

Captive Free West Lakes 2003-04 Journal

Date: 9/28/2003

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

Jon's Web Journal

September 28, 2003

Hello everybody! This is my first Journal entry on-line. A lot has happened in the last month and a half as far as having my life drastically change and also having new experiences and well as meeting new people. At first, I just seemed to numb myself to the realization of what I was about to do when I first got to Minneapolis. The first week of training and my beginning interaction with my team mates almost seemed surreal.

Then, just as I was starting to get use to sleeping on church floors at my host church, we went to camp Luther Dell for the last three weeks of training. It was kind of nice being at the base of a lake and being able to see the northern lights on some nights. When my team first got to practice together, I was amazed at how fast we seemed to play well together and sound good. Being able to fellowship with the people on other teams was probably the most fun part of the camping experience, but it was hard for me in the beginning to really want to know other people because I new I wouldn't see them much at all after training. The more frustrating parts of training to me were the strict curfew times and a few seemingly rushed facets of the training (job training, sharings, etc). Luckily, our first family night program we performed at camp went very well in my opinion. Aside from these things, the entire camping experience was a very memorable one and I had a lot of fun being with the other teams.

The commissioning was a lot more interesting than I thought it was going to be. Seeing all the different bands perform including the international teams (which I hadn't seen yet) was really cool because of all the different music styles and personal styles of the individual bands. It was kind of a sad goodbye in some ways, but I think we were all anxious to get on the road.

Our two weeks on the road have been very interesting. Our first show went very well and it seemed to vary between good and not so good shows after that. Having to get used to seeing different people everyday is probably the most difficult part of the first week. I'm still not sure I'm completely used to it yet even now. Talking with the host families and finding out about their lives has been a very rewarding experience. Visiting different towns and cities and coming to know new communities is probably the most fascinating part of this experience because it gives me/us new perspectives on the differing realities of living and other people's lives in general. I feel like God is already teaching me a lot and allowing me to grow mentally and spiritually.

Team dynamics seem to be going pretty well so far. We have had a few minor confrontations and resolved them pretty well. Although we may be starting to get on each others nerves already, we seem to have a growing respect for one another without all the delusions of perfect relations that we had in training. It is a lot more clear that we will have unavoidable confrontations in the future. Luckily, we still have a lot of fun together and we already have made memories together. We spent one of our days off in Madison and not only saw the filming of "Elimidate," but a lot got to go toe to toe with some crazy fire and brimstone preachers who were twisting the Gospel to their own cultic liking. We can't wait to go back to State Street after that experience. We have also made a lot of memories with the shows we have done like the one were we had to play outside and ended up getting mauled by mosquitoes. Anyways, I am having a great time and I am looking forward to the rest of the year. End.



Jon Hockney

Date: 9/30/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

September 30, 2003

Wow! What an adventure the past two weeks have been for us! I am amazed by how generous and hospitality all the people I have encountered. I am so honored to spend time over breakfast or dinner, watching a movie, or swapping stories with host

families. Some of the program highlights for me include worship time with junior high youth during a lock-in, sing-a-longs with adults with special needs, and opportunities to talk with youth and adults before and after family night programs during yummy pot-luck dinners.

We were forewarned about how amazing the people in the West Lakes Region would be, and thus far each and every person I have stayed with has lived up to that legend of generosity and even surpassed it. I was not expecting to be challenged and convicted by the faith and beliefs of my fellow teammates. For example, Kyle, one teammate, focused on the story of Jesus walking on water during the family program last night (Mark 6:45-52, Matthew 14:22-33). He challenged each of us to examine ourselves. What is our "boat" that we are so comfortable and safe in? Do we too often let opportunities that God has provided pass us by (see Mark 16:48)? At first, the thought of being in a band, having to ask other people to financially support for an entire year, and not pursuing a career after college graduation – basically the entire Captive Free experience – was stepping out of my "boat." Now, I am getting pretty comfortable in this new role. It is not hard to stand behind a microphone and share my faith on the road, but ask me to share my faith in my personal Savior, Jesus Christ with my closest family and friends or with someone outside a church in "real life" circumstances? Whoa, now that is entirely different. I am reading a great book by Bill Bright, (founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International) called Witnessing Without Fear. The chapter I am reading now is entitled "Why we cannot remain silent." It is awesome to say – "yeah, I want to share my faith with other people," but I know I get nervous. I am praying for boldness, (not Bible thumping boldness), but for awareness and willingness to take advantage of opportunities for sharing – with a waitress at a restaurant or the cashier when I buy gasoline for the van. Why do I hold back? What am I afraid of? I think too often, I let my fear and my doubts restrict God's power to change lives and touch the hearts of people. If I would just be a more willing servant. . . . Ahh, happy sigh. The struggles of a gal who wants God to just turn the world upside down with His love. I believe in God's love. I believe that His love can heal and empower, yet still I hesitate.

Love,
Tracie

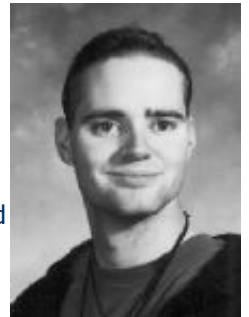


Tracie Bardonner

Date: 10/3/2003
Submitted by: Wade Seward
Journal Entry:

WADE'S JOURNAL ENTRY- oct 3/03

Ever since I was a teenager I had always wondered what it would be like to drive around in a van with a band. Now at age 24 I am looking out the window of the back seat of a van watching trees go by. We spent a month of training and learning songs to get to this point. The thoughts and fun of our last church program still fresh in all of our minds. We had a great show the previous night. We were at Kate's home church in Longville, Minnesota. This was out of our normal area of travels, so it was nice to see some place different. I personally had a rough show. I totally botched the marketing skit, and could not recover it. A small price to pay I tell myself for having an amazing year. At times things still feel a little bit surreal. I haven't cooked my own meal in two months. Most host families offer to do my laundry for me, while telling me how important my work is. Yet I don't feel I deserve this. Sometimes I want to tell my host families I'm really not that special. Many of the responsibilities of the real world have been put on hold. But at the same time, life itself is put on hold for me personally for the year, while back home in Canada I know life is going on without me. People are passing and failing classes at my old college, old relationships ended, new ones have started. I can't imagine how many of my friends will be married by the time I return to Canada. I have missed four weddings already. I feel guilty because I don't feel guilty about missing such important things in my friend's lives. Yet being called into music ministry for a year in another country makes those small worldly things seem so trivial. Some people ask me if I am homesick. I find myself missing the other teams we trained with then the homeland. I never thought I could get closer to one hundred people in three weeks then I am to people I have known for years. When I think I might miss home, I recall a show we did not too long ago where I got sun burnt, and back home in Alberta it snowed about six inches. The days go by fast and the weeks even faster. Our team was talking about home and friends the other day, and how they are excited about Christmas coming in just over two



Wade Seward

months. I kept myself tight lipped as I figured my peers from back home have most likely forgotten about Wade. Perhaps my largest fear is I am nothing more then a passing thought of déjà vu gone as fast as it came. But this is all in a normal day's thoughts when you're looking out the window of your van, watching the trees of Wisconsin pass you by.

Date: 10/3/2003

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

Kyle's Journal Entry-

Wow!!! I have been away from my home, friends, and family for close to 2 months it seems like it was just yesterday that I was crying and hugging all my family and girlfriend good by. But now I am living in a van with six other wonderful people. We were at training at Luther Dell in Minnesota this seemed to go by so fast. We learned every thing that the Youth Encounter staff thought we need to know before we left the nest of training. The thing that I have found amazing is all the stuff we learned in training is just theory until you are on the road and it is completely different then I ever expected.



Kyle Turver

I knew this year was going to be a learning experience but I never thought I would learn some of the things I already have. For example Spiritual warfare is so real!! We are on the front lines of a battle that I am realizing is bigger then any war that the USA has ever fought. If you don't believe me read Rev. 12 then you will know what I am talking about. Satan knows that we are a threat to him and his army. People are getting sick left and right, sound equipment breaks for no reason, we get annoyed at each other for the stupidest little reasons and it causes us to divide. This is no coincidence some one does not want people to here the gospel of our Lord and that person is Satan. Let me tell you also that the power of Jesus is so much stronger then that of Satan and it is awesome to see him prevail time and time again.

There is something weird happening to me, and anyone who knows me will not believe this but I have this desire to read. I am reading this book called Wild at Heart. It is 240 pages and I read it in four days. Now I can't wait to finish this journal and read my next book. Now for those of you who don't know me let me tell you that when I was in High School (Last Year) I hated reading if I had to read I would do it kicking and screaming.

I have met so many cool people it amazing how generous the families we stay with are we have so much food in our van that we could never eat it all, and it just keeps coming. I wish I could share this year with everyone but I cant you would have to do it to understand. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and he will protect you and guide you. I sure know he has for me. I do miss home a lot but I know that this is where the Lord wants me and I know this road will lead home after it is all over and I will have a new look on life. Please keep me in your prayers. God Bless all who read this!

-Kyle Turver

Date: 10/3/2003

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

10/03/03

There are so many things that I could say about our first few weeks on the road. I am sure that I will never be able to explain how thankful I am for all the people who welcome us into their homes and congregations. I can already see our entire group growing. We have learned a lot about each other and ourselves. There is never a dull moment in our little group. We often go from joking into serious conversations and back to joking.



Lauren Rummel

Right now the hardest thing about this is being away from home. This is the first time I have been away longer than two weeks and I am incredibly homesick. There is a lot that I feel like I am missing out on from weddings to births. It is very weird not to be in school and to have a regular routine. I am sure these are things I will get use to but it is so hard to long for home. I hope my family and friends know that their support is appreciated and I look forward to sharing more stories at Christmas time.

I feel so blessed to have this opportunity and I am enjoying sharing my faith. It is amazing to me to be in the back of our programs and see how touched the people seem to be. Please keep our ministry in your prayers.

~Lauren

Date: 10/7/2003

Submitted by: Kate Schmid

Journal Entry:

October 7, 2003

Hey everyone! Hope everything is well wherever you are at! There has been a lot happening on the road these last couple of weeks!

The best thing for me personally in the last couple of weeks is that we got to go back to my home congregation for a program. It was great for me to see all of my friends and family, even if it was just for a night. It made me realize how many people back home are supporting me this year on the road. I am so grateful to all of these people! You are the reason that I applied to be on team, and every person that I come into contact with this year on the road is affected by your influence on me.

Another great realization that I have come to in the last week or so is that I need to start taking my faith walk seriously. I believe in Jesus, and I am excited to share His Good News with people on the road this year, but I need to be a better example of His love this year. I feel that I am nice to people wherever I go, but sometimes the smallest act of kindness can mean so much to people. When I go to a gas station, I need to smile at the cashier. I need to start leaving more than 15% at a restaurant when I dine out. That is my personal challenge this year. I am going to start leaving random acts of kindness wherever I go.

Kate Schmid



Kate Schmid

Date: 10/8/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

October 8, 2003

And yet another week and a half of amazing host home experiences, programs, and van rides! Thank you everyone who was a part of all of this.

I have two things I would like to share this evening that have especially touched me:

1). Longville, MN. (God likes to surprise us when we are least expecting it; usually in big ways too.) After a yummy potluck, the most fun sing-along and well received puppet show, (can you ever be too old for either of those things, right?), I wanted to talk with a few of the people that seemed to have really enjoyed the program. . . I asked one couple what they did for a living, the wife chuckled and replied saying "missionaries to Longville. We are trying to encourage our peers to open their Bibles, form personal relationships with Christ, . . ." Another woman shared with me some of her personal story – challenges – and wanted to share with me this tidbit of advice, "It is okay to be mad at God. To struggle. That is real life." What a witness these two women gave me! My fear of being an impassionate mid-aged person were removed. They were so encouraging to me about my role in this ministry saying that they could see my personality and passion come out during the program. I just appreciate the excitement they stirred up in me because of their testimonies – what role models for Christian living.

2). Sparta, WI. ConFest. How cool! Bringing over 400 youth and volunteers to celebrate their confirmation with worship, booths about global missions, and food of course. The energy in a



Tracie Bardonner

sanctuary when singing "Every Move I Make I Make in You, You Make Me Move Jesus. . ." while jumping and dancing is just AWESOME! I especially appreciated Bishop Larson's words of encouragement from Romans 8:38-39 during the worship time. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God." Nothing. I like this picture she painted, "The church here on earth and the church in heaven is cheering for each us; more cheering than Brett Farve gets in Lambeau Field." Pretty cool to have a God like that.

Love,
Tracie

Date: 10/16/2003

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

Kyle's Journal #2

Two Months over and only 2 months to go until Christmas, the time has been flying by. Just last day off I stayed with one of my best friends Joe. He goes to Concordia University Wisconsin. It was great to see a familiar face. We got to do a lot of catching up on stuff that has happened to us since we have been gone. He loves it and his friends are really cool too. On Tuesday I went with him to a few of his classes and got to see what the college life that I will be experiencing next year is going to be like. I really needed this weekend to just be able to kick back and hang out with one of the old homies



Kyle Turver

Life on the road is interesting. I was lying in bed last night thinking that the longest I am going to sleep in one bed this year is two weeks for Christmas at home. I don't know why but it was just a weird thought. I have been thinking a lot about life this year. Not just life as it is now but life as it was, is, and is going to be. I realize that life is never going to be the same as it was. I realize that life now is fun, rewarding, and tiring but will be over before I know it, and life in the future is so mysterious. Question run through my head all day like, who am I going to marry, how is God going to use me in the future, what is college going to be like, will it be to hard, will it be easy ect. I believe these are all good questions to ask but I want to live for now. I want to live as it says in Psalms 119:24 "This is the day the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad!" I want to wake up in the morning and lift my hands up to heaven and say thank you God of giving me today I give you praise. My prayer is that these questions that run through my head will make me grow and become stronger rather then distract me from the ministry that God him self has laid before me.

One other thing that has been on my mind lately is that everything that I experience here this year is only going to be able to be shared with the people on this team and God. People like my Mom, Dad, Friend, or even my amazing girlfriend Jessica will never be able to fully understand the things that I experience this year. I can tell them about it as much as I want and they may get a picture of what is going on but they will always be on the outside looking in on this year. This has been a hard realization for me because I want the people I love most to share in all my joys and sorrows of this year, but that is not what God intended. Our paths have split but sooner or later I know they will cross again and God will bring us closer then ever before.

I would like to end this journal with a prayer so if you are reading this please pray with me. Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity you give me to serve you his year. I thank you for the preparation that you had in plan before this year to get me ready. You put people and circumstances in my life to lead me to this point and I give you praise for that. I pray for all my friends back home that they would be finding there strength nowhere else then you. I pray for my loved ones that you would protect them and help them to grow as much as I am this year. I love you Lord, and will serve only you forever and ever, Amen

Date: 10/17/2003

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

For the first time on the road this year I felt what loneliness and longing for home feels like. In my country, Canada, recently Thanksgiving was celebrated. Normally we get Mondays off, but on this occasion we were asked to perform a show. I always try to give my best for every show. I live by the expression "leave your baggage back stage, you can pick it up afterwards." But this one occasion, I could find no joy in Spreading Christ love through music. My thoughts were driven and divided by missing my friends. The key to the story lies in the fact 90% of my team had friends or relatives in the area they were gonna stay with. My mind fluttered with thoughts of jealousy, knowing my team mates were basically celebrating my national holiday. The mail call came. Much to my surprise something was in it for me, box of hats from the office for me to sell. Not the most exciting gift in the world. Moving the hats the back of the chapel, I calmly sat and counted the new things to sell. Five minutes later the second mail call comes and it's an update from the office on my sponsorship. I guess any mail is ok was the only thought running through my mind as I tried to pick myself up. Knowing I needed some spiritual help asap, I sat down, picked up my Ibanez, and pretended to clean it. Under my breath, I started praying "God, I know I'm in ministry, and I am supposed to be overjoyed on all occasions for, but right now my heart lies up north with friends and family. Lord, I would give anything to be away right now with them. Truly I don't want to feel this way, but I do. Help me God. Amen."



Wade Seward

What happened next was truly amazing in my mind. There was a third mail call for me. I figured it must be more office stuff. Looking at the address I quickly realize it's a package from home. My friends Erin and Janell had sent me my college yearbook and a wonderful package with a tie, a CD, and a large piece of paper with my former school mates all signing it and saying something rad. I felt God had answered my prayer. He brought my friends to me. In a second he took my loneliness and tossed it out the window by reminding me that even though I may not be in Canada with my friends, they haven't forgotten about me quite yet. Thank-you to all my friends back home and especially my girls for making sure no one forgets me.

When I was in School people would often ask me when I would grow up, get a job, do societies acceptable idea of maturity. One year later I'm on the road for Jesus. I might not be doing what some of my peers see as the right thing, or mature, but as long as God is telling me this is the way to go, I'm with him. Joey Ramone once wrote, "When I'm lying in my bed at night, I don't wanna grow up. Nothing seems good and right, and I don't wanna grow up." If maturity means compromising what I feel is right, I think I'll stay this way, On the side where God wants me.

I guess it's a little tacky that I haven't written about any shows yet. So I will write about the nursing homes. The first couple times we went to nursing homes, I was a little taken back. Not really what I expected I would be doing, one day were rockin' out hardcore for the youth of the nation, and the next day I'm in a nursing home, playing hymns on my bass. So quiet I am not sure if anyone even notices noise coming out of my amp. At first I was scared to even make eye contact with them. I feared seeing the pain in their eyes, feared what age looks like close up. This could be my parents someday... this could be me someday... The reality of a nursing home was too close to my heart. Could they even hear me? Did they care? Would elderly people honestly respect a puppet the way our Sunday school classes do? Do I just look like another punk to the people in the crowd? All these thoughts running through my mind as I played the songs, did the skits, worked with the puppets. After the show is when the fears can hit one step closer to the blood pumper. I can't say I was completely comfortable when we go to these shows, but after sitting and talking with them for a while, I have put some fears to rest. They may not always like the loud music, but they appreciate our efforts as much as anyone we have seen, and their appreciation for life, and what the world has to offer has been second to none. Each time I go to a nursing home now, I wonder what I will be learning about the past, and what I can learn to help me in my future. I'm signing off now. Keep it real, God bless, Keep the faith!! Your servant in Christ, Wade.

Date: 10/20/2003

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

October 20, 2003

A lot has happened in the past few weeks. As a band, we have gotten a lot more comfortable with the songs we have had for a long time and we are preparing to learn several more. This is something that I've been wanting to do for a long time and I'm curious to see what songs we tend up taking out and putting in. Luckily for me, we have already put in a song where I get to play electric guitar for the first time in a family night program and even solo for a few bars. I taught Tracy how to play drums on that song and she seems to be doing fine so far.

The past couple of weeks have not been quite as busy as the first couple of weeks but there have been a lot more youth nights than before. These have been our most fun shows so far. One of the most interesting gigs we did was a retreat we did with the United Church of Christ (UCC). For the retreat we got to go to a really nice camp and interact with the youth on a camp counselor type level. This was cool because I'm one of the few people on this team who has no experience in a role that even resembles a camp counselor and we're going to do another UCC retreat very soon.

We have played a lot more retirement homes over the past two weeks which has been a very interesting experience. Just today, we ended up playing at five different homes because one of the staff at the church we played at last night has connections to each of them. I like these shows because I get to hear a lot of stories about the old days and I get to play guitar more than usual. The stories vary from previously having jobs that I'm not familiar with because of the changing times to war stories that are almost unbelievable.

Aside from the interesting things that have happened, my throat has been in a lot of pain over the past week. It started a week ago when my entire team arrived at a host home to hang out for the night and I was exhausted so I decided to take a quick nap on a chair in the living room (which wasn't being used at the time). When I woke up an hour later, for some reason the right side of my throat hurt really bad unlike any sore throat I've ever had. I've seen a doctor about it but they do not seem to think it has anything to do with strop throat. Sadly, it still hurts, but luckily it seems to be getting a little better.

Today in Wausau, we had a really fun program with a very responsive crowd. It was a little frustrating not to be able to talk to anybody afterwards because of my sore throat though. At my host home here, I met an adopted Russian five year old named Nicolae (if that's how you spell it). This kid learned how to speak near perfect English in four months! Well, that's all I can think of right now. It's getting late.



Jon Hockney

Date: 10/24/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

If I had not been reminded lately – wow God made sure that I knew – God is cool! What a week of fun. I checked my e-mail Monday afternoon while I was in Loves Park, IL, (right near Rockford, IL) and the first e-mail I spotted had the subject heading "Baby Johnson." YAY! I am an aunt to a very handsome, head full of hair healthy baby boy named Samuel Nathan on October 19. . . mother, father, and baby Johnson are all doing well.

If discovering that I am aunt was not enough greatness for one day, I had the opportunity to attend a Rockford Lutheran volleyball game with my host family. This was huge for me because I played volleyball at Lutheran High School of Indianapolis and attending the game brought back four years of great memories to me.

Fast forward to Wednesday evening, Wausau Family Night Program, and SURPRISE, I see one of my favorite camp counselor friends from Camp Lutherhaven in the lobby of the church. Could life get any better? Apparently it can because we had the "most rockin" night with the youth of Wausau. The energy in the sanctuary of all the young people, their parents, and others in attendance just knocked my socks off!

Now life of the road of a Captive Free-er is always an adventure; sometimes the adventures are more on the embarrassing side. What could I possibly be referring too? Well, I will give you a sneak peek into the relational ministry side of my life. . . picture a bathroom in need of a plunger. . . picture an experienced plunger (thank you three summers at camp for giving me that experience)



Tracie Bardonner

attacking the problem toilet. . . picture this experienced plunger failing miserably when flushing and seeing toilet water over flowing onto the bathroom floor. Aaah, sometimes you just have to laugh at yourself.

I realized the other day how much my bandmates and I are starting to know each other. Warning: another bathroom story. Lauren, (one of my bandmates), comes up to me with this huge grin on her face and says, "Tracie, I need you to go to the bathroom right now, the first stall." Meanwhile, I have flashbacks to the story I just shared. I check out the first stall and burst out laughing. I see an empty roll of toilet paper and above it rests a new roll waiting to replace it. She knows I like changing the rolls, (perhaps my love for completing tasks and seeing end results – or just quiriness).

It has been another two incredible weeks full of fantastic people and lots of "Go God" moments. I hope that you are able to see God working in your life. Thanks for reading my random journal entry. Have a great day!

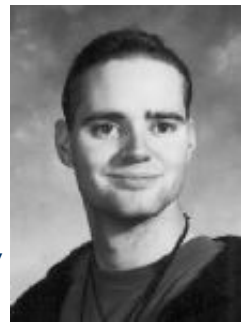
Love, Tracie

Date: 10/31/2003

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

Happy Halloween to everyone reading this journal!!! This is my first Halloween away from my native land, and its already exciting. It started off last night, the 30th, when our host church in Ceterburg put us in a hotel for the night. Now, I don't mean one of those roach motels you see in the movies, this was the full meal deal with sweet rooms, pool, hot tub, and of coarse the one thing our team always need, movie rentals. When I first signed up for captive free, one of my major concerns was that I would not be able to keep up with movies and music of the day. Lucky for me, God placed me with a band that loves movies as much as I do.



Wade Seward

Tracie I think was in heaven on earth when she found the work out room. It was nice to have some quiet. I love the ministry, and meeting people. But sometimes, it's nice to not have noise, and people asking you questions and worrying about acceptable behaviors your not used to adjusting too. For me, I am saying it's nice not to worry if I'm going to do or say the wrong thing. But I still couldn't shake the feeling that I wasn't doing something I was supposed to be doing. Although I felt a small part of emptiness and guilt from not being with people and living the life as I like to call it, I was able to find much joy in watching my team. I was able to sit back for a bit in the pool area and watch my band mates play frisbee in the pool. It was one of those rare moments in life, that you need to notice it when its there, cause it doesn't come often enough. It was one of those times when you can take pure and selfless joy from watching the people you love being themselves and enjoying life. Each time I heard laughter and happiness from my team mates, I felt the same happiness. I encourage everyone to look for those moments in life. They are often the most special moments you can have.

I have always enjoyed Halloween. I think even though we put on masks, and pretend to be someone else, in some ways we are more ourselves then most of the year. Why do I say that? Well, I find when we dress up, often times we dress as we wish we could be. And when we put on the mask, or the costume, we seem to be able to be ourselves because we are covered up. I guess I find some sort of irony in that we need to put on a mask to be ourselves. I might have to dress up for tomorrows show. I won't wear anything too major though. I was thinking about dressing up in a suit and wearing a tie I recently got in the mail.

It feels good to be in a host home tonight again. Interacting and finding out new and wonderful things about people. It's Friday, and I'm going to be here until Tuesday morning. It's a weird feeling to know I'm going to be in the same bed for more then two nights. At this point in time, it seems almost too normal and like real life. Hopefully I don't get too comfortable with my surroundings. I feel very odd telling you it scares me a little to be in the same place for more then two days. But it scares me in a good way. This is a little reminder that sometimes I even get to slow down and smell the roses on occasion. Hopefully no one is disgruntled by that terrible cliché'.

We also got to see Part of Chicago today. We weren't supposed to, but see, I made the brilliant plan to not print out a route from point a to point b(insert sarcasm here). Not one of my smarter moments on team. Praise be to God, Kyle was able to get us where we needed to go, but due to my laziness, tack on an extra 1.5 hours. But it was still major cool to see Chicago. And no worries, we were still very much on time. Even though we are only a few months on the road, I'm already curious what life will be like without my band. I just got to keep reminding myself to continually live in the present and for the moment God has put me in. People ask me a lot in host homes, in churches, and so on, how hard it is to get a long on the road. I can tell you in all honesty, it's so much easier then you can imagine. In fact, I can say with all my heart, I'm not sure what life will be like without my new family. So I choose not to think about that. Just live for the day, and enjoy the time I have with my new family. On earth, nothing is forever, so take what's given to you and run with it. Peace out, God bless, and keep the faith, your faithful servant for life and death, Wadeo.

Date: 11/7/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

What a fun week! I am not always the biggest proponent of Halloween, but this was certainly a Halloween I will always remember because of the people I met in DeKalb, IL, (where we spent Oct. 31-Nov. 4). I was welcomed into my host family as a sister to the kids, and a sister to the host parents. Thank you!!

Some of my highlights from the week:

- * Trick-or-treating as a band member, (not too creative on my part).
- * Being mistaken for being in the same grade as my fifth grade trick-or-treating buddies. Must be the height, right?
- * Going through a "haunted" corn maze – telling my host home sister and her friends that they could hold onto my arm at any moment if they were scared, a seemingly nice gesture, but really selfish motive, (I needed to hold onto someone because I was scared).
- * After singing songs at a nursing home in Green Bay with not much audience participation, breaking into Amazing Grace and seeing everyone start singing with us.
- * Have my parents see our team "in action" at a Saturday night program, come to our Sunday morning service, and meet everyone on the team over a yummy lunch..
- * (Ladies will understand this one), having my hair fit into a pony-tail for the first time in months.
- * Writing letters to camp friends and college friends that I miss.

I continue to be surprised by the hospitality of the host home families, passion for ministry by the pastors, and generosity of church members. We have already had Christmas quite a few times on the road. . . stationery, reams of paper for the computer, homemade goodies, a book, or something else graciously given. THANK YOU!!

The weeks are starting to go faster. Hard to believe that we will soon be in the U.P. for Thanksgiving. I hope that will not get into a routine or a rut with our family night programs. Thankfully, the people we meet make each program unique and fun for us. Still getting used to not being in college and the stress that goes along with that lifestyle. Is it normal to miss homework and all-nighters to study?

Have a great day! Love,

Tracie



Tracie Bardonner

Date: 11/7/2003

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

Trust in the Lord. This is one of the most seemingly easy biblical principals that I have heard and been taught since I was a kid. But what is trust? I find my self asking that questions lately. How do I trust God with every aspect of my life? It is easy to trust God with things like sin, circumstances, and spiritual life, but how about my future. I want God to tell me what is going to happen in my life now. I know that Gods timing is

perfect but I still struggle. I want to know what is going to happen with college, my relationships, my musical talents, my family, my future. I have to trust God that he will work those things out, that his knowledge and understanding far surpasses even the smallest bit of mine, and that my life is his. I know he will clear the fog in his perfect time. Please pray that God will give me the strength and wisdom to trust him and have patience

Life on the road is great! I feel like I am learning and growing everyday. God is stretching me in so many different ways that I would have never expected. We were in De Kalb, IL for like four days straight it was great to be able to stay in one bed for more than a night. My host family was awesome! I stayed with the Youth Directors family. From the beginning I felt like family. I got to go to a NIU football game. It was so much fun to get the chance to watch some good old football. I have not been able to do that much so it was great. When we left it was hard to say good bye because I had grown attached. It was different then other host families I felt like I was leaving family.

It is amazing to me to think that we are already a week into November. That means that we are almost three months in to the year. Where has the time gone? It seems like we just started a few days ago. The days seem to blend together so much that I think back and can't remember when one day started and then ends. It is very weird. I remember lots of things but it has been a blur. The day that I have been anticipating for a while now is coming closer. It is the day that I get to go home for Christmas. It is not so much that I miss home horribly but that I am excited to see my friends and family and see how much they have changed and grown like me, to hear of their adventures and be able to tell stories of mine. I am also very excited to go to mid-winter training and see the friends that I met from other teams and hear about their experiences on the road. There is so much exciting things coming, but every day is exciting, every day is an adventure, and every day is a lesson. I pray that I would never forget those words! God bless all those reading this.



Kyle Turver

Date: 11/7/2003

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

It was awesome to be able to stay in the same place for a while. DeKalb was a great time to get refreshed and ready to go back on the road. Kate and I were at the same host home. It was amazing to be a part of the Heide family for a week. They made me feel incredibly welcomed. We did a family night program, service project with the youth group, and a bonfire/ hay ride. On our day off we went shopping and our house mom took Kate and I to get our nails done. It was a definite treat. We also got the opportunity to go see Northern Illinois University play Ball State. It was my first college sporting event and it was awesome! We then went to Cedarberg and had a fun evening with the youth group. Green Bay was interesting and we got to see Lambeau Field. We are heading on to Pell Lake for a lock in. It should be a lot of fun but I`m going to go and take a nap so I can stay up till mid night! I`m still missing home but I will be there Dec. 14th! Please Keep our team in your prayers and e-mail us if you want to chat!
cfwl0304@youthencounter.org
~Lauren



Lauren Rummel

Date: 11/16/2003

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

November 16/03. wade seward.

Back home, there is one thing I am commonly know for in my small but awesome circle of friends from Calgary. Adventures usually tend to follow me around back home. Not major adventures involving car chases or saving damsels in distress. No, just small adventures that make you say, "that could only happen to Wade." Those small things in a day that make it just a little more memorable then a normal day in another persons life. I had grown fairly used to having adventure follow me, but I figured it didn't really



Wade Seward

cross the boarder. On this day however, the adventures I so dearly miss back home, came to visit me. And it was the perfect day to return. I would love to share my day with you.

Fellow teamer Kate and myself decided that since it was our first official day in Chicago, we should check out the downtown and as many sites as possible within a 10 hour period. Usually on Mondays I sleep in until around 1pm. This day however I dragged myself out of bed and down the stairs at 7:15 am. It has been so long since I got up that early, I had forgotten the morning had a 7 0'clock. I sort of figured morning started around 9:00am. So Kate and I hit wonderful city transit and start the festivities. Our first stop after a shaky yet amusing train ride was the sears tower. How wonderful. Seeing the world from high above!!! I could not wait. I was like a child on Christmas morning. So filled with anticipation I could hardly contain myself. The day was clear and sunny, until we reached to top of the tower that is. Once we reached the top, the clouds had taken over the skyline, and all I could see was white. This is how it was to stay the rest of the day. Slightly saddened about the clouds and wastes of 10 bucks we continues along the Chicago trek.

After a brief stop in the second oldest jazz club in America to get directions, we continued on our way to Michigan street. This was a wonderful site to see, so unique and interesting. One thing I like about Chicago, is there is an officer of the law every second block, keeping the peace. I felt very safe. Not knowing exactly how far anything is, we decided to walk to the zoo. It was free admission. This turned out to be a very long walk. But once we got there, it was so worth it. Well, at first all we could find were the barn yard animals. And Although they are magnificent creatures created by God, the thrill has pretty much dwindled for me as I grew up in a farming community. I did find it this most amusing though. As well, a squirrel, the largest one I have ever seen made an attempt to take his frustrations of city living out on me. By the grace of God I was able to make a clever yet grand escape. This was possible the largest squirrel I have ever seen. I will remember to not cross it's path again for fear squirrels have a good memory. Once in the zoo, I saw many great animals, lions, tiger, and bears(oh my!). But one thing that caught my eye the most was a hockey team all dressed for a game, chilling out in an animal sanctuary. Wondering why someone would try to tame the wild beast known as a semi pro hockey team, the timber wolves, we crept closer to get a better look. I also felt a longing for playing hockey. The sport of hockey is pretty much the only thing I miss about college, other then my friends. Once closer, a man approached us and offered us each a dollar to be in a commercial for the hockey team. I thought twice about it... I am not supposed to make money in the United states, since I don't have a working visa. But I figured this would be a good way to start and end my acting career. And hey, one buck is one buck. So it was worth the risk of deportation back to my native land. After our hard earned ten minute pay check(in cash) we finished our zoo tour and headed back into the depths of down town. For the third time this trip we were forced to ask for directions. Another four miles landed us at the hard rock café for supper. I look at the stage, and the singer doing sound check looks familiar. We had walked into the the pre show for the lead singer from the rock band Everclear. Like an annoying tourist, I once again brought out my camera and took some pictures. This was the end of the third role of the day. Due to having to set up for tomorrow's show on our day off, we had to leave early, but not before hearing him do a few of there major songs for free.

To me this was a nice adventurous day For Wade. I like to talk in third person. I don't think I will ever forget my first day in Chicago. I really do feel like God gave me a restful day by filling it up with fun. I know Kate enjoyed it as much as me. And I really loved sharing it with you all. Its too short until Christmas, but rest will be both needed and well taken. Have a good week. God bless, keep the faith. Your servant in Christ, Wade Seward.

Date: 11/19/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

I tell you, it is one small world. Narrow it down to the Lutheran world and there is only a single degree of separation!! Listen to this weekend that I had. It all begins in Valparaiso, Indiana. We arrive at the church for a family night program followed by a lock-in where I discover that the youth director is the sister of one of my camp counseling friends from Camp Lutherhaven in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Then, during our family night program, in walks one of my fellow camp counselors who



Tracie Bardonner

attends Valparaiso University. Surprise! I was able to spend the night with the parents of one of my Marquette friends after our time at the church. (Need to explain, the youth at Valpo spent the entire night at the church, but we left at midnight – after my first game of Sardines, basically reverse hide-and-seek, coolest game ever).

I did not think that my weekend of connections could continue until Saturday afternoon. I am driving the team's van in the city limits of Chicago, not downtown, but not a suburb. I happen to turn my head to the left; I take a double-take. . . no way! It is one of my college buddies just walking down the street. How cool to happen to look at that very moment! While talking with my host home family for Chicago, we discovered that one of my best friends from Indianapolis's mother taught their daughters in school. Who needs to be home for Thanksgiving when you are surrounded by friends and friends of the family!

Some highlights in my life:

- *as before mentioned, playing Sardines. (one person goes and hides, then everyone else individually tries to find that hiding person, once you find the person you join them in his/her hiding place, game ends with everyone hiding together)

- *using my first battery operated toothbrush (who knew brushing could be that fun!)

- *crawling on a church fellowship basement floor completing a "super secret mission" with 5 elementary children (finding supplies, making thank you's, and delivering them without being seen)

- *seeing a bunch of friends from camp and high school at Concordia River Forest on my day off

- *attending Luther High School North for a day, playing for chapel, and reminiscing my days at Lutheran High of Indianapolis

Thank you for taking the time to care about me. The support I have just astounds me!! Team life is going super duper fast. How can Thanksgiving be next week?!

Have a great day!!

Love, Trace

Date: 11/21/2003

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

Hey all! I have a lot on my mind. I am trying to learn everything I can from this experience. We are incredibly busy. We have a program at least everyday. It is good that we don't have the chance to get bored but pretty stressful all at the same time. I still have a countdown to Christmas going, only 23 days! I was ecstatic to see some of my family this past week. My Grandma Rummel, Aunt Linda, Great Aunt Dawn, Great Aunt Charlotte, and cousin Samantha were able to come to a family night program. It was wonderful to spend time with them. We are heading back to the Chicago area today and I am anxious to see my sister on Sunday. It is fun to try to think of inexpensive Christmas presents for everyone. Tracie and I are getting into doing some crafts I hope that I will be able to come up with creative gifts for everyone. We will head to mid-winter training soon. It should be interesting to swap stories with other teams and a lot of fun to catch up. Hope you are all preparing for the Thanksgiving season. I am very thankful for all that I have been given. This time away from home has made me realize how wonderful my family and home congregation have been to me. I am thankful especially for Brad (and family) Kristen (and family), Bonnie, Chase, David, Erik, Kelly, Gretchen, Danielle, my Daddy, my Mommy, and Toby! It is a true blessing to be welcomed into peoples home and to have the opportunity to minister to different communities. Please continue to keep me in your prayers. Thanks for everything.

~Lauren



Date: 11/21/2003

Submitted by: Kate Schmid

Journal Entry:

Greetings to everyone living in the real world! I pray that you are all doing well! As for the team and I, we are great! The countdown has begun for Christmas Break, and while I am looking forward to seeing everyone back home, I know that I will miss my team

mates. I can't imagine not living every day in a van with these five people. We have truly become a family in these past three months.

I was given the unique opportunity to go to downtown Chicago on my day off last week. It was an awesome experience! I had never been to Chicago, and so it was nice to be the quintessential tourist for a day. We went to the top of the Sears Tower, and thankfully there were clouds so we could not see any of the sights. If you know me, you know how afraid of heights I am, so that's why I was thankful. After that, we walked about thirty miles to a free zoo right north of Michigan Avenue, and got to see all of the animals. We spent about three hours just wandering around the zoo and enjoying the sights. We were also asked to be in a commercial as an extra for the Chicago semi-pro hockey team. The first day I was in Chicago, I was in a commercial!! That was great!

We have been having a hectic schedule lately, and so days off have been precious. But the hectic schedule was exactly what I was expecting when I signed up for this year. We have been doing an average of six to seven family night programs a week. We have been fortunate enough not to get burnt out yet, and I don't expect we will. We have been learning new songs to break up the monotony. I personally enjoy the feeling of accomplishment after a family night program. I can feel God working through our team every night.

I am personally feeling a closeness to God that I have never felt before. No matter what happens, I am constantly talking through it with God. Whether that means praying before I sing any of the songs in a program, or just chatting about the best route to take to our next booking, God is a constant companion. There are several big questions that I am working through with God right now. Of course the biggest question being what am I supposed to do next year. I am not feeling called to another year of team right now, but I don't feel particularly called to go back to school right away. I want to stay close to my family, but I always feel like I am being called away from them. I guess that I am hoping for some sort of epiphany to show me what to do.

But we are getting close to our next destination, and I should take a short nap before we get there! Keep the energy up! I will write more stories from the road in a short while. God Bless!!!



Kate Schmid

Date: 11/21/2003

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

A few weeks ago we were in Pell Lake, WI. We were going to be doing a lock in. I was very excited because lock in are always a blast. When we get there, I was told contact wanted us to do a candle light worship service later in the night. When I heard this I was very excited because I had not had a chance to lead a worship service in a while. The contact and I sat down and went over what she wanted it to be like. As we sat down I felt a very strong presence, it felt like the Holy Spirit was guiding the whole meeting. She told me that there were going to be a lot of un-churched kids there and she wanted to have an opportunity for them to accept Christ. She also told me that I was to let the kids know that there were going to be people in the prayer room that would be ready to pray with them if they wanted some one to pray with. I had this feeling that the Lord was going to something huge but I could have never imagined what was about to happen!



Kyle Turver

The whole night went awesome the kids were having a great time and we were connecting to them very well. The time came to go to the sanctuary and have the candle light service. As we walk in the sanctuary was dark the only light was the light lit by the candles. Before we started I told the kids about the prayer room and that there would be people there to pray with them if they wanted. I played a few songs then stopped and prayed, then told them again that there were people in the prayer room waiting to pray with them and to not be afraid if they were feeling led to go and pray with some one. I started into the next song and almost simultaneously about twenty of the thirty kids there stood up and went in to the back room to pray. I continued on and Tracie and Lauren were in the back praying with kids. I gave a short Gospel presentation and gave the kid a chance to receive the Lord. Then as kids were slowing coming back in from the prayer room I could here sobbing. I looked around and kids were holding each other crying and worshipping the Lord! It was awesome. After the service was over the kids sat in the sanctuary and talked and prayed and took time for refectation. I went out and talked to the youth pastor. She told me that the night was amazing! Then she continued on to tell me that kids who had never heard the gospel were coming into the back room and accepting the Lord with out being told. I was in awe, kids were getting saved

not by something that I said or even the Holy Spirit said through me but just purely through the experience of the Holy Spirit. It was like nothing I had ever experienced. Even if the most selfish prideful part of me wanted to take credit for what happened that night there was no way. It was purely the Lord. It was an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. God is good all time!

Date: 12/3/2003

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

December 3, 2003

Sometimes you just have to laugh.

Picture it: Monday = day off. Day to do nothing, except exercise and write letters, if your name is Tracie that is.

Lauren, (one of the bandmates), and I decide to go into town to get some treats because it is our day off, and we figured that we had worked hard during the week, and we deserve some snack foods. We talked it over for about 30 seconds and decided that we would just go; meaning, that we did not need to brush our teeth, or our hair, or change out of our pajamas, or shower, or do any sort of hygienic activity for our excursion. (For you ladies reading, you know that whenever you do not look so nice and go out into public places, you will most surely run into someone you know! It is some sort of law of nature.) I thought about getting a coat on, but decided that I would only be walking 30 feet in and out of the store; so what if the wind is blowing hard enough to blow me over and sending snow through the air. Well, after driving through the town, asking for directions at the gas station, and creeping along the county road, (we looked like tourists), we found the IGA. We bought our goodies, and quickly walked to the van and trailer to get out of the cold- mission accomplished. I start the van, push my foot on the brake and attempt to move the gear shift from park into drive, and huh, it will not budge. . . I try again, and no luck. "Lauren," I ask, "What am I doing wrong?" She gives the shifter thing-a-ma-jig a pull and it is stuck. . . what do you do when you can start your vehicle, but cannot change out of park? Well, you go back into the IGA/gas station and ask the kind lady at the cashier what she would do, and be overheard by a kind retired mechanic that heard you lead worship at his church the day before. Yes, that is what you do. Then you have the kind mechanic crawl underneath your car, try to pull the van with his truck into gear, snip wires, and trust you with his life as he works underneath the car saying, "Whatever you do, do not let your foot off the brake because you will run me over." This kind mechanic will proceed to call the Ford dealership, work in the cold while his groceries wait in his truck to be brought home, and manually shift the van into drive from underneath the van, allowing you to drive to the next town over where the Ford dealership is located.

The adventure continued with Lauren and I getting to the Ford dealership and giggling our way into superbly nice service. Thank you Ewen Ford! We got the van fixed that afternoon and left the trailer over-night for re-wiring. A very fun afternoon!

As I have done before I would love to share with you some other highlights:

- *Snowmobiling, and being pulled on a sled by a snowmobile in the UP.

- *Horseback riding Thanksgiving morning with our host sister and host mother.

- *Thanksgiving dinner in Chassell, MI with our adoptive family, with nap following of course.

- *The coolest/craziest/wildest game of spoons, (card game) in the church basement of Ewen, MI.

Thank you again for all your support as we are traveling this year. I am pumped for our lock-in this weekend because lock-ins are definitely high on my favorite things ever list. Hope you are able to reflect and spend time with your loved ones during the Advent season.



Tracie Bardonner

Date: 1/2/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

1-2-2004

Happy New Year! What a great year it has been thus far – all two days of it. If I could I

would love to share with you, in my sometime very wordy and jumbled manner, some highlights since we have been on the road Dec. 27.

*Starting off our year in Milwaukee and seeing familiar surroundings from the college days. Getting a little mixed up while trying to take my teammates out for dinner on the fun, trendy, east side of Milwaukee, oops, that is why I am a driver and not a navigator. (Flashbacks to all my Marquette days of making an evening out of getting lost on the public buses.)

*My host home in Milwaukee was such a blessing, and a great way to start back up on the road. The family had four children that let me watch a movie over yummy frozen custard. We even got to play 18 holes of mini-golf and laser tag. Life is hard. Wink wink.

*We quickly entered my Hoosier homeland on Tuesday for a nursing home visit. I introduced myself to a nurse and happened to say that my last name was Bardonner. "Bardonner?" the nurse asked. "We have a woman with that same last name." My first 'meeting a family member that I did not know' before on the road.

*The night of my meeting a family member, Kyle and I were able to drive an hour and see our Watermark Germany friends share a program. What a witness they were to me and a great jumpstart and motivator for my ministry on West Lakes. (The rest of the crew picked up Wade from the bus stop. . . I am guessing that Wade may journal about his "American adventure" to be admitted through customs and the trek to rejoin us on the road.)

*New Year's Eve Night and New Year's Day night. After our New Year's Eve program, we were able to play games, (Catchphrase – yep, I was a teeny bit competitive) with our host home families and church members until the ball dropped. Then, on New Year's Eve Day night, I went with my host family to one of their friends places and completely stuffed my face, and laughed and laughed. Fun night!

*It has been a rough week of illness, especially Lauren and Jon. Hopefully, we will all be 100% soon.

*We are very excited about our program. We are currently trying to refocus our message. Hopefully people in attendance will be challenged to share the hope that Jesus brings us, and not be satisfied with leaving their faith at the church on Sunday mornings. Be prepared if you come to a program; you may be motivated to step out of your comfort zones for God.

Thank you again for all your love and support. Hope you had a wonderful holiday season. I know I did. A shout out to all those people, (Marquette peeps and camp friends), that I was not able to see. I love you all!

Tracie



Tracie Bardonner

Date: 1/14/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

January 14, 2004

Hello everybody, this is my first journal since I came back on the road from break. The first couple weeks back have been more frustrating and miserable than fun, which is mainly due to the fact that I got sick a few days after I got back. I think I got the flu from Lauren but I'm not sure. Even more than a week after I got rid of the flu, I still have bronchitis which is frustrating but not very surprising considering how my sinuses act up in the winter.

On the brighter side of things, we have had some of our most interesting programs to date. We had one program that took place in a high school auditorium in Reedsburg, WI. At this program, we ended up playing for almost 200 people, and I got to relive my high school performance days. We also had our first Quake last weekend. Even though I started the Quake with an awful headache the team and I had a lot of fun playing music, hanging out with the youth, and talking the staff and the other band. I also got to go to the water park twice and hang out in the hot tub. I'm definitely looking forward to the next Quake.



Jon Hockney

Date: 1/18/2004

Submitted by: Kate Schmid
Journal Entry:

I was severely reprimanded at Christmas time for not writing journals....so I guess you could say that this will be my New Year's Resolution.

We have officially started the events season here at Youth Encounter. This means that most weekends our team is housed at a hotel with four hundred to two thousand junior high and high school students. These events have been the highlight of my year since being back from Christmas Break. As each event draws near, I get nervous thinking things like "What if these kids don't like me?" But in the end, I always meet lots of kids who just want to be around me, and I realize that I have nothing to be worried about. Another thing that I have been thinking a lot about lately is how awe-inspiring God is. I have delved into my Bible lately and I really am enjoying being in the Word. Every time I open my Bible, I find something that pertains to my day, or to what's going on in my life. I hope that reading my Bible will be something that I continue to do even after team. I have to make the conscious decision to stay in the Word.

But I guess that's all for now. I hope that everything is going well in your lives out there in the real world. Keep the team and me in your prayers, and know that I will be praying for you too! God Bless!



Kate Schmid

Date: 1/18/2004
Submitted by: Lauren Rummel
Journal Entry:

Hey All! Event season is amazing! We have seen a lot of people that we've met along the way. I could not remember everybody by name but there were so many familiar faces. I have had the awesome opportunity to work with the Junior Guides at both of our quakes. It was amazing to watch them get up on stage and lead a huge group of people a little younger. I had a few of them actually tell me that they are more comfortable sharing their faith with others and getting up in front of people! We also got the chance to meet alumni and made a few friends with the staff at events. Over all besides not getting enough sleep events are awesome.

My home Congregation is very generous and just organized a fund raiser that made me reach my sponsorship goal! It is great not to have to worry about that. I will never be able to thank everyone who sponsored me enough. I am still homesick often but I am glad that I have had this chance to learn how much everyone there truly means to me. This is definitely a once in a lifetime opportunity! As a team we pray for a lot of people we meet or are asked to keep in our prayers. I would love to pray for any of you and appreciate you keeping us all in your prayers. If you'd like to e-mail us a prayer request or just to say hello please do! Cfwl0304@youthencounter.org
Gods Blessings,
Lauren



Lauren Rummel

Date: 1/18/2004
Submitted by: Wade Seward
Journal Entry:

Greetings to all reading the west lakes journal. I hope this finds you well. We have had two quakes now, and it was totally exciting. It took some time for me to get back in the country. I guess I look like a terrorist. Oh well, if it's the sake for national security, rock on. Its hard not to let the attention of a quake make you get a big head. I just try to remind myself I'm doing this for God and that I'm in a cover band. It was awesome to watch other bands play. Since we don't see many other bands on the road, it was really cool for me to watch agape bust it out. I have been trying to understand the whole rap thing, but being from small town Alberta, I really don't really get it. But I am continually trying to understand the different culture I am in. it wasn't as hard to come back as I thought though. I thought I would want to stay home, but I felt the calling of the road and wanted to get back on the tour train. But that is all I got for now. I will write more next week. Keep it real ya'll.



Wade Seward

Date: 1/20/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

January 20, 2004

Hello my friends, family, and other Tracie supporters. Now I thought this year was a year that I was supposed to be "giving up something for God. . .or going to struggle and be challenged to the point of not wanting to go on. . ." This past week was anything but that. In fact I have been pampered and loved on to the point of feeling like a true sister to one host home and a granddaughter at another! (I felt like the guest of honor at my host sisters' late night dance party and honored that they would share an early morning breakfast - getting up hours before the time they routinely woke. As a granddaughter I was invited to play UNO and share family dinner as well swap stories.) I am still amazed every time I am welcomed into a home and treated as kindly and lovingly as I am. Thank you for those that have touched my heart this past week.



Tracie Bardonner

Last weekend was our second quake. This time we were in Chicago with 650 junior highers and their chaperones. I am humbled that God would be willing to let me stand in front of these youth and share His love through song and dance. For those people that know me, you will know how funny this comment, "You are such a great dancer," strikes me. Yes, I was told more than once that I, Tracie Bardonner, can "cut a rug." Well, maybe not in those exact words, but wow, who knew that my true talents would shine this year on team, (wink wink).

Events are just such a blessing. Not only is just cool to have that much energy and hormones in one room, but the opportunities to share and listen with youth, youth group leaders, and all the other volunteers that are required to make the event possible – are just awesome! I like the term "divine appointments." I truly believe that God has pre-planned many of those conversations because I have learned so much about myself and have been able to listen to many stories. Events feel like family reunions. We eat a ton, play lots of games, and are reunited with former teamers and the event staffers, (that feel like family).

Next weekend we are in Indianapolis. I will sleep in my own bed on Sunday, but the most exciting thing of all is seeing my family and Indy friends!

Peace.
Tracie

Date: 1/20/2004

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

January 20, 2004

Hello to all my amazing family, friends, supporters, and anyone reading this! This is my first journal entry since I have been back on the road. Christmas break was amazing. Being able to be back at home with the people that I love so dearly was great. Then leaving after two short weeks was very hard on me. But now that I am back on the road with my team having a blast life is great.

We are now in event season and I have come to find out that for the next three months I am going to live for events! They are the most fun thing that I have ever done. It is an amazing thing to be able to be on stage and look through the bright lights and see 650 kids so excited about their faith and having a blast. Then even better we get to go out into the mass of kids



Kyle Turver

and hang out with them. We have so many chances to make relationships with these kids through eating with youth groups, going to family time with groups, and just being accessible. The event staff is amazing and makes events even more fun because they are so fun and willing to help with anything. After events I become so drained that on Monday I end up sleeping until like one or two in the afternoon. EVENTS ROCK!

I have had a chance to stay at some amazing host homes in the past few weeks of being back on the road. Last night and tonight we are staying in the home of this awesome family. Yesterday I got to go ice skating outside with the family we had so much fun falling all over the place and then we went out for pizza after. I am always so amazed at the generosity of the host families that we stay with. They invite these strangers into their home but they don't stop there. They offer to serve us in anyway that they can. Then through all of this relationships are built. Oh God is good.

My relationship with the Lord is doing very well. My girlfriend Jessica and I read First Corinthians and now are working on Second Corinthians. We read one chapter per day then talk about it at night. It is awesome for two reasons. One, it is amazing accountability to be in the word and two it has grown us closer together as we grow closer to God. I feel like lately I have been filled with this in quenchable joy. I am just very happy and I give all the glory to the Lord.

My prayer is that any one who reads this would be encouraged in their faith or encouraged to have faith. May all the glory go to He who deserves it all, Jesus Christ.

-K Dog
Aka. Kyle Turver

Date: 1/27/2004
Submitted by: Kyle Turver
Journal Entry:

Kyle Turver 1/27/04

Hey to all my beloved friends, family, and supporters. Life on the road is great. We are in Indianapolis, Indiana. We were supposed to be playing a Tracie's home church tonight but we had a good size snow storm roll in and it got canceled. So we are kicking it here at our host home getting a nice extra day of rest! Life is great! The quakes are such a blast and they are making time fly by. This weekend we were in the Marriott Hotel in Indiana. There were about 400 kids there and they were pumped! We did not lead any treks because there was a group of people that called Jeremy last year and wanted to lead all the treks. They did a great job. The speaker's name was Packer Dave. He was a huge encouragement. He got the kids so fired up to go home and tell their friends about Jesus. He got all the kids to go up to people and say, "God loves you deal with it". It was really awesome. The kids responded so well to it. I went to lunch and dinner with two different youth groups and they both had two or three kids who went up to people and said that. It was amazing.

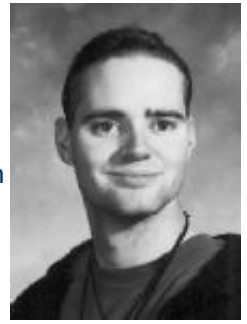
Earlier in the week we were at a church with this amazing Wednesday program. Each week they have a theme and they decorate for the theme and they have dinner, a bible study, and then an activity relating to the theme. When we were there the theme was rock and roll night. The fellowship hall was totally decked out to look like a 50's dinner! We did a bible study where we broke into age groups. Wade and I had the elementary school kids. These kids were AMAZING. They were by no means the kids that give the Sunday school answers they were on fire. They were teaching me things about faith and about the Lord!!! One kid in particular was filled with the Holy Spirit like nothing I have ever seen. He was whipping out answers and insights left and right. He told us about how he wanted to get people at school to pray before lunch so he and his friends started praying and now the whole table does before every lunch. They are now known as "The Grace Boys". This boy was in fourth grade. I talked with his mother after the bible study and she told me that he knew he wanted to be a minister since he was in first grade. I was blown away to say the least. Praise the Lord for kids like that who teach us how to have a child like faith. After meeting that young boy I now know what Jesus was talking about.

Thank you all again for all the support that everyone continues to bless me with. I love you all and pray that God is doing a mighty work in every one of you. God Bless!!!



Kyle Turver

Date: 1/28/2004
Submitted by: Wade Seward
Journal Entry:



Hello to everyone reading on this wonderful day. We are currently residing in the wonderful city of Indianapolis. We just finished up the Indi Quake. It was a riot. I had an amazing time. But I think the best part was that Todd miller(the bass player from the Christian rock band Echelon) asked me to play bass for him playing guitar. It was so awesome to play for another band. Many times I question my musical abilities, or lack there of. Having Todd ask me to play and be satisfied with how I was playing was a major confidence lifter for myself. It also felt really cool to play with a real band.

I am most amused by the snow here. Being from Canada, I don't really freak out too much about snow. So I was quite shocked and even amused when people were referring to the moderate flurries as an all out blizzard. Schools were cancelled, people couldn't go to work, it was rather funny to me since to me this was an average day in late October. My amusement stopped though when the church had to cancel our show. **Wade Seward** That was a little disappointing. I hate to see a show get cancelled. But the people around me told me they don't get much snow here in Indiana. I think what made it twice as hard to not do the show since it was Tracie's home church. Hopefully they will book the show for another time in the future.

On the up side of it though, I was still tired from the three quakes in a row, so an extra day of rest was really good for me. My host family here in Indianapolis was so amazing. They were some of the nicest people I have met in the United States of America. The one real different thing was I went from a hardK0re football state (Wisconsin) to a hardK0re basketball state. I can catch on to basketball much more then I can American football though, so it was easier for me to watch sports here. Of all the things we do on the road, host home ministry is the hardest for me. I was raised in such a casual do whatever sort of atmosphere, and also having just kinda floated around from place to place the last five years, my etiquette is a little lacking. I honesty had no idea that if someone asks for the salt, pass both slat and pepper. Who knew? And what's with this no elbows on the table thing? Who makes up this crazy stuff? And how come I was never told about it? Anyways, the hardest part for me has really been staying in peoples homes without offending them, or doing something considered kind of out of the ordinary. It is something I will continue to work on. By the time I figure it out, it will be homecoming.

Things on team seem to be going quite well. We are still revamping our program all the time to encourage people to not be Sunday Christians. This means we try to convey a message that its not good enough for God to just go to church on Sundays and then leave your faith in the pews. If people can take one thing away from out ministry and program, we hope that this it. I think coming together on a common goal for our program was a great start for our team to truly start coming together. I still haven't gotten used to the whole "bond for life" sort of thing, as I'm not really the touchy feely kind of guy. I'm still getting used to hugging people. Sometimes the different upbringings and life styles come in to play and I feel a gap between myself and my team mates. But I know that people are different and this is part of getting to know people, to love and respect the differences that we have.

As far as being homesick, I haven't felt it too much. The members of my team are constantly being in contact with and seeing friends and family, and that makes it a little hard sometimes. But for the most part, it doesn't get to me. All of the snow in the last couple of days made me think of home a lot. I like that I'm not hot all the time. I think the hardest thing right now is just being in this different culture. I'm sure many of you are laughing at me right now for calling Canada and the United States different cultures. I promise you though, it can be quite difficult and trying on me. If anyone reading this is going to see me in the future, I have a small hint: The Canadian jokes... there not funny, and I have heard them all a hundred times. See, here's the thing: when the people of this country start insulting me and making fun of me for being Canadian, this is what I take back to my home. And I tell everyone that I was made fun of and was the blunt of American jokes for the fact I'm Canadian. Then this becomes the opinion of people who will never meet anyone from this country that I have grown to love and respect. If people were to make annoying jokes to anyone, they would probably get offended at some point. So I just remind people reading this journal, that in any situation, not just Canadians, the way we act is how we are preceived by

more than just the person we are making fun of. This means that the more I am disrespected, made fun of, and taunted for where I'm from, the more I will only be able to reflect to others in my travels that this is what This culture represents. The only time I truly feel homesick is when I don't feel welcome. I ask you to take this care with all people and all cultures, not just with me. I Don't want to tell everyone when I returned home that many people I ran into insisted on showing me ignorance and disrespect. But this is an inevitable end result when I am constantly bombarded with insults regarding my accent, my country's policies on war, and different approaches regarding other cultures. Different can be good. I don't want to say I've had a bad time here, or that people have been overly mean to me. I have had a wonderful time and have met many wonderful people. This is more a request by myself, and also a reminded when you are speaking to someone from a different country and/or culture you are representing an entire nation/culture and this is what will be taken back to the other persons country/culture. Maybe next journal I will put in some truthful fact about Canada or something. It could be fun.

I think now I am going to sign off now. Time to head out into the great abyss of Indiana. Until next time, keep the faith and love Christ!!!!

wadeo

Date: 1/29/2004

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

Hello all! It is awesome to have events but great to get to do more family night programs at churches. We got the opportunity to stay at Tracie's house. Her parents are amazing. We were supposed to have a program Tuesday night at her grade school but it got canceled because of weather. It was too bad but I got the chance to visit with a friend. We were able to do chapel on Wednesday morning at the school. I have learned more this year about "God things." Nothing happens by chance. It never ceases to amaze me how everything works out. Sometimes we'll be running late and it turns out that there was a funeral at the church or something else going on. We would not want to be in the way so being late worked out. I am glad that it finally snowed. If it is going to be so cold all the time there should at least be snow! I am missing the 50 degree weather at home right about now! I hope that everyone is doing well! Please continue to keep us and especially our travels in your prayers. Like I said it snowed so travel is a little more dangerous.
~Lauren



Lauren Rummel

Date: 1/29/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

January 29, 2003

Another amazing week! God is good all the time. Let me share just a few highlights: 6:30 am on January 28, 2003, a normal cold wintery Wednesday morning. Do you remember what you were doing? Kyle and I traveled to Perry Meridian Middle School where we were stunned by the 150 junior highers gathered for a Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FCA, meeting. Whoa. I was blown away by the eagerness and excitement in the eyes of these youth gathered in their public school cafeteria. I was humbled that I would be invited as a "guest speaker" to share my testimony with these youth that already have a stronger faith than I did at their age. I never attended public school, but was always a little jealous of the camaraderie that Christians attending public schools seemed to share with one another. I felt that there was a special bond, a pride in confessing one's faith in a setting that was not labeled as a parochial school. That is what I experienced on Wednesday; a breath of fresh air from those in attendance that energized me for the entire rest of the day. They challenged me to dig deeper in my relationship with Christ, but mostly encouraged me by their example.



Tracie Bardonner

Kate and I are in our host home and my youngest host sister says she forgot to bring her offering the family night program and wanted to make sure that she remembered to give it to us before she left. As she ran up the stairs to get her savings, her mother told us that she has been saving all her allowance for us. Wow! Faith like a child, yes, but also the generosity and simple act of love of this little girl. Her giving has challenged me to give more freely, but to give from the heart with love.

Awesome to be able to spend time in my own home with my family and Indianapolis. It was the colliding of two worlds! Wish we could have shared our program with my home congregation, but due to the weather, the program was canceled. Hopefully we will be re-scheduled later on in the year.

I was challenged by one host mother to think about these four things:
(here is the paraphrased version)

1. God wonderfully created me.
2. God is in control.
3. God tenderly loves me.
4. God has a distinct plan for my life.

If we could always remember and believe these four things, as well as continually seek after God's presence - - watch out - - hold on to your socks, this world would be rockin' with love and hope!!

Date: 2/2/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

February 2, 2004

Hello again everybody! It has been an amazing couple of weeks since my last journal entry. We've had our first Chicago Quake and our Indianapolis Quake since then and we've been having a lot of fun. The Chicago Quake was really cool because we got to stay at the Hyatt O'Hare, meet the righteous insanity people, and we got to play "Light My Way" for the first time at a Quake which was quite a rush for me to be able to use my Karaoke experience to sing a heavy rock song. Me and Kyle also got to lead a worship trek which was also really cool. The only down sides about that Quake was having to carry all the equipment through a long and freezing wind tunnel (this was the long kitchen/freezer corridor that ran behind all the massive ballrooms), and the fact that this plush business hotel didn't have a hot tub!

This most recent Quake in Indianapolis was actually very relaxing and smooth running. This time, there was no long wind tunnel to carry equipment through. In fact, there was a big garage door that opened right in to the room we were playing in. We also didn't have to lead any treks because a church group took on that responsibility. This allowed us to have almost the entire morning and afternoon off. The biggest thrill of the weekend for me was for me and Wade being able to play with Todd Miller for most of his songs. It was fun having to be so spontaneous with my Guitar again. I haven't been able to do that in a long time.



Jon Hockney

Date: 3/2/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

Hi everybody, It's been a while since my last journal entry. We've been pretty busy for the past couple of weeks doing a lot of family night programs, kids programs, and a few youth nights. There haven't been as many nursing home programs as usual but we've had plenty of things to do to keep us busy. We did have our second Dell Quake the weekend before last which was a lot of fun. We got to play two or three songs that we hadn't played there yet including our Audioslave song "Light My Way" and our punk version of "In the Secret." Our set up went a lot faster then last time because we actually knew what we were doing this time. I ended up spending a lot of time with the "Righteous Insanity" people at the Quake also. Even though I love my team members, it is really nice to hang out with a team I don't see every day.



Jon Hockney

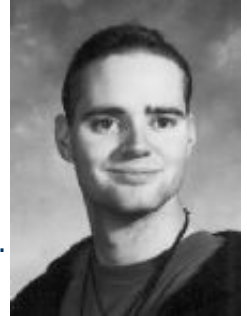
Aside from the Quake, we've been to a lot of nice churches and met a lot of nice people. I actually got to visit Platteville, WI which, as I found out when I got there, was where my Grandpa grew up. I use to have a sign in my room for the "Hotel Tracy" which use to be on main street in Platteville. I even met a few people who actually remember it being there and they said that it was a very high class restaurant. Well, that's some of the highlights. There haven't been too many low points other than the fact that we are all starting to get a little burned out, but we always deal with that pretty well. Events rule!!!!!!

Date: 3/2/2004

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

Greetings once again to my brothers and sisters in Christ. I pray this journal finds you all well and loving the weather. Oh the weather is amazing. This is like the summer time where I am from. Definitely this is the most amazing march weather I have ever been in. We just finished off the Chicago congress and it was so awesome. I love events. Its almost sad the event season is coming to a close. We only have two events left.



Wade Seward

One thing I feel compelled to write about is the life back home that I am removed from. Don't worry, I won't stray away from the team talk for long. I got an email the other day from someone back home. In this email they accused me of being a horrible friend and a bench warming Christian. When I left Canada for this ministry, I tried to make it as clear as possible this would take up most of my time and I would not be able to contact home as much as before. Much to my dismay, I was not taken as seriously as I had hoped. So every once in a while I get an email telling me I'm not the greatest person as I cannot find time to write or call everyone. Now your probably asking, how does this tie into team... Ok, the other day after I got the email, I mentioned it to my family on the road (that being the five people I share a van with). They encouraged me in many ways, assuring me I'm doing the right thing and that people are just going to have to accept the changes in me and the fact my life can't revolve around them anymore. As I was talking to my band about this, I thought about how sometimes the silliest things can be argued about here. But the truth be told, I'm so thankful for the people on the road with me. Life ain't about trying to be happy all the time, but having people to comfort you when you're down. My team, my band, my family... they were there to help. Not to cheer me up and say its' all good, but to do something better. To tell me they are there for me.

It's getting close to Easter. And due to lack of funds, and my extreme fear of flying, I will be celebrating the death and resurrection of our lord and savior in the great U S of A. I think it will be good. I'm hoping to go to the mall of America. Should be a trip (no pun intended). It will be weird not being home, but it's all an adventure. That's one of the amazing things about doing captive free. Every day is an adventure. Sometimes the adventure can make you so tired and so sore you feel you will never stand again, but that's just the sign of a good day's work for the Lord.

I want to give a big wazzzzzzzzzzp to my brothers in Christ Bryan and Dave. They are getting geared up for a rocking summer at Luther village. Keep the camp a rocking. I'm going to miss you boys this summer!

High lights of the week and and weeks past.... Ok this is silly, but I love seeing Chris Benoit as the champion in WWE. I have been following his career for the past 18 years. And he finally is getting the recognition he has so greatly earned. Go Canada.

And my last line of writing, check out the movie matchstick men. It was so awesome. Possibly the best movie of last year, and it got the shaft at the Oscars.

Date: 3/24/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

Isn't it amazing how fast things we look forward to are here and gone. We just finished with the Chicago Congress and it was awesome. Even though the setup for it took twice as long as the Quakes, we also got to have a lot of extra time at the Pheasant Run Resort. We even got to see Chris Tomlin (girls scream in the background) at Willow Creek Community Church on Thursday night where he led worship. It was really nice to worship at my old church again. The Congress itself went really well. I thought my drumming was a little more off than usual but nothing too noticeable. Echelon was amazing as usual and Richard Phamous was funny. A band called Opus also played for the Friday night fiesta and they were very impressive especially for their age. Having High schoolers at this Event was very different than having Middle schoolers. While not quite as energetic, they have a longer attention span and more schooling which makes for some great conversations and family time meetings. We also got to spend our day off (or sort of day off) with Jeremy our Event director at Pheasant Run which aside from all the usual Hotel accommodations is within walking distance from a Super Target, Wal-Mart, and a Mall. The weekend before Congress was actually our Dells 3 event. At this one we got to play opposite "Daniel's Window" and they had quite a big production and setup themselves but they put on quite a show. We ourselves ended up having several technical difficulties that weekend but it ended up working out pretty well. We even got to stay around the resort longer than usual this time. Overall, this two week period has probably been the most fun we've had on the road so far, even though we are still tired from it. I think we all grew mentally and spiritually from this experience. End.



Jon Hockney

Date: 3/26/2004
Submitted by: Kyle Turver
Journal Entry:

NINE DAYS UNTIL I GET TO GO SEE MY FAMILY!!! We just finished Chicago congress a few days ago. It was so awesome. The energy and excitement was something that I will remember for the rest of my life! We stayed at the hotel from Thursday night until Tuesday morning. It started to feel like home. Staling in one place for that long is very foreign for us. On Thursday night after we set up for the congress we went to Willow Creek and worship. We found out that Chris Tomlin would be leading worship. It was awesome. As I sat in the crowd and worshiped, as I was worshipping my body had this yearning to be doing what he was doing. Not right then but for the rest of my life. I felt God saying to me that is what I want you do to serve me. I don't know Gods plan but I know that he desires me to lead his people into worship. I talked to my mom just a little bit ago and the NW Captive free team will be at my church this Sunday for the youth worship time. My mom is very excited to have them over at the house and to get to meet the team. What else is new????? OH YA, I started writing a song! See I write lots of songs but since I have been on the road I have not been able to write any songs. But a few nights ago it just started to flow! I know that is probably not exciting for you readers but it is very exciting to me. Well, wade is commanding me to load so I must go but thank you all for your prayers and support. Ones again and for always may God receive all the glory.



Kyle Turver

Date: 4/1/2004
Submitted by: Kate Schmid
Journal Entry:

So I'm supposed to be writing a journal every other week, but as you may have noticed I don't quite get that many done. I know it's got to be time to do a journal when one of my friends from back home starts yelling at me that she doesn't know what I'm doing on the road. But Easter is coming up soon, and I'm very excited to be going home to see my family. I'm also taking Wade, my teammate home with me for our time off. I only hope that my family doesn't scare him too much! But really and truly, there isn't anything too new going on, so I don't have anything to write about. For most of you who are remotely interested in what I am doing, I can give you a call to let you



Kate Schmid

know what's going on. So that's all from the road this week.....or until I do my next journal.

Date: 5/1/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

"Please let me stay in a unique host home God. . . maybe someone with weird hobbies or lots of children. . . surprise me." - - - As I write this I feel like I may sound ungrateful for the homes I have stayed with thus far on the road - - -no, no, no - definitely not what I mean to be typing. Staying in people's homes, or the 'relational ministry' component, as we call it, is my FAVORITE part of my day! Anyway, I could have guessed what God had in store for me as our van rolled into our northern Wisconsin home for the night. . . We start unloading our trailer at 4 pm, our typical unloading schedule. . . as I bring in two buckets of Youth Encounter clothing items and CDs, I see a familiar face in the hallway. . . "No way, I think, it can't be." Yes, there stood one of my favorite campers from Camp Lutherhaven in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, summer of 2003, in the church hallway. I could not believe my eyes!! She lives in Wisconsin and flew out to Camp Lutherhaven, where her mother was a counselor, and was in my cabin group. What a cool surprise! To top that, I stayed with an amazing host family. Not only did I partake in the snack of Cinnamon Life, (I love cereal!!), after our ROCKIN' evening with area churches and over 150 junior and senior high schoolers, (how cool to have a packed church with dancing, jumping, hyper teen-age youth), but my host family stayed up to gab and play a very intense game of Sorry with me, (I also love to play card and board games!!) All in all, it was a fabulous evening!!

Like I just said, host homes are my favorite thing about life on the road during the week, (lock-in's and our events are my favorite type of programming that we do). I am blown away each and every evening by how welcoming and loving the families are to us when we come to stay for the evening, or evenings, depending on our schedule. THANK YOU!!



Tracie Bardonner

Date: 5/12/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

May 12, 2004

Woozers!! God is good. May I share with you some of the fun from the last few weeks? Let's start with a few of the best days of imaginable! I could not have dreamed up better days.

This Monday, May 10, I went with Kyle and our contact to Lake Michigan for a sailing adventure. I have only gone sailing a few times before during summer camp in Idaho. Nothing beats summer sunshine and fantastic company on a lake. We were the sole sailors enjoying the perfect day. Go figure, some people have to work on Monday mornings! Thank goodness for teammates that look out for fellow teammates - if it were not for Kyle grabbing me on one quick tip of the boat - I would have been mighty cold and wet.

Flashback to May 3, another outstanding day off. I had my very own Makeover Story. If you are not familiar with TLC's show, then please let me fill you in with this girly-ness. Picture me, a not-so-fashion savvy youth lady, hair in a ponytail and clothes purchased in a different century, entering a department store equipped with saved up stipend money and two fashion consultants, my teammates Kyle and Lauren, ready to change "my look." The mission: to find me hip, cute clothes. The goal: to transform me from looking like a junior high girl with camp counselor clothing sense to the college graduate that I am. Successful? Most definitely. (Don't get me wrong. . . I now have a new outfit, but you will still see me sporting the pigtail mesh short look quite frequently!)

I share with you a few silly fun highlights from the road, those two were just two of many adventures of the Captive Free West Lakes team. . . what else have we been up to?

Lots of amazing host homes! Wow, I have had many great nights of family fun over board games, ice cream, strawberry shortcake, and movies. I am continually humbled by the feedback we receive from those in attendance of our programs. Thank you for your words and notes of encouragement



Tracie Bardonner

and support.

Other highlights: *the rad-dest game of crab soccer, (picture a room of junior highers in "crab position" on the floor with 4 balls flying around the room), in the universe* *outdoor program complete with "mosh pit" and a kick-line of junior and senior high boys and myself* *roller skating team outing* *driving around downtown Chicago in a convertible* *listening to junior highers share their desire to live their life for Christ*

Wow! God is doing great things in the West Lakes region!

Date: 5/18/2004

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

Hello All! Life on the road is still an adventure everyday! Now that event season is over we are visiting churches and doing family night programs. We are starting to prepare for Vacation Bible School, which I have to admit I'm not too excited about. We are going to have a short break over Memorial Day Weekend and then we go to Ohio for training. This weekend we were in Evanston, IL. On Sunday they had both of their choirs sing and their contemporary band play. It was absolutely amazing! It is always nice to have a day off. I got to get a hair cut and relax most of the day. Recently we visited the nicest assisted living home that I've ever been to. It was in Peoria and the people were incredibly nice. The church arranged for us to stay in a hotel and to eat out. It was very nice to have some down time.

Since I last wrote I celebrated my 21st birthday on the road. I thought it was going to be very sad to be away from home but my team mates made it special. Friday night we were at a lock-in and so we had chocolate chip cookie cake at mid-night. Then Saturday, Tracie had several surprises for me. It was still hard not to be home but I got to go home the next day for our Easter break. It has been a continuous adventure, between figuring out driving directions to planning for lock-ins. We have learned how to work together better then I thought we would. I honestly think I will not be able to make decisions on my own when I get the chance to again! I am registered to go back to school in the fall. It has been a big challenge trying to get everything situated with my school from this far away! Please continue to keep us in your prayers. Thanks for all the support!

~Lauren



Lauren Rummel

Date: 5/18/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

May 18, 2004,

Hello everybody, it's been a while. April just breezed by and we're already halfway through May. Our last two events were a lot of fun and we're kind of sad that they are over. We actually got each our own rooms at the Chicago Quake 2! Fun stuff. It's strange to think that we'll probably never see the Chula Vista Resort again, but life has to go on (sob). It was kind of sad saying good bye to a lot of people that we did our events with. We all had a lot of good times and hopefully we'll get to see them again sometime. Many of them I know I'll be seeing this summer and at homecoming, but that seems like a long time; but I know from my experience so far on the road that it really won't be.

Lately, we've been going to a lot of churches that we have already been to which is really cool. It brings back so many memories and so many familiar faces which have almost been lost in the seemingly endless sea of faces I've seen this year. I must admit I recognize faces a lot better than I remember names. It was really fun doing a family night program in Brule, WI which was our very first show we ever did during training. It felt like we were just there yesterday. We also more recently went to the first church we were at in Sheboygan, WI and got to re-live our first experience staying the night there and renting movies to watch. One of the most memorable churches I've been to recently had an old miniature bowling ally. I usually hate bowling because it costs money to



Jon Hockney

practice and it always turns into a competition, but this was the most fun I had bowling because both of those characteristics were removed.

One of the cooler things that has been happening is that I've been developing a better passion for people and the ministry. I don't know if it's because it's getting closer to the end of the year or what, but it seems to happen more frequently now. The only problem is that it drains my energy very quickly and I can still only talk to a few people before I start to wear down. The thing that wears me down the most is having to answer the same questions over and over again. Even though that is the biggest part of our ministry I would much rather find out more about the person asking me. Tracy's really good at that and it seems like more of chore than anything. Ah, the joys of being an introvert.

Date: 5/18/2004

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

May 18, 2004 by Wade Seward.

First thing's first... GO FLAMES GO!!! I am so excited that the Calgary flames made it into the playoffs. And they now are in the Stanley cup finals. The only weird thing is that the one year I am out of the country, the flames actually made the playoffs. And now the finals. So exciting. I wish I was there with all you flames fans reading this, but that's ok.



Wade Seward

Things are good. I'm a bit tired. It's getting close to break time and it's hard to keep everyone motivated to want to keep pressing on. I have had some really awesome host homes as well. Also part of the reason that I am tired. The other night I stayed up playing beach volleyball outside until 3 am. I was like "hope you are enjoying all the snow back home." Maybe that was cruel.

We had an outdoor show for mother's day and I got sun burnt. I called home to vent to my mother, and she explained to me they cancelled everything back home due to the snow fall. So even though events are over, we're still having an amazing time and getting ready for even more excitement.

And we are now doing V.B.S. stuff. And that's been really awesome for me. Cause I feel I am really of use now. A lot of my schooling and past ministry experience is in children's ministry. So many of the songs and stuff I am trained with are finally going to apply to this year. A big part of the year is feeling like a person is needed. And now I feel that way. So I hope my expectations for V.B.S. are not too much, but I am expecting an awesome experience. I think as well, since I take longer to warm up to people and vise versa, having an entire week should help me to get to know people, and feel like God is truly using me to make a difference in people's lives.

But with every good thing comes the bad. The bad part is this year is quickly coming to a close. I wrote at the very beginning of the year about how I'm frozen in time and life is moving on without me. Well, now I have to go back to that life. And already, things I know are so different. Things I knew would change. Things I have written about before. People are engaged, got boyfriends and girlfriends, some have moved away. Some, well, some have flat out rejected me since I have left for a year. Will there still be room for Wade? I know also that our church is getting a new pastor. That's gonna be very hard for me, as I was very close to our old pastor. And how will I be viewed upon when I return? In some ways it makes me almost want to stay here for another year. Going home does scare me in some ways. But I just gotta take every day for everything I can, and let God sort out the rest. Hopefully it will work out in the end

Well that's all for Wade. Keep it real, keep rockin the cross.

Wade

Date: 5/21/2004

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

Kyle Turver, May 21, 2004

Yo Yo Yo. Hello to all my Family, Friends, and Fans (and all those who do not care much about me at all). I am doing great. We have been super busy here after event season got over. We have been doing family night programs every night since then. I do love them but I have to say that VBS is going to be a great change. Our team has been rehearsing getting ready for the summer. I have to say that it has been very refreshing to rehearse. We have not been much of a rehearsing team because that was one of the only times when our team would get into disagreements. So we kind of stayed away from them. But all of us are so excited and on board for VBS that they have gone amazing. We have rehearsed for the last 4 days and learned the themes to both VBS packets and a whole lot of sing-a-longs.



Kyle Turver

Last night was awesome! I got to say at the Huck's in DeKalb, IL. I have stayed there before and we have grown very close. I think of Julie like a second mom (Don't worry Mom no one could replace you!!!!). But it was great to be there again, and it really did feel like I was at home. It is even cooler because I get to go to my real home in less than a week now! Matt from the North West team is going to be at my house for break. That will be a blast!

I am all set to go to school at North West College in Kirkland, WA. I am getting pretty excited for it but at the same time I am pretty nervous to. But it is something that is going to be very new and challenging. It is going to be awesome to live 5 seconds away from my wonderful girl friend Jessica. I have really learned to appreciate the blessing of living close to the people you love. Well I hope all is well to those who read. I send my blessings and I love you all with the love that Christ gives me, may he receive all the Glory.

Date: 5/21/2004

Submitted by: Kate Schmid

Journal Entry:

Hello to everyone in the real world! I hope everything is going well for you! There's so much going on these days, but at the same time it doesn't seem so busy. This year on the road has been a strange and exciting trip for all of us. God has changed my outlook on many things, and challenged me in many ways. When I started this year, I was so excited to use my strengths for God. However, God had something else in mind. I have been challenged over and over this year to work on my weaknesses. Instead of being a leader, I have had to become a follower. Instead of being my usual unorganized self, I was challenged to become organized. And instead of being the selfish individual that I usually am, I have had to become part of team. And all of these things have made me a stronger individual. I am still forced to work on these things daily, but it is for my own good. And that is something that I have had to come to realize through a long, hard journey.

Something of excitement in my home life is that my Dad, who is legally blind because of macular degeneration, is soon going in to see if a breakthrough procedure will work on repairing the damage to his eyes. If this would work, my Dad would be able to do things that he has not been able to do, such as driving and reading. That would be an amazing gift from God, and if you all would keep him in your prayers, that would be very nice! Hopefully I will hear soon if this will work for him!

But that is about all that is going on here on the road. Again, I hope you are all doing well, and that I will be able to see all of you in August! Thanks for all of your prayers and concern. I appreciate everything that you all do for me!!!

Kate Schmid May 21, 2004



Kate Schmid

Date: 6/7/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

As I am typing, Lauren Rummel is exercising to an exercise video. Quite an interesting background to this journal entry. . . (A couple of us are determined to get in better shape since we are 10 months into our 12 month marathon tour of yummy desserts and all-you-can-eat potluck dinners)



Tracie Bardonner

We are in our first week of Vacation Bible School, VBS, here in Danforth, IL. Too fun! We have already been showered with blessings – people, food, and accommodations. Picture two trailers resting side by side in the church parking lot for the six of us to use all week.

We arrived here in Danforth on Saturday after our VBS training in Fulton, Ohio with three other Captive Free bands. (Awesome chance to catch up with friends on other teams, worship together, and play ultimate Frisbee together!)

I must share with my glorious Sunday afternoon, a picture perfect summer day of activities. Kyle and I went on a run, then basked in the sun, (well actually falling asleep and causing a little bit of pinkness to appear on our skin). I thought I owed it to the team to "quality control test" the camper chairs by sitting in the shade of our awning sipping Crystal Light, listening to the breeze rustle through the trees, and reading my book, The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. Last night we were invited to one of the church member's homes for dinner. Hmm hmm good. I must say that whomever invented the swing set had quite an intelligent head on his or her shoulders. Nothing screams summertime fun like the squeals of children playing on a backyard swing set.

This is only a little snapshot of the adventures that are in store for the CFWL team this summer. Already it has been wonderful to have more consistency and develop stronger relationships with the youth and adults here because of the longer stay. More to come!!

Date: 6/15/2004

Submitted by: Lauren Rummel

Journal Entry:

Hello again! Our first Vacation Bible School went 100% better than I thought it would. We were in Danforth, IL. It was a small town but had the nicest people. Anything we could have possibly needed they took care of. I have never known people to give so much of themselves. The church's ministry was amazing. I had no desire to spend my summer with little kids but this has been awesome so far. It seems like this time will go by fast. I am registered for classes in the fall. I feel bad looking forward to returning to the real world but I know that I looked forward to this for several months too. Please continue to keep us in your prayers. As a team we are doing okay but I think that everyone is a little anxious for future plans. It is wonderful to get the opportunity to stay with one family for so long. It is nice to finally get past the first day questions and get to know them a little more too. I do look forward to spending time with families. Thanks for all the prayer support!~Lauren



Lauren Rummel

Date: 6/16/2004

Submitted by: Jon Hockney

Journal Entry:

VBS has started and we are on our second week. So far, everything is really well and it is not quite as bad as I thought it was going to be. The days go by really fast and the kids all seem to enjoy it. Our first week was spent in Danforth, IL and we had a great

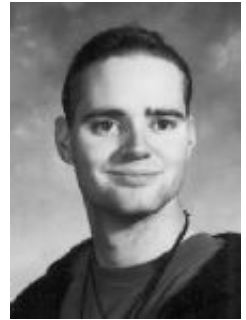
time there. They set up personal trailers for the guys and the girls and I felt like I was on vacation for a week. The families there are very nice and we got to have supper with a different family every night. One of the families was nice enough to get me some prescription glasses when I put it on the needs list which was amazing. I've been needing glasses for a long time and I never thought I would get them on the road. The kids also were a lot of fun to be with and we had a lot of good times. This week we are spending at Clintonville, WI and we are all at separate host homes. The week is going very well so far and we're having fun with this group of kids. My host home is very nice and they have three kids. The oldest six grade kid knows more about computer programs than most of the computer people I know and the two little kids have more energy than I've ever had. I look forward to the rest of the week.



Jon Hockney

Date: 6/17/2004
Submitted by: Wade Seward
Journal Entry:

From the files of Wade comes another summary of the adventures of touring in a foreign country. It's pretty crazy back home with people gearing up for an election. I'm sad I won't be voting this year. This means I won't be able to complain about my government for four years since I was unable to exercise my right to help choose our government. Oh well. When it comes to politics, I just try to pray that the leaders in power make the right decisions.



Wade Seward

That is enough boring stuff. I was sad that the flames didn't win Lord Stanley's cup, but that's ok. They made an awesome run. Just hope I don't have to wait another 15 years for them to win a playoff series. I guess I still feel ok, since there are more Canadians on the Tampa bay lightening then on the Calgary flames.

So your probably waiting for me to start talking about touring... well, I guess I can do that. We are in our second week of VBS. And it is quite awesome. I'm really enjoying staying in one house for a whole week. The churches and host homes are treating us with so much respect and dignity. It has been absolutely wonderful. I have to admit though, sometimes, playing the sing a longs all the time for hours can be somewhat boring. I find myself coming up with new bass lines every day just to keep myself amused. I know it's for the kids and all that, but I still am a musician and need to keep challenging myself somewhat. Doing this does make me wonder if I could ever make it as a children's television personality. But then again, I would probably have to remove my piercing.

I must tell you all about this exciting thing that happened to me last week. Myself and fellow teamer Kate went to a near by town to rent a movie. On the way, I noticed a music shop. I kept this in my mind since I don't see music shops in towns of 2 or 3 hundred very often. So we went and rented a movie. So the next day I'm playing Kate's guitar, and the string holding her strap breaks and the guitar falls. I felt absolutely horrible. So I told her we would go to the guitar store and try to see what we could do. We end up at Fairchild's music. The owner is Gabe. He's a Christian and was so nice to help us and give us a break on musical stuff. As well, he invited us to an open stage Jam, where Kate and I got to get up and play some stuff together. As well, for the first time ever, I got to play Ramones in an open jam. It was really awesome for us. I felt this was a true blessing for us to hang out with another Christian musician and get a chance to play some stuff outside of what we normally do.

As most people reading this journal know, I work in oil field construction and maintenance. It is very weird that in only a few short months I will be back turning wrenches and shoveling gravel for P+H oilfield. Trading in my patchs chords for work gloves, my sandels for steel toes boots, and my bass guitar for my hard hat. Hopefully my boss takes me back at any rate. I guess it's a weird thing to think that this moment right now when I am in the states living it up in a captive free band, that this will soon be no more then a memory. A story. A quick story to tell at morning coffee before the work day truly begins. That's hoping that people will want to hear my stories and listen me to babble on about what I did, and how I wasn't just in a band, but part of a family that tried to be the best vessel of God's work possible. So that's where my life philosophy comes in. Don't worry about the

future. Cause this is the future. The future happens now. It happens now matter what. I do the best work I can with the now, and the future happens. Now matter what we do or don't do, the sun will rise the next day and the sun will set that night. I recently passed that idea along to a friend back home in Saskatoon. And I hope it helped. So I thought I would share it with you. Hope that it didn't make anyone think less of me.

Well, that does it for me this week. God willing I'll talk to you all again in a couple weeks. Keep rockin' the cross.

Wadeo

Date: 6/17/2004

Submitted by: Kate Schmid

Journal Entry:

Hey everyone in the real world! I hope that you are doing well! There is nothing really new here on the road, but I will try to write about something anyway. When it gets this far down to the wire, it's hard not to think about going home as I'm sure all of you could guess. However, the kids that we are doing Vacation Bible School for make staying on the road much easier. I have learned this year that if I were to become a teacher, I would be a better elementary school teacher. I really enjoy hanging out with little kids, and they make my life happy. Don't worry Mom and Dad, I'm not ready to have kids of my own yet. I just like to hang out with other people's children! But that is about all that is new in my life. I hope that this journal entry finds everyone well and having a blast this summer!!!

Kate Schmid
Captive Free West Lakes 03-04



Kate Schmid

Date: 6/23/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

What fun adventures has the West Lakes Captive Free team been up to?

Well the BIG DOG of fun activities has to be our trip to Six Flags Great America yesterday in Gurnee, IL. After we finally found the parking lot, (who knew it would be so hard to find the entrance to the park), we hit the coasters. What a blast!! God could not have blessed with a more perfect day of weather – sunny, gentle breeze, not too hot, not too cool. We rode the rides, enjoyed the park entertainers, (Kate got squirted with a water squirting clown), stuffed our faces with yummy, and horrifically bad for you park food. A few of us braved the water rides and succeeded in becoming soaked to the bone! It was awesome!! I believe that Wade was the big winner in the wet award, although, Kate, Kyle, and I were leaving a trail with our drenched clothing. We even made it back in time to partake in the evening meal at our current VBS church in Machesney Park, IL. All in all a great morning and afternoon of team bonding!!

Yes, that "work" thing, if you can call puppet shows, bouncing up and down while singing "Father Abraham" with your tongue out work. This week we are "working" in the evening for Summer Celebration – learning how to lead a victorious Christian life; based on Phil 3:14, (you can sing it to the tune of Jimmy crack corn and I don't care). Nothing beats the entire family, (babies through grandparents), singing the song "Everlasting Love," huge grins on their faces, and hopping through the pews singing "Ooo ooo ooo."

It has been fabulous to be back to a place where we have been before. My host home is just terrific – trips to DQ, UNO tournaments, and lots of full family fun.

I must share some of the highlights of last week's VBS as well. I was spoiled rotten with horseback



Tracie Bardonner

rides, Harley rides, home videos, omelets in the morning, visit from another YE team, and lots of laughs. Being in one home for a week has been such a blessing. . . I can't get over how attached I can become after only one week. . . but when you stay in home where the family is as fun and loving as the homes I have been blessed to stay in - - it is possible. THANK YOU to those special people.

Date: 6/27/2004

Submitted by: Kyle Turver

Journal Entry:

Hello all! I am sitting here in the navigator's seat heading back toward Bloomington, IL. You see we have already passed this today and in fact we were in Indiana. Here is the story. I got to the church today an hour before everyone else, because my host family had to go to work today. So when I got to the church I took out my bags in the gym next to the door so that I would not forget them when I left. Well we did our morning stuff then departed. About two hours down the road I go to grab my back pack to get some money for lunch out and it is not there. Then it hits me that I failed to remember to grab my bags from the gym as I walked out. Well all you other teamers are thinking, "No big deal you can just pick them up some other time when you are in the area". That was not going to work because we all have memorial day break off and I had all my stuff to take home and even worse my I.D. and ticket to get on to the plane. We had to make a decision . Do we go back miss our booking and maybe even my 7:30 flight or do we continue on to our nursing home booking and just miss my flight.

We sprung in to action. Three cell phones going at once, calling everyone we could think of to figure out what we were going to do. We called our contact, the church, and even the office. I could not get a hold of our contact but I did get a lady from the church who I explained my situation to. Meanwhile Tracie was on the phone with the office talking to the team director. With some help we make the decision to turn around and go back for it.

When we got the bags it was a race against time to see if we would get there before it was too late to catch the flight. Tracie's dad met us close to the air port to pick me up and take me there so we would not have to deal with taking the trailer through. He was so great and picked me up a salad because I had not had time for lunch or dinner. A HUGE THANKS TO THEM. The awesome thing was, I made it there with more than enough time to spare. Thank you God. The moral of the story is? Even if you are a knuckle head like me and would lose your head if it was not attached.....God still loves you. :)



Kyle Turver

Date: 7/16/2004

Submitted by: Tracie Bardonner

Journal Entry:

If this were PeeWee's Playhouse, (a silly show from my childhood), the *word of the day* (the word that every character screams crazily whenever spoken) would be **WATER** (AAHH)



Tracie Bardonner

Water (aahh) + summer = Heaven-on-Earth

Today is Friday and water (aaahh) day which means little screaming with glee young children. Name a more heart warming noise than a little child getting splashed with water (aahh) – that smile just melts my heart.

On Wednesday this week I was fortunate enough to go white water (aahh) rafting with three of my teammates and one of our host families on the Wolf River here in Wisconsin. What a blast!! The first time going through those white rapids and getting doused in water (aahh) gets the heart pumping with adrenaline! The trip included a little swimming time before going down the biggest and final rapid. I am proud to say that we, (Kyle and I), were the only raft to successfully tip over. . I'm a little embarrassed for Kyle, but somewhat proud to say, that this was the first time in Kyle's white water (aahh) rafting career for him to spill out of this raft.

Flashback with me now to our time in Spring Valley, Minnesota to Good Earth Village and family camp. (How great is my life – four days at a camp, camp being one of my most favorite places on earth!) Lauren and I decided to take advantage of all the camp activities and quickly signed up for an afternoon of canoeing. Yes, we chuckled a little under our breath when the first canoe tipped over on the first bend because we thought – "How in the world did they tip the canoe?" Both of us had been canoeing numerous times before and believed that the only way you can tip your canoe is if you are determined and trying to intentionally tip your canoe. Well, we were laughing at ourselves when we successfully tipped over on the second bend of the river. Only Lauren and I could tip the canoe and then zig-zag our way down the river ramming into every side bank of the river that was lined with trees and rocks. Lots of laughs and a great afternoon of adventure in the water (aahh).

Summer isn't summer without the water (aahh) thing. For example, how fun is it to start a water (aahh) war in a host home's back yard – obviously boys versus girls. I must share that the girls felt that we were a little at a disadvantage because the boys controlled the hose. . . tough to win a water (aahh) war if the opposite gender has hold of the only water (aahh) source.

I love summer!

Date: 7/22/2004

Submitted by: Wade Seward

Journal Entry:

Greetings to the summer crowd of readers on this fine day. It's very nice to sit down and write a journal. To start off, I'm going to back up a little bit. About 3 weeks ago we were at a summer camp in Minnesota called good earth village. While we were there, the transmission in our van no longer would work this was very frustrating for me as the vehicle safety manager. As I have felt as though I have taken very good care of the van this year, and my more than limited know how of vehicles. It is always one thing or another with our van. And that is very frustrating. From trailer wiring, to fuses, to tires, to lights, and on and on. But it seems that those times in life are often required. As I was trying to deal with the van, I called ahead to our next booking to say we would be late. Upon further discussion with the contact, they were not expecting us until the day after. Meaning if our van hadn't blown up, we would have arrived a day early with no where to stay. As well, one or two teamers got to take some needed days off in the city while our van was being repaired.



Wade Seward

The staff at good earth village were absolutely amazing. It was so nice to sit and chill out with some

people our age in ministry. Most often I don't find myself relating to people since the people we run into are either 30 years older than me, or 15 years younger. And that's not a bad thing. I love all the people we meet. When we are given the opportunity

To socialize with people within our age bracket, I feel I can truly discuss the issues and ideas that are closest to my heart that our target audience would usually not find interesting or meaningful. Also being around people our age in ministry gave me the extra boost I need to finish out the year. Cause, man, I am one tired Canadian. I hope they send a team every year from now on, cause that was the highlight of my year I think. Could be cause I used to be a councilor though as well. One councilor, Jenna, really gave me the encouragement to continue on in the year, and made me feel like I wasn't alone, and it wasn't fleeting. We shared a lot of the same ideas and thoughts on doing youth and family ministry the good and hard points of it. Truly Jenna was an inspiration to the finish of my year. Thank-you Jenna. See, sometimes on the road, it can be lonely. You meet people, people you grow to love as your own family, then you leave never to see them again. This is especially true during vbs season. I have never met a nicer bunch of families than the ones I stay with. But then it's sad when I have to leave. Kind of a catch 22 you might say. But that I find is also just another analogy of my life throughout the years. It is Perhaps even why I am so prepared and ready for this part of the ministry. I'm pretty nomadic. Meaning I move around a lot and meet lots of people and such. So this is really just a larger step in what I normally do.

Lifestest was next. And that was amazing. I got to hang out with some of the artists that have inspired me to put Jesus in my music. I got to meet Toby Mac and Third day, News boys, got on stage with audio, hung out with reliant K. the list goes on. We had wonderful time. I think the best part was how all the security staff knew us and were always pleased to see us around. The free food was also a bonus, and the all access to all things on site. It was a really great time. We had some complaints about our music. Meaning it wasn't very tight people thought. I am not too concerned about it though. I thought we played good. And we don't do much concert type stuff anymore. I feel the most important part of what we do, the relational ministry went extremely well. Perhaps it went the best we have ever done. It was amazing on every level. Go life fest.

I am really excited yet nervous cause my mom and my brother are coming to take me home at homecoming. See, my mom has only seen me play once, and that was at church with me and an acoustic guitar, and my brother has never seen me play. So I'm a bit nervous. Hopefully I don't screw it up.

And my ongoing theme continues. My absolute fear of reentering society. I don't know if I can function without my team in a big group of people. Granted we have our problems, like all people do, it's going to be no fun to not have them around. Life has gone on without me. That's all that I can really say. Where will Wade's place be? This I do not know. I do know I'm taking a month off before anything, and that will be good. It's been an awesome year, so let's pray it finishes off this good. From the desk of the Canadian cow bell, this is Wade signing off. God bless.
