



In Junior High School, Katie Kaufman was wrestling with a number of big questions regarding life and faith that she felt nobody could answer. Consequently, she didn't know what to believe in. It wasn't until high school, and through the positive influence of her family, that Katie started to believe in God and recognize there was something special about having faith in the Lord. At the same time, there was still something missing and her search for significance and meaning continued.

Katie has always enjoyed volleyball and played for several different clubs over the years, where she learned a great deal about the game and had positive experiences. However, this timeframe consisted of proving herself and competing to be the best - the best player, the best team, and the best club. Not only was Katie competing against other teams, but there was an internal struggle, including the pressure to perform. This took away from Katie's ability to have fun and truly enjoy the sport she loves.

In 2009, she came to Crossfire to play for the 18-1 team. To Katie it was a different atmosphere with a different message. There was an unquestionable dedication to excellence and rigorous training to be an exceptional volleyball athlete. At the same time, Katie was able to take the focus off of her individual performance and embrace a healthier team perspective. "For the first time in my life I saw past the urge to prove myself," Katie said. "I really enjoyed my team and felt a sense of purpose in helping my teammates to get better."

But it didn't stop with athletic training alone. Katie's coaches were dedicated to "faith training" in order to challenge her and the team members spiritually. As a result, Katie gained a new perspective and a new zeal for her faith. "Because of Crossfire I was able to add so much fuel to the fire in my spiritual life," Katie said. "For once I was surrounded by people to whom I could talk about my faith and felt as if I wasn't the only one with questions."

In August of 2009, Katie left the Twin Cities to attend the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse where she is playing volleyball and plans to major in Exercise Science. As she enters this new and exciting phase in her life, Katie feels she has a stronger foundation in her faith upon which to learn and grow. "I realized that God could use me to plant seeds in the lives of others through my example by giving every ounce of effort in volleyball or through discussing bible verses. My message for young athletes is to do something you truly love and not try to please others. In this you will be happier and a positive example for others."