



YOUTHFORCHRIST

of *Northern Ohio*

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Ministry to Teenagers Can Often be Like Cleaning a Stain on a Rug

I returned home late one evening and noticed a small stain on the rug in my office. I resolved to get the steam cleaner in the morning and get rid of that stain. Little did I know what the rest of the morning would entail.

Early the next morning I grabbed our “little green machine” steam cleaner, grabbed the appropriate liquid soap, and went to work on the rug. Now this cleaner is made for spots on couches so you need to get on the floor to clean a stain on a rug. As I began the cleaning process, I quickly realized that there were many stains hidden in the pattern on this old rug. I went from stain to stain and emptied and refilled the scrubber many, many times. Everywhere I looked I could see another stain, now that I was close to the problem area. As I moved to another stain, I was reminded of attending one of our outreach meetings the night before. I was standing at the door after the meeting waiting to talk to one of our adult staff while chatting with two teenagers. The two were brother and sister it turned out, and the conversation quickly turned to the topic of drinking. The young man asked if having 2 beers every night made a person an alcoholic. The sister quickly fired back, before I could get a word in, and told her brother that the reason he drinks every night is because they have been abused by their father and step-father and he does this to escape the pain. The two of them bantered back and forth about what constitutes abuse and what is not abuse as I stood there. I had just met the two of them ten minutes before this conversation took place. I was relieved to know that our staff were working with and helping these two through their issues and dealing through the right channels to make sure they are safe.

Stories like these are repeated to our staff at every site and almost every night. These kind of issues and much worse are happening all across our 7 county ministry area. We hold weekly club meetings, take kids out to dinner, go on trips, and plan events all for the purpose of sitting down face-to-face and getting involved in their lives. We can no longer just walk by and allow the pain to go deeper and deeper, we want to help make a difference. And it doesn't matter if it is a rural school, detention center, or suburban high school—the issues are the same.

I walked into my office hundreds of times and didn't notice all the stains that were on that rug until I got down close and was looking to clean it up. Youth for Christ of Northern Ohio has adult leaders in many communities that are sitting down with young people, getting to know them, and asking the tough questions about what is happening in their lives. We care enough to take the necessary time to find out where they are struggling and how we can help. Sometimes, we need to refer them to others to help, sometimes, it is just an

encouraging follow-up call that makes a difference, and sometimes, there are things that we can't help fix. YFC adult leaders are willing to get down into the lives of young people and help them see the stains in their own lives and then we direct them to the cross and to the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

There were 3 stains I was not able to get out of the rug that morning. They were just too deep in the fibers and too much time had passed before I tried to get them out. Every day we are going out and finding hurt, lost teenagers whose lives are filled with hopelessness and we are trying to help them find Christ. Thank you for your support that makes that possible.



The third goal of the Youth for Christ of Northern Ohio Strategic Plan is "To further develop the In the Whisper site as one of active ministry with a full or part-time staff person who is supported by a steering committee and a foundation and works in partnership with likeminded organizations." Please pray for Steve and the Board as they work on this goal.

Presbyterian Women Partner with YFC

In our Juvenile Justice ministry in Sandusky County, the women of the Fremont Presbyterian Church have partnered with us to provide "Jesus" bibles for each of the 36 cells at the Juvenile Detention Center(JDC). This is the only book the teens are allowed to have in their cells. The ladies also fund bibles for each departing teen who requests a "Jesus" bible. The ladies pay for the bibles that volunteers purchase in bulk and distribute at the JDC. The bibles contain a plan for salvation and extensive commentary in the Old and New Testaments that points to Jesus. The teens who receive a bible to take home

are provided a thank you card to return to the ladies at FPC. Some of the comments the teens made on their cards to complete the sentence "The thing I like best about my "Jesus" bible is that"... "it helps me learn about and be closer with God," "...it helped me get on the good track so I thank you for that," "...the way He has changed my life," "...I am going to gain more knowledge about Jesus," and "...it's helping me build a better relationship with Jesus, my Lord and Savior." In the past two years, over 80 bibles have been purchased. The YFC volunteers are excited about giving such useful bibles to the teens, and the teens are certainly grateful.

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