Dear,

I hope you have had a great start to your year! January/February is one of the two busier seasons as a Region Rep. This is due to the fact that we host our Real Life Real Impact events during this time of the year. It is one of the best things that we do at Christian Veterinary Mission. These regional gatherings began as student ministry retreats for schools and have grown to encompass professionals. It is part fellowship, equipping conference, and spiritual growth retreat. They also involve quality time spent with students and professionals that are spread out during the year, so it is a really wonderful time for me and those who serve as Region Reps.

This year, I had the opportunity to lead Real Life Real Impact events in the Northwest, Midwest, and Northeast. Professionals in these areas attended, as well as students from Washington State, Oregon State, Cal-Davis, Utah State, Ohio State, Michigan State, Illinois, Purdue, Murray State, Penn, Cornell, Tufts, Ontario Vet College, and Atlantic Vet College. As I reflect on what makes these events successful, one idea keeps coming to mind – it’s providing our leaders an opportunity to shine. Veterinarians, Vet Technicians, and students prepare messages, lead worship, and provide hospitality. All we need to do as Region Reps is to provide the opportunity for our people to shine – and they do.

I heard wonderful messages this year, ranging from practical sessions such as “A Plan to Deal with Debt with Courage” and “What I Wished I Learned in Vet School” to messages you might hear at any Church service like “Get to Your ‘Why’” and “Children of God: The Only Identity That Matters.” Some of our speakers shined by equipping others from their experience, such as veterinarians who own their own clinics or missionaries that have served for years on the mission field. Others shined by being honest and vulnerable about their doubts, failures, and challenges, like those whose life has been affected by the addiction in the family or have lost a close loved one. Together, all of these stories - this community - creates a great weekend and a good picture of what the body of Christ is supposed to be for one another.
One speaker that I am particularly proud and happy to call my friend is Maria. This is the second year that she has spoken at Real Life Real Impact. She lives near one of our schools and spends time with the students, and she has an adorable 3-year-old daughter. Her message is entitled “Bankrupt but Blessed: What I Lost, and Gained When Addiction Touched my Family.” I will not tell Maria’s story – it is hers to tell – but the title of her talk alludes to the significant challenges she has faced, which were not of her own choosing. I am grateful for her strength and courage in sharing. I am also moved to her faith through this season. Her faith in a God that has seen her through and provided for her, every step of the way. Our theme this year comes from Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Maria is indeed strong and courageous. And the Lord has been with her everywhere she has gone. May you and I be the same. And not by mustering up our own strength and courage, but by believing and relying on God to be with us wherever we go. God’s track record for telling the truth is perfect; we can indeed trust Him. Let us trust Him, so that we may live with strength and courage every day.

Prayer Requests

• Pray for all those who attended RLRI and that all will draw closer to God following this.

• Pray for my co-worker Krista and her husband Derek, who is in the hospital.

• Thank you! – To all who took time to read, pray, or donate in 2019 and into 2020.

Serving alongside you,

-Curtiss Gibbs

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