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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Cedarville Athletes Serve with Xenia Youth Ministry**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** – This fall, the Cedarville women’s soccer team served with The Cleft, a ministry that reaches teenagers in the Miami Valley through building relationships. Now, CU Fellowship, a group of athletes from a variety of Cedarville sports, will continue the tradition of meeting with teenagers twice a month at the Xenia Community Center to engage in sports, conversation and Bible study.

Soccer player Creslyn Van Dyck, a junior social work major from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, looked for a ministry opportunity for the team in early 2017 and discovered The Cleft. The team began serving regularly throughout the spring, but took a break early this fall during soccer season.

“I love getting to know the kids,” said Van Dyck, who prefers to sit and chat with the teens. “These kids are from all different backgrounds, and I enjoy hearing their perspective. They want to talk, and I take every opportunity to share Jesus.”

At The Cleft, athletes welcome up to 200 teenagers into the gym to play basketball or other sports. Other players sit with teenagers at tables nearby to speak with them about their lives and the gospel. Each night has a specific theme or activity tied to it, and team members readily join in. The night also includes a short Bible lesson intended to share the gospel with the teens.

“This is a great opportunity for our team to get involved with the local community for the cause of Christ,” said Jonathan Meade, head coach of the women’s soccer team. “It’s about building relationships, being an encouragement to others and modeling Jesus. It’s also a chance to stretch ourselves, get outside our comfort zones and put into practice the faith that is being developed on campus.”

“The Cleft is a unique ministry that focuses on the students,” said soccer player Hannah Wicker, a junior nursing major from Crawfordsville, Indiana. “The leaders meet the students where they are and relate to them on a personal level through conversations and activities. It’s great when Cedarville students get to minister to middle school and high school students. It just takes taking a step out of your comfort zone and remembering you can show the love of Christ to someone who has endured a lot.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,963 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).