

# RUF REPORT

*News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast and Midwest*

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## RUF Fall Outreach

We are just finishing the most exhausting, most anxiety-producing, and most important time of year for RUF – freshman outreach. This is our best shot at encouraging freshmen to get involved in RUF or some other campus ministry. Here are reports fresh from the field:

David, pretty crazy first week. I don't think I've been this physically exhausted in a while. The student leaders were really great. The girl I put in charge of freshman outreach was a home run. She did everything I asked, and she took great delight in reaching out and serving. The pre-semester leadership retreat was really great for prepping students for this week. – *Alex Watlington, Penn State*



Penn State large group meeting

Things are going really well so far. We had a great day yesterday with a table at lunch and a table at an ice cream social with the other campus ministries. We got a lot of contacts at the ice cream social and I think these will be the best ones to have since they are actively looking for a Christian group. Our lunch table today was better than yesterday and I'm anticipating a good day at lunch tomorrow. Tomorrow evening is our open house and we have had a lot of people say that they are coming.

Sunday night was a great night. We welcomed back returning students with Rita's ice on the quad. We had some new students see us and stop by and we had a freshman girl that I met at Wheatland Church come with a couple of her friends who stayed and talked with us for a long time. I'm excited about this group of freshmen.

So, early on things are looking good. My returning students are actively reaching out to new students and there's a good energy around the group. Keep praying for us. – *Rob Ilderton, Millersville University*

BBQ Welcome! This year we decided to do our Welcome to UMD BBQ right on campus near the Freshman dorms... what we had was chaos! Students started coming before we could even get set up or even have burgers cooked... and they kept coming! We served out around 250 burgers and hot dogs, chips, sodas, bottled water as well as information about RUF in our little stadium cup promo...it was awesome! We had so many students there I could not cook the burgers fast enough.

Our goal was to get RUF out there, to get our Ministry Team students interacting with new students and seeking to ultimately bless the campus with creating community and a big welcome to these new freshman. We are hoping by small acts like this to spread our outreach and influence many of these freshman with the Gospel. But it starts with a welcome and building friendships.

At UMD students will not just come out to a Bible study if you put a sign up. It takes the hard and necessary work of getting in their world, loving and serving them. It was a great night... some students hung around for three hours with us. – *Chris Garriott, University of Maryland*



BBQ Welcome at University of Maryland

It has been challenging and I am learning a lot, but I've been pretty encouraged overall and am excited to be here.

Looking forward to having you up here next week. – *Lucas Dourado, new campus minister at University of Connecticut*

We had our best Student Activities Fair thus far, and have far more contacts than we've ever had. We're working hard to turn those around into real face-to-face meetings and visits. Small groups begin tonight. Large group last Thursday went well, fairly well attended, though less than I'd hoped. Still a lot of opportunities to meet folks during the next few weeks. Pray we'd be open, gently aggressive, and faithful. – *Derek Bates, University of Pittsburg*

Pray for God to use these outreach events to draw many students to Christ and into Christian fellowship. Pray for God's continued blessing on our ministries across the Northeast and Midwest. And pray for me as I travel to visit these campus ministers and students to encourage and help them.

## Thanks and Funds

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God continues to bless RUF with funds necessary to carry on this work, but some campus ministers struggle more with this than others. Several of the men I supervise had to buckle down and work harder this summer, and some are going to have to keep raising funds into the fall.

The reports on page one are all possible because of the support of God's people. Thanks so much for your interest, prayers, and financial support for RUF! God is using you to reach thousands of students with the saving gospel of Christ. Please pray for the additional support needed for all our campus ministers.

## Focus on Kevin Nelson

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Thanks to Hurricane Irene, the start of Yale's fall semester was more of a whirlwind than usual. Sixty-plus mph winds and heavy rains whipped through New Haven, CT, leaving downed trees and power outages on the heels of freshman move-in.

Some students were delayed in coming to campus and the freshman bazaar, where organizations like RUF make connections with new students, was postponed one week. All of this forced RUF campus minister, Kevin Nelson, and his student leaders to change their strategy for introducing freshmen to the ministry.

However, in God's providence, RUF's Monday night large group meetings were already set to take place on Old Campus, where all the freshmen residence halls are located - a huge advantage for freshman outreach. During

these meetings, Kevin leads students in a discussion-based introduction to Christianity, recognizing that many students come to Yale having never been exposed to the Gospel. RUF also reaches freshmen through two freshmen Bible studies, led by upperclass student leaders for the first time in the history of RUF Yale.

Going into his fourth year of ministering with RUF at Yale, Kevin has seen the ministry grow in encouraging ways. At the beginning Kevin had only four committed students, and he now sees about fifteen at weekly large group meetings. While this number might sound unimpressive to some, for an Ivy League school in America's most unchurched region, this number shows promise.

A New Jersey native, Kevin missed the Northeast mentality while pursuing an M.Div at RTS-Orlando and Th.M at Duke in North Carolina. In searching for a call to ministry, he knew he wanted to land back in the challenging atmosphere of the Northeast. In fact, Kevin thrives on this tough soil. At Yale, many students see Christianity as anti-intellectual, but RUF has earned a reputation for tackling the hard questions with honesty. Kevin notes that being a Christian in such a culture conveys a weighty message, and he sees Christians on campus boldly taking a stand.

Kevin has also seen students grow in their connectedness to the local church. While this is generally a goal of RUF, Kevin's unique role makes this an even higher priority. Unlike most campus ministers, those in New England tend to serve as church affiliates, directly serving the local church as well as through RUF on campus. Kevin's responsibilities with Christ Presbyterian Church in New Haven make for a natural bridge between the church and campus.

When Kevin accepted his call as assistant pastor at Christ PCA, he had never heard of RUF specifically. However, having become a Christian through the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ at the University of Maryland, Kevin was no stranger to campus ministry in general. Early in Kevin's Christian walk, during his sophomore year of college, the Campus Crusade staff members all left, and Kevin joined with other students to keep the ministry from folding. By Kevin's junior year, he was elected President of this fellowship group. It was a formative experience that worked in his development to pursue campus ministry in some capacity.

A few weeks post-Irene, Yale has recovered from the effects of the storm. While the natural climate has calmed down, the campus climate is bubbling with activity and students are already feeling the pressure to take part in all of the wonderful opportunities offered at this Ivy League institution. In such an environment, Kevin finds his ministry has a strong counseling component as he walks alongside students battling depression and anxiety in light of the pressure they face to become over-extended. Also, Kevin, his wife Christie, and their four-year-old daughter, Kyra, enjoy entertaining students in

their home. Kevin considers their home a safe haven free from the high levels of stress students experience on campus and has enjoyed watching many a student unwind in his living room.

As for Kevin, when he's not busy shepherding both his church flock and RUF Yale, he takes refuge in watching a good game of baseball (as opposed to most RUF campus ministers who prefer college football). A Phillies fan from his youth, Kevin is hoping to watch his team, with the best record in all of Major League Baseball, win another World Series in the coming weeks. Only time will tell if his team can weather that storm.

For more information on Kevin Nelson or RUF at Yale, check out their website: [www.rufyale.org](http://www.rufyale.org).

- by Kristen Boe

## The Homefront



This big family news this fall is Daniel's wedding to Ginny Speights, a wonderful woman he met at church. I delayed the publication of this newsletter so that we could bring you a picture from the wedding, held on September 17. Peter, Megan, and Elijah flew in from Wheaton for the occasion, and even Christopher was able to get time off and fly in from the Congo. It was a thoroughly delightful weekend with family and friends.

On Sunday Christopher flew back to the Congo where he handles logistics in the U.S. embassy. Peter, Megan, and Elijah returned to Wheaton where Peter is working on his Ph.D. in Old Testament. Stephen is in his senior year at Lehigh University, and as far as I know, he still has no idea what he wants to do when he graduates. He is vice-

president of the RUF group there. We are already looking forward to having them all home at Christmas.

Benjamin is still at home, in ninth grade. He enjoys his friends at Excelsior, the homeschool co-op, and continues to play soccer. Ruth is teaching English in said co-op in addition to her online classes. It is going to be a busy fall!

## Personal Reflections



*"But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example..."*

*1 Peter 2:20-21*

Alex said he has not been so exhausted as when reaching out to freshmen this fall. I know the other men I supervise, and I am sure they are working just as hard. I was just talking to Stephen about a freshman who has yet to come to church. They are like lost sheep, and usually do not know they are lost and do not want to be found. Ministry is hard work, and takes long perseverance with people who are often ungrateful.

What makes this harder is that we live in a culture of ease and convenience. Suffering is considered an intolerable condition, and we spend billions of dollars on health care to end suffering. That is not wrong, but it fosters an attitude that suffering is inherently unacceptable. But Peter tells us that suffering is not an aberration - we have been called to suffer. Jesus also said, just before He died, that if people persecuted Him, they would also persecute His followers. "A servant is not greater than his master." If Jesus suffered, and if we would follow Him, we must suffer also.

The challenge is to work hard, enduring suffering when it comes - but not to work so hard as to worship work itself. Both laziness and workaholicism are sinful. We need God's grace to resist both sins and live as true followers of Jesus.

Remember to check out my weekly report at <http://dgreenruf.org>. And email me if you wish to get weekly prayer requests.