

Alaska Village Missions

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Dear Friends,

This summer one of our staff families, Matt and Maranatha, with their three young children, agreed to spend a month in the remote village of Sand Point. Their assignment was to help the small local church reach out to the youth of the community. I am going to include an excerpt from Matt's report from Sand Point below.



Sand Point, on Popof Island, in the Shumagin Islands, 450 crow miles from the end of the road in Alaska

On the second night we had dinner with one of the couples from the church, Austin & Cheryl, who have three kids. Cheryl is originally from Sand Point and Austin from Virginia. It seemed like a very normal interaction, kids playing in the background making tons of noise, and the parents eating dinner and getting to know one another. We got ready to go and Austin made a comment to me, "We've never done this before." I asked what he meant and his response startled me. "We've never had dinner with another Jesus-following family with young kids." I was blown away. We have never lived in a place without a thriving Christian community.

Over the next four weeks Austin and I spent a lot of time together. As I got to know Austin I heard him consistently say, "We live here to reach the community of Sand Point." The cost of Austin's family living in Sand Point is high. Groceries and virtually every living expense is astronomical. On our first day we bought a bag of Tyson's frozen chicken thighs for \$20. Let's not even talk about the fresh vegetables. It's not just the food that costs Austin—he could easily move to another part of the country and find a great job, make a good living and live carefree with his family.

Austin's perspective is a little different. In one of our conversations he said to me, "Matt, I could move to Anchorage and get a good job, live in a middle class neighborhood full of middle class people. My kids would go to school with middle class kids and we'd find a church. The lower income families would be in that neighborhood and the wealthy in another."

"Living here in the village, the wealthy, middle, and poor classes all live in the same neighborhood. We all know each other and each other's struggles. As I raise my family they see the good and bad of life and I get to talk it through with them. My kids see me serving those who need help."

At the beginning of the summer we had no idea that we would have the pleasure to spend time with another family like this while in Sand Point. We also did not consider that God's intention in bringing us there would be larger

than developing a youth group, but to encourage those in the church through inviting them into meals and sharing life together with them. His plan really is bigger than we can imagine.

More about Matt and Maranatha's summer in Sand Point in another letter. We see Sand Point as a good base for reaching out into the smaller villages in that area. Now we are looking for a family, called by the Lord, that can be based in Sand Point, to help expand our work on the Alaska Peninsula. Let us know if the Lord might be calling you to that work.



(left to right) Austin, Pastor Scott, and Matt



The St. Peter, unloading fish in Sand Point. The first Peter was told, "Its time to fish for men."

Now for some business items. We are so thrilled with the progress we made on the dorm renovation project this summer. We had seven volunteer work teams, plus several individual workers who joined for extended periods. Thank you to all who helped.



Making our Dormitory great again.

We are looking to finish the dorm project this coming summer. If you or your church would like to bring up a team this coming summer to help finish up the project, please contact us about that.

On another note, our Board of Directors wanted to honor **Galen and Arlene Gordon** for their many years of service to ABI. Galen was the building director from the beginning years of the Bible School. They lived on campus and were in-

involved in every aspect of the development of the ministry. When you visit ABI now, you will see that our classroom building has been named Gordon Hall. Thank you Galen and Arlene for your outstanding contribution to ABI.

Tod and Angela Hibbard, former students, joined us this fall as dorm parents, with Tod also taking the responsibility for campus maintenance. We have 17 family housing units on campus, some of which are 50 years old and have major maintenance issues. Tod has proven more than up to the challenge and has already made good progress on our list of most urgent projects. My concern is that we may have to throttle him back because of our budget. To address that we would like to raise \$20,000 specifically towards apartment upgrades. If you can help with that, our staff and student families would be very grateful.



Galen and Arlene Gordon: Almost fifty years of service at ABI.



Eric, our Bible School President, right back row, taking some of our students on a "Glacier Hike".

Michael Beard, our Academic Dean, has submitted a project proposal to build a digital library for our students. He would like to increase the number of computers available to our students, and load each of them with the most commonly used Bible study tools and reference materials. If you would like to see the proposal, I can forward that to you. He is requesting a budget of \$11,000 to get this set up and available to our students. If you would like to help with that project, earmark your gift "digital library".

Lastly, you may know that each of our staff need to raise the monthly support needed for their salaries. Two of our staff families are having a hard time meeting their support requirements. They are both very critical to our operations here at ABI. If you would like to know more about those two families and their needs, please contact me about that.

One more thing. We have recently appointed Duane Klas as our new Village Ministry Director. Duane and Beth (right) came on as staff a year ago and it quickly became obvious that the Lord had given them a deep and passionate call to the needs of those living in the villages. They helped make Vacation Bible Schools happen in seven villages this summer and are planning our village outreaches for this fall and winter, in addition to classes that Beth is teaching. Look for great things to begin happening in the village part of our work.



Randy
Thanks, Randy

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