

Captive Free East Lakes 2006-07 Journal

Date: 9/19/2006

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Arrrrrrg! Today be "Talk Like A Pirate Day!" Of course, the East Lakes team be talkin' like the pirates we be.

It's too hard to *type* like a pirate though, so I'll refrain from doing so. Our very first booking was a little over a week ago, in Staples, MN for Rally Day. After three weeks of training (which was wonderful, of course), it was nice to see the real world again. I think it's so cool to go to new places and see how others worship the same God. Before I was on team, I think I forgot there were other churches and other people out there worshiping God just like me. It's kind of a weird thing to "forget," but it's really hit me hard now that we're on the road. We (Christians) are all striving for the same things, whether we're in Davenport, IA or Staples, MN or California or Maryland, or Michigan or Denmark. It's a cool realization once you've really seen it "in action."

Other than that, it seems as though God is really telling me lately, "Hey Ashley, I'm totally going to provide for you this year, so, like, don't worry about it, kiddo." The first occurrence that proved this point to me wasn't too big of a deal, but it still meant a lot, and I think God can really speak through the little things in life. As some know, I'm not always the most confident person. For our first booking, I was really nervous about the whole "Team Leader" deal. I wanted to make sure I was doing everything and doing it well. Right after our program, our host dad came up to me and said something to the effect of, "I just wanted to affirm you in your Team Leader position." He said something about not getting intimidated and how I got done what needed to be done. I'm sure you can imagine how thrilled I was to hear that, right after I had got done praying for confidence the night before! God is not only providing my material needs, but my mental and spiritual ones as well. Sweet!



Ashley Hartman

Date: 9/26/2006

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

Hello friends. Katlynn here. I am so excited because this is my first journal entry for the 2006-2007 Captive Free East Lakes team! Woo hoo!! Hope that this finds you all well. We are all having a great time so far. Last week we were in Middlebury, Indiana on Monday. Stayed at a really cool house that was on the same grounds as the little country church. The pastor of the church was really fun. We got to meet their youth group. They are small but mighty and so willing to serve. It was very nice to share a meal together. The next day, the pastor took us over to Shipshewana, a small Amish town. We got to check out the Amish-Mennonite Visitor Center and also had the chance to try some food at the local bakery...it was so yummy! It was so surprising to find out how Christian-based the Amish are. They strive for simplicity and are some of the kindest people that I have ever come into contact with. We sang a few songs for them and in return, we all got to try some cookies. We also got to go the Cheese Factory! We all tried many samples of cheese. That was really fun, too.

Left the next day for Toledo, Ohio. Had a great time there. We got to go to the Central High School Homecoming football game in Elkhart, Indiana. That was such a great time to just hang out together. Gunnar was so excited! It was great.

God is really at work here. We really are becoming like a family now, and that is something that I have been praying for a lot. We have made some great friendships with the people that we are coming into contact with, and I really feel like we are having an impact. God is working on all of us and strengthening our faith with every stop. I am so blessed to be on this journey with these people. I am learning so much about how to love people, even when we don't always have the same



Katlynn Hoegel

view point. I am loving every minute of life on the road! May God bless you all!

Katlynn's Encouragement: 2 Corinthians 12:9

The Lord said: "My grace is enough for you, my power is at its best in weakness." So I shall be very happy to make my weakness my special boast, so that the power of Christ may work in me.

Date: 10/3/2006

Submitted by: James DeMaio

Journal Entry:

Greetings and salutations from Captive Free, bound to the East Lakes region of America. Today, I write from the noble land of Berea, Ohio. The indigenous species of this land are kind and hospitable, so I am able to author this log within a comfortable chair without persecution. The past weeks have been interesting. East Lakes has been rapidly filling the remainder of our schedule and it is interesting to see what waters Captain God has charted for us.



James DeMaio

After leaving Toledo, Ohio, the East Lakes crew headed south to Wapakoneta, Ohio. There we performed our second Experiential Worship service. It was interesting to see children and adults worshiping together. The following day we visited a rock garden owned by an author who works as a prison speaker. It was fascinating to hear some interesting views on works and faith and see how some people view Christian philanthropy.

Next we went to Loveland, Ohio. There we performed another Experiential Worship to a diverse audience. It is exciting to see so many people from different backgrounds, including un-churched, experience God's message of rescue through our program.

At our next stop, Duncansville PA, I was blessed with the presence of my parents at our program. It was a great experience for me to be able to share the message of my heavenly parent with my biological ones. It was during this week that I focused on living in God's opulence and avoiding the distractions of this world. For as Psalm 84:10 says "Better is one day in your courts, than thousands elsewhere. It is better to be a doorman at the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of the earthly."

And all God's people said "Amen."

Date: 10/5/2006

Submitted by: Angel Brelie

Journal Entry:

How fun, and what an amazing experience this has been for me thus far! My faith has been growing so much these past couple of months, and it's so exciting! As a team, we are doing really well, and really enjoying each other's company. God is working in me so much right now. I've been learning about each individual on my team, and all of their dynamics, and it's been awesome to see how different each person is. It has, however, taken some time for me to adjust to the everyday give-and-take of being a team member. Sometimes I forget that there are five other people in the van, and five other people who are so close to me in my life, and I just think about me. God, however, lovingly reminds me that I'm not the only one there, and I get over those moments pretty quickly!



Angel Brelie

We have been blessed with fantastic host homes! How gracious and servant-hearted these people are to open up their homes to six music-playing hooligans! We have had so much fun doing backyard cookouts, and shooting each other with marshmallow guns! Oh, and last night we had an early Thanksgiving dinner! It was FABULOUS! So, we are having such a blast right now, and I'm just waiting to see what tomorrow brings!

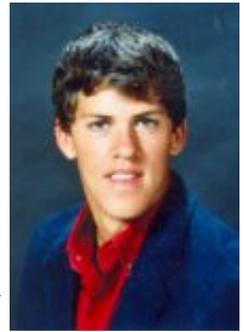
Date: 10/10/2006

Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

Journal Entry:

Team has been going great! I have loved all of it. We have been traveling the Midwest, and I must say it is beautiful. The churches and host homes we have been staying at have been amazing. God has truly blessed me with great people like Dr. Jerry along the way. I have never seen Pennsylvania, and we have been in the state twice so far. Each trip has been breathtaking, and the hospitality was super. I'm excited to go up to my home state Michigan and hang out and worship with some great Michiganders. I see my family in a couple weeks and that will be great. I want to thank everyone for their prayers and for supporting me. God is great and alive in every corner of the world, and we all need to keep up the good work as Christians and continue to spread his amazing love. I want to say hi to my family and thank my mom for her undying love. I love you all! God bless!!

Gunnar



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 10/12/2006

Submitted by: Rasmus Madsen

Journal Entry:

I am now writing about the Captive Free East-Lakes team. Tuesday we drove under 42 bridges. It was fun and a part of life.

Right now are we in Bexley a little outside of Columbus, Ohio. Why? Because they booked us. You can do the same if you like us and want us to your church.

Yesterday was we supposed to do a XP in a tornado but the tornado heard about our music and stayed away. I don't know why.

The world is big but that's not a problem.

Thursday to Saturday we was in Beaver Falls PA where we helped with setting up art and played at some music at the church and different preschools.

Next stop Moundsville, West Virginia Saturday to Tuesday. We played a XP and a Sunday Morning. Saw a Indian Mound and came late to a Haunting House.

Now are we in Bexley to Saturday. Yesterday we served food for some high schoolers and played a XP. Today is Thursday I think.

Thanks to everybody we had met. You were amazing.

God bless you all.



Rasmus Madsen

Date: 10/14/2006

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Greetings and salutations from Van #72. I am pleased to report that the East Lakes team is doing quite well on this lovely Sunday afternoon as we make our way to Mansfield, Ohio for an XP (experiential) worship tonight. Yesterday was a busy day. Not only did we have an XP worship and a lock-in, but we also went to the world's first Wendy's. Yes, the very first Wendy's. The Frosties were ten times frostier than those other duplicate Wendy's. Mmhmm.

Even though we've been at this for a month already, sometimes I still don't believe I'm actually traveling with Captive Free. Like this morning, for instance, when I looked at the church's bulletin and it said "Special Music by Captive Free," I had to think for a second before I realized, "Whoa! That's *me!* Awesome!" It's like a surprise party every day. "Surprise! You're on Captive Free!" It just never gets old.



Ashley Hartman

Yesterday we also got our first ministry partner! That was super exciting, especially since they gave us one thousand dollars! Thanks, St. Paul in Smithville, OH. You guys are awesome!

It's taking me ten times longer to type this than it should because A) we're in the van and B) there are a lot of little hills that keep making my stomach drop. It's like a free roller-coaster.

I just want to give a quick shout out to God. He's da Man.

Date: 10/17/2006

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

Hello friends, it's Katlynn once again. We just left Mansfield, OH and are headed towards Warren, MI. I would like to share a story with you. Sunday night we did an XP (experiential) worship, and I shared my story about being born premature, and a woman in the audience stood up after the last song and shared a story with us. She spoke of how her son was shot right between the eyes with a .22 and how he lived. I realized then and there that what we say and do in our program really does have an impact on other people.



Katlynn Hoegel

God is using us in so many ways this year. We have been so blessed this far with great churches, amazing host homes and awesome ministry. We are living in the moment with fond memories close within reach. We are so excited to see what God has in store for us next.

More stories to come, folks!

Love,
Katlynn

Date: 10/27/2006

Submitted by: James DeMaio

Journal Entry:

Hello, Citizens of the Universe. This is James speaking. Although not literally, as I am actually typing. Today is October the 24th, or as I like to call it, Octagon #24. So, we are riding in a van. I've done a lot of that lately. Recently, we have visited Gunnar's home church and seen his family's lovely orchards. Prior to that, we were able to engage in some incredible night-time Capture-the-Flag action up in a lock-in in Interlochen, MI where we met seemingly half of the people that will be attending the Lansing Quake. It is interesting to hear so many people express their views on faith. As always, it has been enjoyable and I appreciate this opportunity. So thank you to God, the YE office staff, Jesus, my family, the one true God, my home congregation, God, and most importantly, God for aiding me in this opportunity.



James DeMaio

God loves you and so do I.
James "Phatty" DeMaio

Date: 10/27/2006

Submitted by: Angel Brelie

Journal Entry:

Hello all!

It feels like such a long time since I last wrote a journal! Anyway, we had the most amazing two days in Cadillac, Michigan. Well, the most amazing to days to ME so far! Anyway, we first went to an assisted living home, and sang some songs for them, then we did a puppet show and sang some more songs. Then after we were done, we



got to talking to all of the residents, and it was so interesting for me because we got to hear all of their history and all about their lives and the events that happened to them when they were younger. I'm a history buff, so maybe that's why I enjoyed it so much! But it was just awesome to meet a different generation of Christians. The next day, we did some music for a choir called The Patriots, which is a choir for special-needs adults. They were such a riot! I could see that they really enjoyed our music and puppet show! The real treat that day, though, was them singing for us! I can't even describe how I really felt. They had so much enthusiasm and joy on their faces when they sang to God; it was astounding. Now, to be completely honest, it didn't sound the best, but that wasn't the point. The point was that all they cared about was praising and worshiping their God through their singing. And another thing that took me by surprise was that the director was taking solos from people and giving them to different ones, and not one word was said about it. Sometimes I think that we get too caught up in how we sound, and if it's good enough, and what people are going to think. What an awakening this was to me, and just a reminder that it's not about how good we sound and what people are going to hear. It's about if the people listening are going to hear and see God, not us. And when it comes to solos, whoa...I find that it's difficult for me sometimes to give them up because I want to be heard. It's not about me when we're singing, it's about God. It was just so refreshing for the whole team to experience that, and I just think it was a good lesson for all of us. God showed me a lot in those two days, and I wasn't even looking for a lesson. Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Angel Brelie

God's peace.

Angel

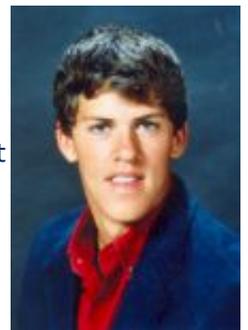
Date: 11/13/2006

Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

Journal Entry:

Hey, the trip has been great! We just did a Quake and it was a blast! I love life and want to thank everyone who has made it so great this year. God is good all the time! All the time, God is good!

God Bless



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 11/16/2006

Submitted by: Rasmus Madsen

Journal Entry:

Gunnar and Katlynn are disappeared. I hope we can catch them. I am sitting in a handbell rehearsal room and wait for dinner and some high school students to look at. It's always fun. Last weekend we had our first Quake, and it went well. Nothing dead, just a little bit blood and lots of water and kids.



Rasmus Madsen

After the Quake we took south and met James' grandparents, but we couldn't stay away from Niagara Falls, so we took back and ended in Canada. A land where they like colorful lights. We took back to US and meet a Canadians. When we (I) still are talking about Canada, Hans Island is Danish.

Yesterday we were in a church with a bowling alley. Today are we in Bowling Green. It is a small world we live in. Or maybe not. I don't care.

Ashley stopped playing piano, so I hope we soon can hear the handbell.

En lille hilsen fra landet hvor de kalder Karlsvognen for en ske.

God be with you all.
Rasmus

Judges 3:17

Date: 11/20/2006

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Lock-in

Pronunciation (lok/in)

--n.

A ceremonial get together where junior high/senior high students get hyped up on caffeinated beverages and proceed to remain awake throughout the night playing games, such as the famous DDR, watching movies on large projection screens, and communicating to each other through loud screeches, grunts, and other assorted noises.

Excellent.

Lock-ins are a blast, and probably one of my favorite things we do on team. (Besides the fact that I usually don't get a shower the next morning.) What's excellent about a lock-in is simply stated in the name of the whole idea. The kids are *locked in*. They can't go anywhere. We have complete control over their whereabouts. HA! Secondly, it's extremely informal. We don't seem as much like "rock stars" when we are in our pajamas. This gives us an opportunity to be really relational; way more than after our XP worship services. And lastly, there's just something strangely amusing about waking up a bunch of teens who have had very little sleep with a song that says, "I'm alive, alert, awake, enthusiastic!"

Excellent.

But seriously, the relational thing is great. Who knows why, but so far in my experiences with lock-ins, students are way more willing to open up to you at 2:30AM than 8:00 or 9:00PM after an XP worship. I haven't quite figured it out, but my theory is that if I'm willing to stay up with them into the wee hours of the morning, they figure I really actually am interested in them and their thoughts, and I'm not just saying I am. It makes sense. The only downfall to that is, I'm not always at my best at 2:30 in the morning. Words don't always fit together nicely and thoughts aren't always completed. I *want* to listen to them with my full attention, and I want to give input using all of my intellect, but sometimes it just doesn't come out right. This is how I know God is working through me. Somehow, at 2:30AM, I talked with a girl for a half an hour about God. She had never been in a church before and didn't understand the whole Jesus thing. I've never "witnessed" to anyone by myself before who has *never* heard the salvation story. She said it made sense to her, though.

I'm so glad God works with me. If He just sent me out there to talk about Him without any help it would be like...

jcioa*&CNW&#shi&niusaw*j%#&\$BFIFkeu&hfeuH...

Wha?



Ashley Hartman

Date: 11/25/2006

Submitted by: James DeMaio

Journal Entry:

Thanksgiving and Things

The holidays are great. Being away from my friends and family on Thanksgiving has given me a greater appreciation for all the love and care they have given me. So in view of the Thanksgiving season, I would like to share a list of some things I am thankful for.

Warning! long sentence fragment following:

My Savior, family, friends, fruit, peppers, sandwiches, host homes, hotels, churches, the YE staff, music, books, the works of C.S. Lewis and Donald Miller, orange juice, Honky (the van) and Tonk (the trailer), my guitar, my home congregation, all the churches around the world, the Manship and its noble crew, CFEL, CFNE, CFWC, CFWL, CFNC, CFSC, CFLL, XF, ND, NV, WMD, KD, Luther Dell and its staff, Bibles and the people that print them, milk, cereal, fresh socks, fish, fishing rods, cheese, water, air, sunrises, sunsets, butterflies, fireflies, cement, grass, turf, Italian food, tacos, pastors, D.C.E.s, youth ministers, foam swords, toast, and much more.



James DeMaio

So we were able to share Thanksgiving with about twenty-five individuals in St. Timothy's of Mansfield, Ohio. Following the fellowship and feast, the Pastor's family allowed us to nap at their house, and took us to the dollar cinemas. After the movie, the guys loaded into the van and drove to their host home. En route, the Ohio hills and falling temperatures gave way to thick blanketing fog. The fog was thick and even forced Gunnar to slow his pace. As we entered the more rural area on the outskirts of Mansfield, the fog warped the woods and marshes to resemble the inside of a pillowcase filled with cottonballs. The sparsely placed streetlights appeared intermitently like fireflies rising from a deep grass.

To conclude: Life on the road is good. I like lists. Tryptophan induced naps lead to dreams about vegetarian lions.

Date: 1/4/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Tonight I am sleeping next to a trash can. But don't get the wrong idea, I'm not sick or anything. To be quite honest, I'm feeling great! I've been getting adequate rest and my immune system has been fighting off and potentially hazardous germs. The trash can is for something else. Something... wet. Something like a leak. But that's okay, too. Because a leak can only mean one thing (well, one thing that I can think of. You plumbers might say otherwise.) A leak means that it's raining, and that's just fine with me. Because it's January, and if it were colder like January in Michigan is suppose to be, it would be snow. It's been raining all day long, and if it WERE snow, I'm not so sure we'd be getting to Lansing tomorrow without lots of scary winter driving. I'm trying to look on the bright side of things. I know this sounds cliché, but it really makes a difference. I can either be totally annoyed that there's a trash can right next to me with water falling into it every couple seconds, or I can be joyful that it's wet, and not white. Getting annoyed isn't really going to do me much good. There's really nothing I can do about the situation, right? So why get frustrated? Instead, I think I'll be positive. Life is much more enjoyable that way. I'm finding out that days and weeks and months go by so quickly, and life is too short to get upset about things that won't matter in a little while anyway. God has given us this life to enjoy! There are too many good things out there to get bogged down by the bad. Enjoy today. God would want it that way, I think.



Ashley Hartman

Date: 1/10/2007

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

Well friends, we are officially full blown into Quake season, which means little amounts of sleep, lots of meals with youth groups, worship, workshops, speakers, awesome sponsors and good times with friends. I have met SO many cool people all across the East Lakes region. We have Events the next several weekends...I can't wait.



Jacob's Road was our guest band this last weekend. They were so much fun to rock out with. Kerry, one of the main worship leaders for the band, was so focused on leading everyone to a place of surrender to God and letting him take control of our lives. It was so inspiring to me as a worship leader. To be able to lead friends in worship that is fun and crazy and to know that God is present in that loud, electric, crazy worship was totally awesome! **Katlynn Hoegel**

I can't wait for the rest of Events and the energetic faces that I will come into contact with. We have so many good times in just two and a half days; it is amazing. God is on the move; it is my job to keep up! haha...

Date: 1/12/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Christmas and New Year's have ended, and already we find ourselves in the middle of January. This means Event Season! They are great, but a lot of work goes into preparing them. I consider myself a hard worker, sometimes to the point of a perfectionist, so naturally I give my all during these weekend Events. The whole reason we are here this year is to share the love of God, and what a great way to do that by hanging out with a bunch of junior high kids for a weekend, playing music, and leading Bible studies.



Ashley Hartman

The kids love it. They jump and sing and grow closer to God through these weekends, and we as teamers love hearing the stories of how the weekend really opened their eyes. However, one evening after we had finished our last set for the day, I was in the restroom and overheard some of the girls talking. They walked in, complaining about something, and then started talking about one of their friends who was with them that weekend. Apparently she had "copied" one of the other girl's hair-do the whole weekend and now she was "copying" her clothes and blah, blah, blah. It was really frustrating to hear that. I remember thinking to myself, "What am I even doing here? Clearly we aren't making a difference in these girls' lives if they're complaining about silly little things like that." It frustrated me even more when I remembered that I used to complain when my sister would do that... but that's besides the point right now. I'll get back to that later. That night I went back to the room and just cried. I remembered asking myself, "Why are you going through with this? You are homesick, and this is hard, and you're not even making a difference? This is so pointless." It was a rough night.

THEN. The next weekend we stayed at a really great church in Cincinnati, OH. We attended a Martin Luther King Jr. service, which was absolutely amazing. Afterwards there was fellowship and food, and Angel, Lynn-Kat and I sat around and talked to some of the ladies that were there. Now, to get the full effect of this story, I must tell you a few things. To begin with, we were at a Lutheran church, but they had invited an amazing Southern Baptist church to join in with the service. They brought their choir to sing, and sing they did. It was great. Anyways, we were talking to one of the pastors from the Baptist church. She was an older African-American woman who, near the end of the fellowship time, came and sat with us for awhile. Angel and Katlynn talked a lot to her about team, and she told us a bit about her life and her story. As many of you know, I'm not much of a talker, but I do enjoy listening, so I sat and took everything in.

We continued talking as people kept drifting to the door. One by one people were cleaning their areas, saying their "Good-byes" and heading home. It was getting late, so we decided to part ways. As she stood up to go, she grabbed my hands, looked me straight in the eyes and said, "You are making a difference this year." I had told this woman nothing of the struggles I had been going through. Somehow she knew I needed to hear those words. I truly believe God speaks through people, and a few nights ago, He was speaking to me.

Tonight is good. I laughed a lot. I'm happy today.

Date: 1/21/2007
Submitted by: Angel Brelie
Journal Entry:



Angel Brelie

Last night I got the chance to hang out with an amazing little seven year old boy. I was only around him for about an hour, but I completely fell in love with him, and even though I had a great time hanging out with him, I was overtaken with this overwhelming feeling of sadness. In fact, I had to leave the community dinner to go to the bathroom and cry. Why? Because this seven year old boy was so physically and mentally handicapped, that he was in a wheelchair, couldn't talk, couldn't communicate at all, and couldn't feed himself.

Now don't get me wrong here, I am very strong in my faith, and I know that this was NOT God's doing, but sometimes, I just look up towards the heavens and say, "WHY!?!?!!" I don't get it! I don't understand why I am 21 years old, have almost everything that I could possibly want, can walk, talk, eat, laugh, cry, and have so much ability to do other things....and this seven year old boy can't do any of those. I feel incredibly lucky, and incredibly just...awful at the same time. I just don't understand why those things happen to little children. I know he is loved, and that gives me peace! I know that God loves him incredibly much and will watch over him wherever he goes, and that gives me more peace, but still...I hurt for that boy. He won't get to experience what I've experienced, or what my teammates have experienced, or what my family has experienced.

I guess that I can't say that I know what's going on in his head, because I don't, but I just feel this sense of loneliness, and maybe that's just because that's how I'd feel. I feel helpless because I can't do anything about it. I guess I just have to trust that he is okay, that he is happy, and that God is there inside of him, loving him, keeping him company, and just giving him peace. And I know that he is loved.

Date: 2/22/2007
Submitted by: Rasmus Madsen
Journal Entry:



Rasmus Madsen

Hello everybody.

I just found a time machine and figured that I wanted to go forward in time to write a journal. (It's not because we are amazingly bad to write them).

The date I came from was January 30th. I am in a house in the Nashville area. Tennessee is a fun state. We have mostly been in Nashville and Memphis, and there is a lot of fun stuff there.

We meet so many cool people that I don't have time to say them all. The Quake in Memphis was so cool.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH the aliens are coming
AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

Date: 2/22/2007
Submitted by: Rasmus Madsen
Journal Entry:

Hello again

I am sitting in Delaware, OH and waiting. On what, I don't know, but I am. Everybody on the team is doing good. We had an amazing Quake in Huron with a lot of funny people. But the hotel is tooooooo long.

I am now in Delaware; we are staying with Cal and Beckie (they are cool).

We are going down to Cincinnati today, and tomorrow starts the Zone there. I am definitely looking forward to that.

God be with you all. (At the same time; that's pretty cool.)

Love, Rasmus

P.S. Aliens are not real



Rasmus Madsen

Date: 2/22/2007

Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

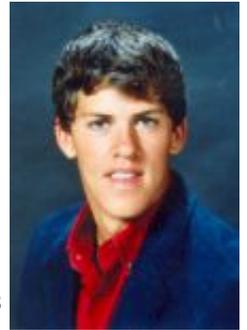
Journal Entry:

Hey everybody; sorry I never write.

So team has been going great! I love everything about it. I love getting stuck with the van, loading sound equipment, and yes, even playing music. Most of all, I love how God has shown me himself every day through so many great people. This month on team has been hard for me, but through wonderful host homes and amazing Events, God has blessed me with so much comfort and rest in the midst of all the chaos of team and matters at home. I want to say hi to my family and everyone back home; thank all of you for so much support. I love you all! Praise God in all that you do!! AMEN!

God bless,

Gunnar Nyblad



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 3/11/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

By no stretch of the imagination would I consider myself a rock-star. I *just* started playing keyboard in August, and even though I've had a lot of practice these past six months, I still make constant mistakes. Just ask my teammates. Regardless, I still get asked for autographs. This always makes me feel kind of silly, but I know it means a lot to the youth, so I do it anyways. For a while I would just sign my name, and do the "side-hug!" but as some of you know, I'm not exactly a physical touch person. I don't remember who had the idea first, but soon enough we all had Bible verses that we would write with our names, which made the idea of signing autographs slightly less weird. I feel productive when I can give them something else to look at besides my name.

The Bible verse I chose is 1Thessalonians 5:16-18. I feel bad because I can't even remember exactly how it goes, but I know it talks about rejoicing always, praying continually, and giving thanks because that's what God wants for us. Actually now that I look at it, I'm pretty sure that's almost exactly how it goes, but don't quote me on it. So like I said, I don't even have the verse memorized but I've been writing it on kids' t-shirts and CDs and pieces of paper for a long time now. Just last week, we were at a Lutheran school doing chapels for each grade. It was AWESOME and the kids just loved us. They invited us into their classrooms and the teachers let them stop their activities just to hang with us for a little bit. PLUS we were there for two days, which is always a treat on team. Two days of getting to know kids can sure make a difference sometimes.

Anyway, the second day we were there, a whole bunch of first graders came up to me after we finished our set with their papers and pens in hand. I began signing my name and writing my Bible



Ashley Hartman

verse again and again on each paper pushed into my face. As I continued writing, I heard pages rustling behind me. In between signings I looked back to see one of the little boys with his Bible open, and finger pointing to the verse I had just written. He began, "First Thes-a-Thessss-aaa-low-nee-ans." And then, to his fellow classmates within listening distance, he read the verse. I had to stop for a second and listen along with all the other first graders.

Flashback That past week hadn't been my best. I wasn't really happy, I wasn't treating people nicely, I was tired of being on team, and I just didn't feel like asking God for help. I wanted to fix things on my own, in my own time, and the way I wanted to.

Hearing a first grader repeat back to me the verse I gave him to read was quite the experience, especially since it was just what I needed to hear.

Pray continually.

Rejoyce always.

Give thanks in all circumstances.

Three great pieces of advice. Advice that I give to people more often than I use for myself. After that day, I told myself that not only am I going to write the Bible verse, but try and follow it myself as well.

Date: 3/20/2007

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

Well friends, it's almost time for break once again. I am excited to see my family, and the cool thing is that Rasmus will be joining me for Easter break, so that should be fun. Team is going so well for me right now. I have really come to understand the grace of God these last few months. I had the extreme pleasure of doing minisrtry at a juvenile detention center for girls tonight. We did an XP worship, and it was so amazing. Just to talk with these girls about the struggles in their lives and remind them that there is hope if we trust in the Lord was such a blessing to me. They have blessed me so much and helped my faith become even stronger. God is working...all the time, even when we don't think that we can do anything more to help the situation. I love that! It is so amazing to me that God keeps working on all of us. That is what I have learned this week.

Life is great and God is awesome! Until next time...

Peace and love

Katlynn



Katlynn Hoegel

Date: 3/28/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

*Raise your hands, all you nations
Shout to God, all creation
How awesome is the Lord most high!
We will praise You together
For now and forever
How awesome is the Lord most high!*

At the end of every XP worship, we sing the song, "How Awesome Is the Lord Most High." To be completely honest, I hated it at first. Not the melody or the tempo or the key signature, but the fact that I was new at the keyboard and had already used all the different patterns of playing chords on all the previous songs. All I was doing was plunking out a chord every once in awhile. I wanted to be more useful musically, but it just wasn't going to happen. Instead, I resorted to something I knew I could do. Every time that chorus came around, "Raise your hands all



Ashley Hartman

you nations..." that's exactly what I did [and still do.] Raise my hands. Simple, yet one would be surprised how much easier the audience will raise their hands after someone on the stage has done it first. I like getting the crowd involved.

At first it was a little uncomfortable. Sometimes people in the audience would just continue standing without moving. That's always a little awkward. Most of the time, however, people get into it. I love it when that happens. You can just see the joy on their faces as they wave and flail and move about with child-like enthusiasm. When they start catching on to the words of the song, it gets even better.

I can't remember exactly when, but sometime after we got back from break the words to the chorus began to really mean something. As I looked out over the crowd watching people sing and dance to the words above, I felt something I never had before.

"Shout to God, all creation."

I never realized what a privilege this year is: traveling and meeting so many more people that God Himself created, and being able to worship with them. That is so cool! How many other people get such an opportunity?

"We will praise You together, for now and forever."

I love this line. The meaning for this phrase, for me, didn't even come during a program, but during a hospice visit. We visited a lady, sang a few songs for her and talked for just a couple minutes. She loved the Lord so much. We took turns giving her a soft hug as she lay in her bed. I was last in line, and as I bent over her small, fragile body and gave her a hug, she said to me, "See you on the other side."

And then it hit me. All of these believers I'm meeting, I'm not leaving forever when I say goodbye. I get to see them again so soon on the other side. We will praise Him together, for NOW, here on team, and FOREVER someday in heaven. That is going to be so amazing.

Date: 4/24/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

Saturday was my birthday. It was sad being away from home, but I love everyone from Imlay City, so it was okay. They got me an awesome cake and balloons and a really awesome bracelet that has 1 Cor. 13:4 on it. I love it.

Thank you, Imlay City! I love you guys! Thanks for making my birthday so special!



Ashley Hartman

Date: 4/27/2007

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

WOW! What an amazing few days! We are here in Jamestown, New York, doing a lock-in tonight; tomorrow we have a long drive back to Ohio. Our programs this week have been few, but our host homes have been amazing.

I stayed with an amazing family last night. Getting to know host families is my favorite part of traveling on the road. Last night I met Megan and Lindsey. They are so fun. We talked about team life and went online to check out their pets that they can take care of on the Worldwide Web. They got so excited to show me their treasures in their rooms and tell me about the different things that keep them busy in their lives. What they don't know is that I have been so blessed by that. Just learning about what interests them is so much fun. They all tell me that they love Captive Free and that they want to do that someday. They want to be like me and do the things that I am doing!

But sometimes I feel so unworthy do be doing the things that I am doing. I don't always feel like I



Katlynn Hoegel

am a good enough Christian. But God uses people that I meet along the way to remind me that he is doing the work this year. To remind me that he is always with me. That he has never left my side. That is so amazing! I might not always realize that at the time, but at some point, God reveals that.

God is awesome and continually moving and working. I know that he is right there, smacking me on the back and telling me to open my eyes. I just need to look at the world around me.

God is good--all the time!

Peace!

Date: 5/1/2007

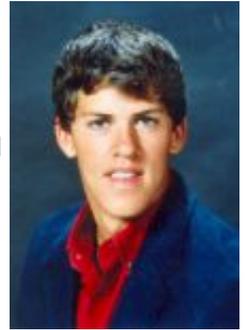
Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

Journal Entry:

Hey wow, what a great time I have been having. We are in Canton, Ohio right now, and life is good. I have been seeing God in so many different ways, and he has been providing me strength every day. I had a blast during Event season, and I can't wait for VBS. I have nothing to complain about. Thank you for all the support and the prayer. God bless.

Praise God for a place where we can praise him daily! AMEN

Gunnar



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 5/10/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

I'm a perfectionist. My mom says I always have been, and I believe it. I remember in kindergarten we had to share desks with the morning class. I would organize my pencils and pens and princess Kleenexes, and then Mr. Messy would come to school in the morning and throw his papers and trash and dinosaur Kleenexes all on my side of the desk. It was a rough year.

This perfectionism followed me all the way to high school and showed up in many school assignments and long stressful evenings, presenting the pros ("Yes! My fifty-bajillion proofreadings paid off! Scholarships!") and cons. ("AHH! Why isn't this exactly how I want it?! *explodes*") Another area of my life affected by my perfectionist mannerisms has been my inability to make decisions. I'm always afraid I will make one terribly wrong decision and my life will come crashing down upon me. Fortunately, this has not and probably will not happen, and I know that, but every time it comes down to that final decision, whether life changing or mundane, I freak out. I want everything to be perfect and the choice between vegetable lo mein and orange chicken could really effect the rest of my evening, you know?

But seriously, it's pretty bad sometimes. And although I'm getting better at deciding those small issues, the big, life changing ones still loom over me, ready to come crashing down if I choose incorrectly.

As I was running the other day, I realized something. It's so funny how you can hear something over and over and over again and think you understand it, and then one day it just "clicks" and becomes so much more clear than ever before. Like when you're shifting gears on a bike because you're going up a really big hill and you think you've downshifted all the way until you're ¾ of the way up the hill and then it ACTUALLY clicks into first gear and it's way easier. Something like that. So as I was running up this big hill, my gears finally "clicked."

Even if I do make mistakes (which I have and do and will), as long as my faith is in God I will



Ashley Hartman

still go to heaven with the promise of a PERFECT eternity. Even if I choose the wrong major, have the wrong job, say the wrong things, or choose incorrectly in a situation that could have huge impact on my life, God still promises me an eternity with Him! Of course it'd be nice to make some of the right decisions while here on Earth, but ultimately the only thing that matters is that I place my trust in God. I could totally completely screw this life up and still have the promise of a perfect eternity. I find much comfort in this. Perfectionists of the world, you should, too.

Date: 6/5/2007

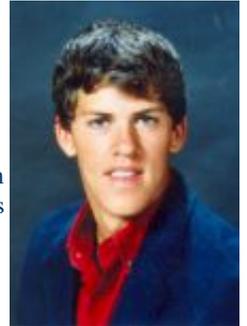
Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

Journal Entry:

Hello everyone and anyone who reads these! Life on the road is great, and I want to thank you all for the support. I'm in Smithville, Ohio right now with Brian Miller, who happens to be an East Lakes alumni from 2000. I remember when he inspired me to be on Captive Free, and it's so cool to talk to him now. The programs have been super fun lately.

We have been real busy, and I'm excited for VBS! So look out, all you kids, 'cause we're going to have some great fun! I hope y'all have a wonderful summer and have fun. Take care and GOD BLESS!

Love, Gunnar



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 6/13/2007

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

Hello friends! Well, Vacation Bible School is officially rolling now! Our first one this week has been in Lordstown, Ohio with an ELCA church doing The Great Bible Reef theme. My team and I have had a great week so far with amazing host families and awesome kids to work with. The kids are really getting into our program and I think are really having a great time diving deep into God's word.

Something that has always amazed me is how quickly these kids catch onto songs and themes. I sometimes wonder how much kids are actually understanding what we are teaching them, but as the week progresses, it is easy to see how they have retained the songs, Bible verses and even the puppet shows. It really is a good reminder to me that even when we think kids aren't paying attention, they comprehend more than we think. We are making a difference in these kids' lives. They are getting it, and they come into Bible school the next morning, still singing the songs and talking with their friends about how awesome God is. I love it!

I went to my host sisters tee-ball game last night, and there were some kids there from Bible school, and they were hanging out, singing "The Hippo Song" in front of a bunch of other people from the community. These other kids and adults may never have even heard of who God is, and here are these five- and six-year-old kids singing about how God created the heavens and earth and everything in them! It amazes me how God uses things around me to help be a witness to everyone. He has given me the tools, and the tools just happen to be in five- and six-year-olds. Thanks be to God for that!

More to come, friends...peace and love for now,

Katlynn



Katlynn Hoegel

Date: 7/9/2007

Submitted by: Angel Brelie

Journal Entry:

Hello all!

It has been quite awhile since I have written, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to do it now. It is amazing to me to see how much God can work in a persons life in one day, but for a whole year? Now that's another story!

It's hard to believe that it's already July! It seems to me like it was just several months ago that we started our journey with Captive Free. It has been truly amazing. I have seen God at work so much this year in those around me, my teammates, and myself.

We are currently in our fourth week of VBS, and it's going swimmingly! I absolutely adore the children! They are so precious! I really enjoy listening to them sing and hearing their reactions to the puppets. I think children are one of God's best creations and learning tools. We see so much in them and learn so much from them. I have lost a little bit of the child in me, and I didn't realize that until just recently. I miss that part of me sometimes! And when I'm around the children, they bring that area back to life! They put a little extra spring in my step.

I am blessed to be doing what I am doing, and when it's done, I'm sure the blessings will continue on. Thank you to all of those who are supporting us in their thoughts and prayers! Your support means a lot to us!

Love in Christ,

Angel



Angel Brellie

Date: 7/13/2007

Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

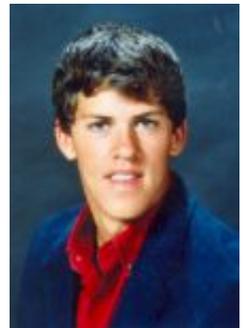
Journal Entry:

Hello everybody! Life is great and so it God!

The year is almost over, and as I look back at the photos on this site, I almost want to cry. Almost mind you. (Not one to cry.) But I know I will when it is all said and done. As I look back, I see nothing but great times spent with five amazing people. God has truly blessed me this year! We have been through so much and have done so many amazing things, and for all of you who have seen and supported us, thank you. Thank you for letting us worship, pray, play, and laugh together. Thank you to all the host homes. I didn't realize all of you would impact me more than anything on the road, but you have! As this year is finishing, I pray that God be with all of us and keep us strong in body and faith. Praise God for his Amazing Grace; surely it rains FOREVER!! AMEN

Ashley, Angel, Katlynn, James, Rasmus, I love you all, and we are family.

Gunnar a.k.a Drums



Gunnar Nyblad

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: James DeMaio

Journal Entry:

Family is a funny thing. Families come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and stripes. This year I have been blessed with the chance to see many varieties of family up close. Whether a close-knit nuclear family or a family that is a few broken pieces, the common theme below any problems or disagreements is love, love for one another. This year I have added six people to my family. One from a birth, but five through another way.

I cannot say the East Lakes family is perfect or always gets along perfectly and everyone is always in the perfect mood, but I can say that love and purpose are found



James DeMaio

in everything we do. This year I have been blessed beyond belief, so thank you God and all the people that make this year possible.

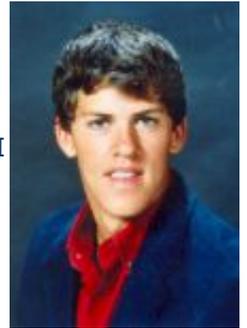
-James DeMaio

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: Gunnar Nyblad

Journal Entry:

This is my final journal! Like I said before, Ashley, James, Rasmus, Angel, and Katlynn--I love you. The lessons I have learned and we have learned together this year will stick with me all my life. We have done some amazing things this year like eat at the first Wendy's or the first Bob Evan's and even Kewpie!!! Yes, the pot lucks, the restaurants and the long van rides. I have not only had the privilege of growing and building my faith, I also am happy to say I have enjoyed "physically" growing with you all. Gotta love Lutheran pot lucks!



Gunnar Nyblad

I thank God for all the amazing homes, churches, camps, and hotels that have taken us in this year. May the Lord bless you and keep you. Thank you, Youth Encounter, for giving me the opportunity of having my life changed and molded by all the people I have met this year. I'm at my home VBS right now, and I have to say this year is a dream come true. To everyone in ministry, thank you for the work you do; to all you reading, let's glorify our risen Lord today!

I ask that you continue to pray for me and thank you for all the prayers this year. We are all amazing gifts to this earth; let us all sprinkle a little sunshine on each other. Praise God for His love endures forever!

Love, Gunnar

GO IN PEACE TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD!!!

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: Angel Brelie

Journal Entry:

I just recently wrote a journal about the year and how it's been and how it is hard to believe that it's already July. All of that still holds true. I am also still thankful for all I have learned this year about myself, others around me, God, and His creation. It has truly been an experience I won't forget. As always, THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU to all of the people who supported me as an individual this year and supported us as a team. Our hearts will always be filled with the many memories and blessings from all of the people we have encountered this year.



Angel Brelie

God's peace and love,
Angel Brelie

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: Rasmus Madsen

Journal Entry:

Dear everybody that is reading this.

You are pretty cool. That doesn't mean that people not reading this aren't cool. They are also made by God.

Godt sa er vi foerdige med alt det engelske. Nar der nu er fem allerede engelskesprogede hilsher op er det vel on lille smule retferdigt med noget dansk.

Forst tak for alt den stotke du son laser dette har givet mig. gennem bon men ogsa pa alle onder mader. Det har varet et rigtig godt ar for mig utrolig lorzrigt og sjout.

Formentelig det bedste ar i mit liv. Men nu er det slut og det er hjem til lille Danmark igen. En lille smule frist men det vil dog blive rart at starte pa noget nyt.

Lunden jeg slutter af. En opfordriug til alle der eller kender nogen der kunne tanke sig at prove noget rejse/fortelle om jesus/noget med musik. Youth Encounter teams er en rigtig god mulighed.

Bare kontakt IM's musikfolk hvis du er dansker eller Youth Encouter huig du er noget andet og snah mea dem omhring det.

Gud vere med jer alk.
Koerling Hilsen Rasmus

And all you Americans, I love you, too.



Rasmus Madsen

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: Katlynn Hoegel

Journal Entry:

We just surpassed 30,000 miles on the van! I can honestly say that it's the most time I have ever spent in a car. And for those who know me well, I like to travel.

Wow! It is July already! This year has flown by, and yet time has gone slow at the same time. I have learned so much about music and how to work with all kinds of different people. I have learned how to stand up for the things that I feel really strongly about and also to let go of the little things. I have enjoyed every minute and have learned to give thanks in ALL circumstances. It is a hard lesson to learn sometimes, but God has been faithful in helping me trust Him completely.

The bottom line: I have been changed by God. I am not the same Katlynn that everyone once knew. Same personality and blonde hair, but different at the same time. God has used adults, 95-year-olds in nursing homes, and three-year-olds to mold me and help me to worship Him more openly and honestly. I have a new spring in my step thanks to my amazing teammates who I love dearly, churches, pastors, kids and those out there who fed us, housed us, and all that good stuff. Thank you just doesn't seem like enough. You have touched me more than you know.

To my home congregation, Bethel Lutheran Church in Cupertino, CA--thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your love and prayers and financial support mean so much to me. I could not have done this without your help. Mom and Dad--thank you for being my inspiration to serve the Lord. You are such loving and supporting parents. I love you.

I am sad to see the time go, but I am excited to find out what God has in store for me next. Thank you, thank you, thank you. God's richest blessings to you all.

Katlynn Hoegel



Katlynn Hoegel

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: James DeMaio

Journal Entry:

Dear World,

Thank you for all the experiences and the times we shared. Like that one time when I learned a bit more about humility from the homeless in Detroit. Or that time when I learned the importance of prayer in Cincinnati. And the time I knew I was making a

difference in Bowling Green. We've had a lot of good times...and there are so many people to thank. So, thank you, Ascension and Bowie area churches for all your spiritual and financial support, and thank you to all my family for supporting my trip away from them, and thank you to all my friends for the encouragement, and thank you to all the host homes that made me a part of their families. I also thank the Youth Encounter office for keeping me sane this year. Of course, I must thank my teammates who have made this the best year of my life. And lastly, I thank God for His beautiful creation, the gift of salvation, and every new day.

Sincerely,
James DeMaio



James DeMaio

Date: 7/23/2007

Submitted by: Ashley Hartman

Journal Entry:

As the year comes to a close, there are so many things to say. I'm sure I could write for hours on the many things I've learned, new friendships I've made, and blessings I've received. God has taught me so much this year, and I'm so excited about who He is making me. Thank you so much to my teammates, host homes, host churches, and new friends for being who you are and being such a blessing in my life.

I've been taught many lessons this year, and I've grown and been stretched in ways I could never accomplish on my own. I feel as though I have a better understanding of what my vocational "calling" in life is now (music education and Spanish and eventually missionary work!) thanks to this year.

I am more confident in who I am and who God has made me to be. I am able to place more of my trust in God and His power rather than my own. I have way more appreciation for my family and close friends, and I realize just how amazingly blessed I truly am. I want to live my life as a blessing to other since God has blessed me so incredibly.

Along with the many mental and spiritual things that have come out of this year, playing keyboard has been a blast. I had no idea I'd enjoy it so much and learn so much.

To everyone out there reading these journals whom we have encountered in ANY way this year, THANK YOU for your part in this year of my life. All of you have touched my heart in countless ways, and I thank you for that. May God bless you all as you all have been a blessing to this team. Let's love one another.

Your sister in Christ,
Ashley Hartman CFEL 06-07



Ashley Hartman
