

# NEWS FROM UTAH

AIM class of 2011

July

Salt Lake City

**H**ello! I hope this newsletter finds you all in good spirits! Well, its been another busy and at times hectic month. This month, God has overwhelmed me with what I've

seen him do and work. Sit back, relax, and be encouraged as you hear what God is doing in Salt Lake City and through the people here.

## What has happened this month....

As you all know, I teach English as Second Language (ESL) and have been teaching since last December. The goal through teaching was to help my student (Soma) prepare to take a test to become a citizen. Thankfully, Soma already had a pretty good grasp of the English language since her children speak both English and Farsi, her native language. I'm proud to say that yesterday, July 30<sup>th</sup> was our last class... Soma took her citizenship test this morning! We should find out soon if she passed, I have no doubt that she passed. The way it works with taking citizenship tests, is that you are allowed to take the test twice. If you fail both times, then you will not be allowed to stay in America. In the event that Soma does not pass her test, we will continue studying and she'll retake the test next year. Soma Passed her test! Now all she has left to do is wait until all the paperwork is finalized.

The month of July has been busy for all of us, but not because of the same reasons. I started the month by going to see my brother Michael get married in Texas. I was blessed to be able to meet up with my parents there for a couple of days and to get to know Michael's wife and her family. I hope you all that are in Alaska had the opportunity to meet Michael's wife and congratulate them both.

A week afterwards, my team and I left to help at a camp in Colorado. This is where I really saw God work. It was a fairly small camp with about 80 people, teens and staff included. I was blessed to be able to sit down with some of the teenagers and some of the staff and have heart to heart talks. It amazed me to hear some of their stories, what amazed me more was how open everyone was about their relationship with God. I met teens who struggled with their family, to teens who struggled with showing God to their classmates, to teens finishing high school and figuring out what to do, to teens taking care of their siblings because the parents aren't present. All of these teens had Jesus in common, they had all seen that Jesus is the one to pursue. It was so awesome to see teens as young as 13 understand Jesus!

A few of the teens have been on my mind lately, but one in particular. Her name is Yulia, she is 15 years old and was adopted from Ukraine last year. I hoped we could sit down and swap adoption stories, but its still too soon for her. We were able to talk a little bit though. But look at that! Now that's super obvious that God set us up for that. We're both adopted (Romania and Ukraine are right next to each other, by the way), we both happened to be at the same camp at the same time and spoke to the same people that introduced us. I really pray that her and I will stay in contact. I'm just amazed at how God worked here!

## What God has been teaching me....

This month, God has been teaching me that there's much I don't understand about him and the Bible. At the camp I went to, I had a conversation with another staff member about God and Jesus and the difference between the two. This staff member understood God as the one that made everything, kind of like a boss. And he prayed to God and Jesus, but was at a loss of words of what to say to Jesus when praying. This conversation shocked me, I'd never really thought about praying to Jesus. So I went home and started studying if I should be praying to Jesus too. I admit I'm overwhelmed and don't know how to study something like this, so I've started reading through the New Testament. Through reading the New Testament, I'm surprised when I read something and understand it on a new level, or see things that are new to me, though I'm sure I've read them before.

Another thing I've started looking into more is the diet of the Israelites in the Old Testament. This came about at camp, while talking to another staff member. Somehow we started talking about food and she brought up that she doesn't eat pork or seafood, and then gave me the health benefits because of it. This brought about the restricted diet of the Israelites and how God had a reason for them to not eat specific foods. Its very interesting, I'm still studying it.

So overall, I'm spending more time in my Bible and seeing new things and learning new things that I'd overlooked before.

## Prayers....

We are all a lot more involved with the teenagers than we have ever been. A few weeks ago, the youth minister handed the youth group over to us AIMers since him and his wife have so much on their plate. As exciting as this is, its also scary. We're all pretty young and are still learning, please pray that we'll be good examples and lead the teens closer to God. I worry that the youth will rely on us more than they do on God, join me in prayer so that doesn't happen.

Though I cannot tell you all the names of the kids from the camp, I ask that you pray for them all, especially for Yulia.

Bekah and I will started studying with Mormon missionaries again, we have two girls this time. As I've mentioned before, its always a challenge to be quiet and listen instead of argue about God.

Please keep my family in your prayers, in Romania and in Alaska. My brothers in Romania struggle with work and unfair bosses who refuse to pay them at the end of the day. This makes it hard for them to provide food for everyone.

My time as a missionary in Salt Lake City is coming to a close very soon, in a little over 2 months I will be on my way back to Alaska. My plan is to stay in Alaska for 2 months before moving to Salt Lake City to continue working with the people here and to start college. Pray for me as I close one chapter and open another.

Thank you all for your prayers and support, its encouraging to know I'm being prayed for each day ☺ As always, if you have any questions or advice on how I can be doing better, or any spiritual advice or study tools, please let me know. You can reach me on my email or at my number (907) 841-0078 or even on Facebook. I'd love to hear from you!

With much love,

Beta Katkus