

BALANCING ACT:

AIA ALUM PROVIDES PHYSICAL & SPIRITUAL CARE AS ATHLETIC TRAINER

BY KATIE NEFF

Balance is an ongoing theme in Kim Detwiler's life. As an assistant athletic trainer at the University of Texas, she balances her time between providing medical treatment and watching practice, keeping a watchful eye on any injured players among the women's softball team, with whom she works full-time.

Detwiler, who became a Christian during college, also balances her professional duties with the calling she feels to encourage the athletes under her care. Because of her profession, where she is part medical professional, part coach and part mentor, it's a balance that she's sought from the beginning of her career.

It started when Detwiler, then a brand-new Christian and athletic training student at San Diego State University, first got connected with Athletes in Action.

"One of [the athletes I worked with] was a Christian," Detwiler recalls. "She invited me to an AIA Bible study. I was reluctant to go because I didn't know anything about what a Bible study was."

Desiring to grow in her faith, but wanting to maintain a professional relationship with the athletes she served, Detwiler eventually began a Bible study for athletic training students. The group continued to meet after she graduated, and she carried the idea with her to grad school, where she formed another small group with fellow graduate assistants.

"WE WERE QUARANTINED TO THE OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER:"

In 2008, she got involved with AIA again, this time traveling to Honduras with a team

of athletic trainers. On many levels, the experience stretched her faith while giving her a vision of the relationships that can be established through sports medicine.

"During the trip, the country's president was arrested and exiled. [Because of that], we turned out to be sort of quarantined to the Olympic training center, where we were staying," she recalls.

The unexpected change in plans meant that Detwiler's team would only have one day to teach athletic training to nationals, instead of the three to four days of instruction they had planned.

"It was still a really rewarding trip," she says. "It was neat to see the relationships that were built, even though we didn't do what we thought we were going to."

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Now, as an athletic trainer at Texas, Detwiler applies what she has learned while maintaining that crucial balance between medical professional and trusted confidant.

"One of the things I've really paid attention to is living in a way that others would see Christ in the way I'm interacting with them," she says. "That's the best way that I can minister to my team and other athletes."

One specific way that Detwiler reaches out is through the softball team Bible study led by her friend Carol Dodds, an AIA staff member. Detwiler is mindful of her unique position with the team, which means that Dodds leads the study, coordinates the group meetings and is the one to invite girls to come and keep them accountable.

"I come and contribute to the conversation," Detwiler explains. "I'm



Certified Athletic Trainer Kim Detwiler treats a softball player at the University of Texas, where she strives to be an encouragement to the team and exemplify Christ's love in the way she interacts with others.

there to serve as another source of encouragement."

"She has really lived her testimony out in front of the softball team," says Dodds. "God is using Kim. She's full of grace and full of conviction. The girls love her."

"In addition to injuries, they also come to me with family trouble, school challenges, and other issues," Detwiler says. "The biggest [part] is just encouraging them, and helping them to see the big picture in whatever they are dealing with."

She remains grateful for the role AIA has played in her own spiritual life, and the opportunities it has given her to reach out to others.

"Building into others is important. [AIA has] given me the opportunity to do [that]," she says.

"Just knowing that AIA is there is really encouraging. I know that if I have any ideas or feel a calling to go on a mission trip – it's available," Detwiler continues. "I've grown up in my faith through the opportunities I have had with AIA."

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