! As the week went on and we started to spend more time with the kids, the more they loved us and hung on every word we said. They'd stop us in the middle of the day to comment on our puppet show, or the skit, or the object lesson. They'd see us around town and yell, "It's Captive Free", and call out our names. I think that's when my team got together and started to really see why we are here. We get to tell these kids about Jesus, that's a pretty big honor to have.

It's going to be so hard to leave here after spending a week with such amazing people. (we have to leave tomorrow) We hope that we made as much of an impact on them as they did us. It was so much fun to be cool for a week, and to have the kids see Jesus in our music, and words. We really saw how important our ministry is, especially during the VBS season. It is incredible, how we were ministered to this first week of VBS.

I encourage all of you too look at the faces of the children around you. How amazing it is to have faith like a child. The kids here have taught me so much. I am here for God alone, to allow Him to work through me for them.

Shout out to my family and friends, and my PP Andy!!

Till next time,

Nicole <><



Nicole Lewis

Date: 7/1/2003

Submitted by: Nicole Lewis

Journal Entry:

This week so far has been incredible. I have seen the power of our ministry become so evident...it's not at all just music. This week we're in St. Paul, MN. The camp is called Union Hill. It's a camp ministry for children who are homeless or live in poor households. Some of these kids are struggling hard core with behavior problems, others just need you to smile at them and their day is made.



Nicole Lewis

It's so awesome to know that our music isn't what we're here for. We do acoustic music with them every morning. But at the end of the day that's not what they remember, it's that you swung them on a swing, or took them out in a paddle boat, or you hugged them, or told them they were beautiful. We aren't cool rock stars at this camp, we're big sisters and brothers. In some cases we're someone who pays more attention to them in an hour than they've gotten for a week. That is very eye opening to me. God rocks, and the kids can remember who we are as individuals and see how much we love Christ and that's great to me.

This has been an incredible week so far. I'm so excited to see what the rest of the week brings. I feel God in this place. I pray that he gives us the words and the actions to make a mark on some of the youth here. We could be what turns them to Him. What an honor.

Shout out to my family, friends, all the other teams and my PP Andy!
Till next time! Nicole <><

Date: 7/1/2003

Submitted by: Patrick Torbit

Journal Entry:

Hello darkne.. I mean journal, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again. It's been a long time since I have written a journal. Well I am here to kinda recap how our summer has been going. We have been to and done VBS's at Lemmon, SD - Pierre, SD, Buffalo, SD and Mora, MN. Vacation bible school has been going well. We have been working from two main kits, Zoom Zone, published by Augsburg, and the Rancho Round-Up published by Concordia. Nicole tells me that we have different ones coming up too. Anyway very generous awesome people we have met along the way. Well it's sad to say but this year is quickly coming to a close. That means we are all trying to plan this upcoming year. I am currently praying and trying to decide about going on to Watermark a Germany team through YE. I hear It's an amazing year and I am excited to see what the year holds. I hope everyone is doing well and I cannot thank everyone enough for their continued prayers and support. I thank God all the time for the amazing support. I hope everyone is well.
Peace,
Pat



Patrick Torbit