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June 15, 2017

Team of Student-Athletes Plans on Combining Love of Sports with Love of Christ

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The summer is the perfect time for adventure, and Gardner-Webb University’s assistant track and field coach, Evan Brusich, is ready to venture to Capitan, N.M. with a group of five students, including Merideth Byl, Ashleigh Cleveland, Laine Parker, Keaton Poole, and Annamarie Warley, for an enlightening weeklong mission trip. Once there, the mission team plans on combining their shared love of athletics and Christ in order to demonstrate their faith to the people of Capitan and learn a little bit about themselves along the way.



Merideth Byl and GWU Assistant Track and Field Coach Evan Brusich are part of a mission team to Capitan, N.M.

While in New Mexico, Brusich and his group intend to work with Lone Tree Camps, mission-based camp, which uses the outdoors to share the love of Christ and build meaningful relationships with fellow campers. Founded in 1980, the camp started out as a small site composed of a few log cabins on the Apache reservation. Today, there are four ministries within the organization, which serve hundreds of people each year.

“This is the first mission trip I’ll be leading so while I wanted to travel a bit and see some things we might not normally see, I also wanted to stay in the U.S. and find a place that could provide most of the infrastructure we need like shelter, food, projects, equipment, etc,” Brusich explains.

The mission team is scheduled to work with the local church on the Apache reservation, where they plan on

photo of Evan Brusich

completing a variety of tasks, from putting roofs on neighboring houses to painting and stuccoing the church. Due to the athletic background of the group members, Brusich also plans to create a unique missions experience that incorporates a great deal of recreational activities into the schedule. “An athletics mission trip is about spreading your love of Christ through sport,” Brusich describes. “Hopefully while we’re doing the athletic side of things, we can bring some fulfillment to younger folks in the area.”

According to Brusich, a few of the student-athletes who will be going on the trip have never been on a mission trip before, and each of them play different sports; however, Brusich is optimistic that the team will work well together as well as with the people of Capitan. “I hope we bring a couple of teams together while realizing how much more we are capable of as Christians and as athletes. We’ll see how it ends up playing out.”

Brusich is eager to see what is in store for him and his mission team, but his main goal is for his team is to impact both the children and the adults in the area, while maintaining the reputation of Gardner-Webb as a place that believes in demonstrating faith through action. “If the adults on the reservation can say ‘There are good, God-fearing folk at Gardner-Webb,’ then we’ve done a good job and know we served them well in a short time.”

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.