



July 10, 2007

Dear supporters and friends of Bayshore Christian Ministries,



I write to you thank you for blessing me with the opportunity to serve in the SAIL program. I have only been here in East Palo Alto for three weeks now, but I can already tell that God has blessed this ministry immensely and I feel extremely privileged to serve with BCM.

My name is Matt Freel, and I am a junior at The University of Iowa majoring in religious studies. I am also the Youth Ministries Coordinator for West Branch United Methodist Church during the school year. I enjoy playing basketball, soccer, and coaching little league baseball. If I'm not doing any of those things I'm probably hanging out with friends and family.

I came across BCM's website while searching for an opportunity to serve this summer. One of the key factors in me deciding to come to Bayshore was the opportunity to serve in a community that I am not familiar with. In order to be an effective Christian, I felt the need to get out of small-town Iowa. I felt as though I had explored the service options that Iowa had to offer me and I needed to move on to something new. Right now I'm a SAIL tutor and I work with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade kids.

When I first got the email from Rolando [Director of Operations] saying I was hired as an intern, I was ecstatic, but also very doubtful about myself. I knew I could connect with kids, but I was frightened by the thought of teaching in a classroom setting. Although I have taught Sunday school, bible studies, and various sports activities, I have never taught in a classroom setting. I was terrified to envision what my classroom teaching would be like (especially my handwriting on the white board). I knew that I would need to seek direction, help, and reassurance from God. I believe that my times in the classroom were some of the closest times for me with God.

One thing I was sure would go well for me was the basketball workshop. I have played organized basketball since third grade and I have coached elementary/middle school basketball teams for two years. Needless to say, I believed that I could rely on my skill alone to turn our kids into future high school basketball stars. It turned out that my time in the classroom on the first day was amazing and my basketball workshop was a disaster! God is definitely teaching me not to rely on my own strengths alone.

I have heard before that it's not strong people that change this world- it is weak people in the hands of a great God. This is 100% true for me; at the times I felt the strongest about my abilities I was the least effective. When I felt insecure, nervous, or ineffective I cried out to God and he answered me every time with assistance, guidance and grace. I hope that you may learn from my mistakes and do not go out into the world expecting to make waves without having the weight of God with you.

The experience that I most enjoy about BCM is the constant Christian fellowship. At Iowa we have about 30,000 students and most of my classmates I will never see again. This has held me back in the sense of meeting new students and adults and interacting with them in a Christian setting. Everywhere you turn here at BCM there are examples of Christ working through us. BCM staff and my host family, the Easons have been so welcoming to us and that creates an incredible environment to serve and grow in Christ.

Bayshore has opened my eyes to true discipleship here in East Palo Alto, and for that I am very grateful. They have really set my heart on fire for urban ministry and social justice- something I could have never really experienced in Iowa.

I pray that God continually cares for this ministry and all its friends and supporters. I pray that God continues to keep me humble and that He always helps me follow the straight path. Finally, I pray that if you have not seen the grace and love that God has placed in Bayshore Christian Ministries that He opens your eyes and fills your hearts with a desire to serve.



All my best to the friends of Bayshore Christian Ministries and may God bless you this day.

Please pray for:

- The students and staff of BCM.
- The teachers in the East Palo Alto school systems.
- My brother Jared and best friend Trevor who both became engaged to their girlfriends at the end of June.
- Finally, pray for the interns as we adjust to being away from home, and the work that we have ahead of us.

Sincerely,

Matt Freel

## **Upcoming Events Summer 07**

- 08/03 – Summer Banquet
- 08/12 – BCM Auction & Golf Tournament
- 08/25 – BCM Spotlight @ Abundant Life Christian Fellowship
- 09/02 – Sermons @ Highway Community  
(@ both Palo Alto & Mountain View Campuses)