

A GENERATION IN NEED!

www.agenerationinneed.com
joe@agenerationinneed.com

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Joe & Annie Shea
joe@AGenerationInNeed.com
 508-873-2838

The Reverse Newsletter

In our newsletters I always try to paint a picture to help you, our readers, understand our ministry at a deeper level, one that goes beyond statistics or lists, one that connects your emotions to ours, one that allows you to be more than readers, but in a unique way sharers and partakers with us. I always want to communicate "Why" we do what we do and not just the "what we do"... As we head into the holiday season celebrating Thanksgiving and with Christmas and New Years just around the corner, I thought I would do something different... really different.... completely different... Rather than writing to you about the students that we minister to and serve; I am actually going to write this letter in reverse... instead of writing to you our supporters and potential supporters about students, I'm going to write to students about you! So you have my permission in a way to eavesdrop, and as you read this, know that it has already been given to students to read first...

Letter to those who we serve and love on campus:

Last week I received an encouraging email from a former student who was on campus back when I first started working with CA. I've seen him grow so much spiritually. I was given the opportunity to pour into his life the same way that I (and other staff) now pour into your lives... You see I watched him as he fell

in love with another student from CA, and even had the incredible honor of performing the wedding ceremony for them. Over the years, as with many students, Annie and I have remained involved in their lives enjoying the view as he entered full-time ministry and as they became parents and now have two beautiful daughters. With permission allow me to share some of that email with you..



Annie and Joe Shea

"Joe, I want to thank you for always being there for me and Colleen and my kids. You have always been a constant source of love and support to me even when I was a massive butt head. Without you in my life I can honestly say I wouldn't be where or who I am today. Your impact in my life has stretched far beyond me and my family and is echoed in my ministry at Fellowship Church. What I do is a direct result of what you did and continue to do. So on behalf of myself, Colleen, Emilie, Erynne, and countless others at Fellowship church, Thank you!

Also Colleen and I are celebrating our 10 year anniversary next month. Can you imagine it was that long ago?"

I share this with you to point out that Annie and I have been reaching out to students like you for a long time, and the reason why we (and other staff) do this... is because we love you, we really

do! In fact, I pray that I receive an email like this from each one of you someday, not that I am looking for a pat on the back, but that I want each of you to discover the depth of Christ's love and the global mission of being a Christian. I pray that God would become fully integrated and woven through every aspect of your lives, that you would find love and reproduce that love advancing His kingdom and correcting injustice at every level...

But you may not be aware of the bigger picture.... Annie and I are directly connected to you, so its easy to be thankful for us, others on staff, and our ministry in CA, and yet you may not fully understand how our ministry to you is dependent upon the generosity, hard work and prayers of others, made up of individuals, churches and even companies who are all part of "the body of Christ" and who all love and sacrifice for you without necessarily knowing you, and without expecting anything in return and as a result they enable me to be available for you!

I remember the first time I spoke at a church to raise support. I remember exactly where I was standing when someone came over to me so compelled to help reach out to students like you that she became our first supporter and still sacrifices to support the ministry today...

I once led the worship for a men's retreat in Connecticut and struck up a conversation with two men about evangelism and how to connect with the culture today. I shared my passion and love about you with them, and with just that short conversation they began supporting the ministry and have for many years.

Another time I was at a retreat in New Hampshire walking across the front porch, when a retired gentleman asked

me my name and what I did. When I told him I ministered to college students, without question he said, how can I help... and he began supporting me faithfully until he passed away a few years ago.

When we were first beginning to build a worship team at Worcester State I posted in our newsletter that we needed a keyboard. Soon after, I received a call from someone I had never met. They told me to go buy a high-end keyboard and they delivered a check without even really knowing me. They have been supporting our ministry ever since. So when you hear the keyboard being played during worship, know that it came from someone who loves you and continues to express that love.

Over the years many times some of you could not go on a retreat because you didn't have the money, and yet through the body, funds were there for you to go, and on that retreat, God spoke to you and you felt His love because someone in the body loved you and provided the funds.

Through the same body when you needed to really talk and we went out for lunch or coffee to get away from campus and we talked about Jesus you were being blessed by the body... and when you received a free Bible... or the coffee and snacks at our coffee table... the body was there. It was this body that provided the sound equipment we use to worship... the LCD projector... the banners... gift cards... meals for our free dinners, work done on the CA house, volunteers and materials.. all products of love... all God's way of providing for you (and me) through this body of Christ!

A few times owners of companies and churches led by prayer, provided significant gifts to help complete large projects, or fill in the funds needed to cover the amount we are short in committed support.

After being invited to speak to a church group in someone's home, people moved by the Spirit, joined our support team. Friendships have been born, awareness raised, and churches from Maine to West Virginia love you! The list could go on and on and on, there are so many stories I could tell you about, so many beautiful

people, and churches who believe you are so precious and valuable... but let me share with you one last example...

A few years ago after speaking in a supporting church, I mentioned how the Bible study we did at Nichols College was now beginning at 10:00 instead of 11:00 PM (it now begins at 9:00 pm). After the service a sweet elderly woman approached me with a smile, she laid her warm hand on my cheek, and in a soft quiet and shaky voice she said, "Praise God... that you have moved the study to 10:00, it is so hard for me to be staying up every Wednesday to be praying for you and the students during your Bible study." She brought me to tears... can you picture the love of this woman who struggles to stay up late for the privilege of praying for you! And there are many who pray for you often.. they pray that you would be blessed, protected, and drawn into an ever closer relationship with God and they truly understand the secret of giving out of love to call, invite and welcome you into His kingdom. So this Thanksgiving holiday, give thanks for those in the body of Christ, the bigger picture, the people, churches and companies that live out the ideal of Christmas giving all year long for you and for the glory of God!

I hope you have enjoyed eavesdropping

To those who faithfully support us through prayer and donations, from the bottom of our hearts thank you!

If you are not currently supporting us, it would be so cool to be able to tell the students who read this letter how many more people have expressed Christ's love for them by joining our support team.

=== JOE ===

Shea's current support status 79% Additional support needed \$2,350

Clarification:

In our last newsletter I wrote about our path to discovering God's call to campus ministry and stated that at the time I began with CA, Val Nordbye was the only one directing a ministry in the MA area. I feel this needs clarification. While what I wrote seemed accurate to me, Val pointed out that CA had been active in MA for many years at different levels and at the time I began working with her and investigating CA there was at least one other campus and student interns on staff. In addition at that time NY was considered part of the region and was very active and growing. The focus of the newsletter was to share what it was like to answer God's call while highlighting the recent growth of ministries and staff I oversee. While this error is likely to not be noticed or understood by most, it is important for me to be accurate and clear in what I present.

Annie's Corner:

Joe and I were at a missions conference in New Hampshire not too long ago, Joe was speaking at a church that we had never visited before. The service went really well and we met lots of nice people. After Joe speaks there is always a number of people waiting to talk with him and I was standing next to him when a young woman came over to me and pulled me aside, she wanted to talk with me. She wanted to thank me for supporting my husband and letting him do what he does best. She told me that she was praying for me and for all the things I do for our ministry that a lot of people don't see. I am very happy doing things in the background. I don't like being the center of attention. So I do a lot of office work and cooking for students and just being a Mom to some of them. I have to admit she really touched my heart and it meant a lot to me. I know there are many others who pray for me as well and I thank God for all the wonderful supporters and students He has brought into our lives and for the future supporters and students yet to come!

Joe and I and all our sons (Jeremiah, Joe, Dave & Sam want to wish you all a Happy Holiday season. Merry Christmas and may our Lord and Savior bless you all.

Annie

To financial support our ministry just fill out the envelope enclosed with this newsletter with a check made out to Missions Door. Please include a separate note stating that you would like to support the Shea's and how often in faith you plan to donate. If you do not have an envelope just use the address at the bottom of this page or go online to our website.