

# New Jersey College Outreach

with Jeff and Karen Grant

February 2012



It's been a nice, mild winter so far, and I hope it really is ending. I'm excited to be hearing about discipleship relationships that church members have been developing with students on their local campuses, and I'm so hopeful that this will become even more natural over the years—that students and church members would enter the semester expecting to meet each other and grow together. Students are growing, as you'll see below, and taking steps of faith. Let's follow their lead and trust God to do big things!

Love, Jeff + Karen

## Praises!

- \* Churches loved on students at our spring semester planning retreat (thank you!)
- \* More volunteers are discipling students
- \* Karen's sharing faith in the neighborhood
- \* Students planning to intern with Cru
- \* The Lord provides!

## Prayer Requests

- \* relationships with non-Christians on and off campus
- \* team and family unity
- \* trust & patience as we await details for our summer assignment
- \* that we shepherd our children with joy

## Recent Highlight— A Day in the Life!

**Missionary** [*mish-uh-nayr-ee*] (noun): one of those crazy people who seems able to survive without any sense of stability or schedule. Sometimes I forget how little God's plans are dependent than ours, or how much better they are than ours!

Last Wednesday, my heart was pounding on my way to campus to take a student out sharing the gospel. No matter how many times I experience how easy it is to start a conversation with someone and see God pave a way, I still get nervous. I looked forward to this meeting, though, because it marked a major step of growth in Josh, a student who flat out refused to go last year but has stepped up in so many ways over the past two semesters. As I stroll toward the bee-hive of a student center, though, a buzz on my phone throws all my plans. "Need to reschedule. Alexis (another student) needs me to drive her to the hospital."

My first thought was to go home and call the day a wash, but then a voice inside said, "roll with it," and I called around to see who else might be free on campus. As I'm hanging up the phone and about to call a freshman (Brent), he comes breezing out the door saying he's "just hanging out." I told him I thought God had other plans for him! A few minutes later, another freshman I'd been looking for (Mike) walks up to us saying that Alexis told him to find us but didn't say why! We had a great time having good conversations with random students. At leadership time that night, one of the other freshmen asked Brent in astonishment, "you mean no one yelled at you or hit you or anything?" "Actually," Brent said, "it was easy and a lot of fun!" His simple comment had more credible weight than anything I could have said.



Mike and Brent learned to share the gospel this week... and loved it!

## Upcoming Highlight— Spring Break?

For the past several years, NJ has taken advantage of Spring Break vacation to share the gospel on the beaches of Florida at the Big Break mission conference, where hundreds of vacationing students respond with decisions for Christ. This year, however, the location was sold out to capacity by other campuses around the nation.

Though we were disappointed, this may disguise a blessing, as we plan outreaches around NJ that more of our students will be able to participate in without needing to raise so much money or commit 10 days. Whatever God has in store, we know that He is in control and not surprised by the situation. Please pray that God would open up even greater wonders now that we have surrendered our plans to Him!

1 of 43 students who came to Christ last Spring Break



## Family News

Happy Birthday to Katherine! Our baby girl turned 2 last week and we are enjoying the fact that she is becoming more independent and better at communicating. Much of the time she is the most delightful person we've ever met—singing, playing joyfully and smiling at everyone. But the moment we interfere with her free will, she becomes...not very pleasant. For anyone who doubts that humans are born with a sinful nature, let me confirm that children don't need to be taught selfishness, envy, rage, rudeness and stubbornness. It's only by God's grace and discipline that kids can learn to control themselves and submit to the Lord...a lesson that none of us ever stop learning! We are grateful that Katherine is learning to understand more and more, and that God gives us the patience and wisdom we need each day.



Since we are proud parents with degrees in English, I'd like to share Arthur's first storytelling masterpiece (here are his exact words, just imagine hearing them very fast!):

Once upon a time there was a T-Rex that looked like this (pointing at a picture he drew) and it wanted to get a people to eat, but there was none people and along came a little boy and his name was Buz Lightyear and he said, "no eating today, T-Rex" and he cried a lot and he became a good T-Rex. The End.

He is constantly delighting us with his imagination and sweetness. He will often compliment us for doing things around the house ("oh Mommy, thank you for painting the dining room, I love it") and he expresses his love in creative ways ("Precious Mommy, you are so beautiful" and "I love you like a flower"). He is very curious about God and asks great questions. He is especially interested in what Poppy is doing now that he's in Heaven. I'll close with a recent ridiculous (but very typical) conversation.

Mommy - "How old are you?"

Katherine - "I'm Katherine!"

Arthur - "Soon you'll be three, then you can paint!"

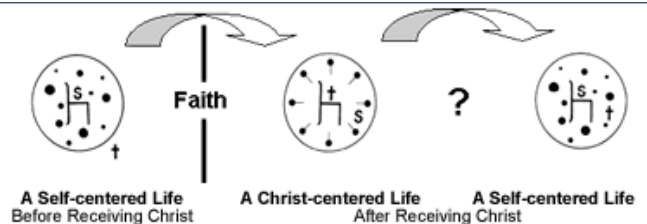


## What God's Been Teaching Us (Jeff)

We've had a hard couple weeks recently, and I felt like I hadn't been responding to it from a position of strength and joy. Circumstances had been impacting me more than they should have, and I had a hard time relying on God. It occurs to me that when that happens, it is a warning signal that I have not been walking with the Lord like I should. God uses trials to reveal our heart condition, and mine was in disrepair. Time with God isn't just about feeling right in the moment, but maintaining a relationship with God that keeps our heart in good condition when the trials come.

We have a training in Cru that relates to this, called Satisfied, and it is very common that God convicts us of failing to take our own advice! When we first received Christ into our lives through faith, He saved us from judgment and from slavery to our own selfish desires. As He took His rightful place on the throne of our lives, all of life felt like it was falling into place (see illustration). But somewhere along the line (in many places along it), something happens in our hearts that makes us want to take over again. It can take many forms, but underneath the behavior is always a wrong belief, that God doesn't satisfy or that we can make ourselves worthy of His love and forgiveness. We hide our sin in darkness because we can't stand being aware of how broken, helpless and rebellious we are ([John 3:19](#)). Men particularly hate being helpless or seen as incompetent, but we can do nothing apart from Him ([John 15:5](#))!

However we got there, the way back is always the same way we started: by recognizing our need for a Savior (confession) and trusting Him (faith) to restore us ([Psalm 139:24](#)). That is the gospel and we need it to renew us every day.



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