



YOUTHFORCHRIST

of *Northern Ohio*

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March 2011

## Reaching the Lost teenager...the mission of Youth for Christ

Every day at thousands of community centers, high schools, middle schools, juvenile institutions, coffee shops, and local hangouts, YFC staff and volunteers meet with young people who need Jesus. We are rural and urban and we are always about the message of Jesus. (YFC USA President Dan Wolgemuth.)

OK then, how do you do it? How does YFC go about reaching a young person who shows no interest in God or Church? This interesting question was asked of our Executive Director Steve Pausch and we thought the answer might be of importance to all who support this outreach.

We are a relational ministry, which means we seek to build an appropriate relationship with a student through our programs that will enable a young person to make an informed decision about following Christ. Let's follow "**Jenny**" as she gets to know a YFC adult leader and follow her journey.

"**Jenny**" is a freshman at ABC high school and excited about all the opportunities that high school provides. While walking around on a Friday night at the school's football game, one of her friends introduces her to an adult named "**Sarah**". Her friends talk with "**Sarah**" for a few moments about a crazy shaving cream game. They share a laugh and then get back to their walking around. "**Sarah**" tells them all bye and tells "**Jenny**" it was good to meet her. "**Jenny**" is impressed because most of her teachers don't know her name yet. "**Jenny**" asks her friends about "**Sarah**" and they tell her that she is the leader of Campus Life, a place where they go each week to have fun. "**Jenny**" is inquisitive but is excited to go buy popcorn and see "**Jimmy**" walk by at halftime. The next week "**Jenny**" is walking around again, and "**Sarah**" remembers her name and buys all the girls a "blow pop" at the concession stand.

Several weeks later, all the girls at the lunch table are talking about the All-Night event at the YMCA being run by Campus Life. "**Jenny**" wants to know where they heard about it and everyone points to "**Sarah**" who is handing out fliers in the corner of the lunchroom. "**Sarah**" is talking with the Principal and several other young people when "**Jenny**" approaches her. "**Sarah**" recalls her name and hands her a flier inviting her to the All Night event. "**Jenny**" looks confused but the principal says, "You should go, Campus Life has a great program, most of our football team go to those events.

A couple of weeks later, "**Jenny**" is signed up and on her way to the All Night event with all of her friends. She can't believe all the large inflatable games, sports competitions, food and activities organized for her friends. She has a great time with all that is set up and around 2 a.m. everyone is called to sit down in the middle of the building and hear from a guest speaker. "**Jenny**" doesn't catch the man's name, but he shares his story and it really makes sense to her. No one has ever told her about this Jesus before and this guy really seems sincere. A bunch of her friends go to talk with adults, "**Jenny**" stays in her seat but she is thinking.

"**Jenny**" plays on the freshman volleyball team and there never seem to be many fans in the stands, which made that "**Sarah**" girl stand out even more. "**Jenny**" was sure that "**Sarah**" was there because she had a younger sister on the team or even a cousin, but "**Sarah**" was just there to watch her play and even cheered out loud when "**Jenny**" made a diving play. "**Jenny**" thought that was weird but also down inside liked it a bit. When "**Jenny**" headed for the bus she saw "**Sarah**" talking to her coach and then "**Sarah**" said "Good game Jenny". "**Jenny**" said thank you and headed for the bus.

The next game was an away game and "**Jenny**" was looking in the stands to see if "**Sarah**" would show up again. She did not see her at this game but when the bus arrived back at the school gym and the Varsity girls were playing she knew why,

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there was “Sarah” sitting in the stands and cheering on some of the girls on the Varsity squad. “Jenny” put her stuff in the locker and then sat in the stands in the general area of “Sarah”. “Sarah” asked her how her game went and she shared how they lost the final game by 3 points and “Sarah” seemed to really care. “Jenny” asked when the next “event” was happening and “Sarah” told her about the weekly meetings again and “Jenny” said she would see if she could go.

A while passed but “Jenny” did make it to a weekly meeting and to her surprise there were a lot of kids from school there. “Jenny” had a great time, played some really gross games, watched a cool video clip, talked about the real meaning of Thanksgiving and they even talked about that Jesus person again. On the way home, “Jenny” told her mom about how much fun it was and how she wanted to go back.

“Jenny” was sick the next week and didn’t go back but she was really surprised to get a card in the mail from “Sarah” saying that they missed her and that she hoped she got better soon. “Jenny” like most teenagers, never got much “real” mail so it was a treat to open the letter. Now she knew why they made her fill out that card with her address and favorite snack food. The card said when she was feeling better “Sarah” would take her out for *a glad you are better ice cream*. “Jenny” was feeling better already, but the next day the Doctor said MONO takes a long time to get over. “Jenny” wouldn’t be going to Campus Life for a while, but she always seemed to get a card each week from “Sarah” telling her that she was missed.

It was now mid-January and “Jenny” heard about the Campus Life sledding overnight. She had missed so much and she wanted to go. They would be spending the night in a cabin in the woods with 2 adults and 6 other friends. They would go hiking, sledding, and just have girl time. “Jenny” was surprised when “Sarah” asked everyone to put their cell phones in the drawer. Did she know what she was asking? “Jenny” never spent any real amount of time without her phone, how could she survive? After some whining and fussing everyone decided to put their phones away and “Jenny” had to admit that seeing the stars and listening to nature was OK, for a while. That night around the campfire “Jenny” spent some time alone talking with “Sarah” while the other girls made bracelets with the other adult leader. “Sarah” told “Jenny” her story and how God had changed her life. “Jenny” was so impressed and confused because most adults never took time to talk with her like “Sarah” did. “Jenny” wasn’t ready to give her life to Jesus, there was too much she still wanted to do but she thanked “Sarah” for taking her on this trip.

“Jenny” was devastated the day her Grandma passed away. She was really close to her and this was the first close relative she had lost. At the funeral “Jenny” seemed distant and sat by herself a lot. When “Sarah” came through the door “Jenny” was surprised because she didn’t know that “Sarah” knew her Grandma. She was even more surprised to find out that “Sarah” didn’t know her Grandma but came to the funeral to see her. “Jenny” sat and talked with “Sarah” for hours as people funneled through the funeral home. “Sarah” talked about eternal life and how God made us to live forever and “Jenny” listened intently. Then she reminded “Sarah” that they never went out for that ice cream, “Sarah” solidified a time on her calendar for that Friday.

Friday was a beautiful spring day with the birds chirping and the clouds moving at full speed. “Jenny” ordered her favorite ice cream and they talked about Grandma and school and life. When “Jenny” finished her ice cream she looked at “Sarah” and said **I’m Ready**. “Sarah” got up and was ready to leave when “Jenny” stopped her. She wasn’t ready to go home, she had finally decided that she was **ready** to give her heart to Jesus. So sitting at a table in the local Dairy Queen with 2 empty ice cream bowls in front of them “Jenny” began her relationship with Jesus.

Stories like this are played out in ice cream joints, burger places, pizza booths, and at club meetings every week across Northern Ohio. This is what YFC does, we take the time to listen, watch, and tell young people about their need for a Savior. Thank you for your faithful prayer and financial support that make it possible for adults like “SARAH” to tell kids like “JENNY” that they are loved and accepted by the God of the universe. That is what we do... and you make it possible!

### Board of Directors

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### The First Strategic Goal for YFCNO

It is a blessing to report that the Strategic Plan for our chapter is well underway. The first of the five strategic goals is to hire a full-time organizational development staff person. That person will further develop the organization, establish an YFCNO alumni support group, and build the fundraising capacity of board members and volunteers. Regular prayer is being offered up for the support and hiring of this staff person. A position description and interview questions have been developed. And board members have begun seeking funding for half the development staff person’s first year’s salary. Please pray for board members as they work on this critical goal.

John G. Roush, Board Chair