

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

October 2026



Different Places, Different Faces, Same Problems | Steve Pausch

Youth for Christ of Northern Ohio is a ministry reaching out to many different young people utilizing a variety of programming and meetings in many different locations.

Institutionalized Young People: We have a superior team of adults who go into the Sandusky County Juvenile Justice Center several times a week to spend time with the teens who are there by court order. These leaders are meeting the young people in their time of need by preparing group messages, group discussion times, teaching chess, talking about life decisions and building relationships.

After School Drop In Times We have another great team of adult leaders who are meeting with middle school students after school twice a week in Brunswick. This high energy time includes a sit-down dinner provided by churches and community members, served family style. A leader works through questions designed to get teens talking. This is a time to get to know and build relationships with this group of at-risk teens. Our leaders seek to point them each to Jesus and challenge their thinking. Of course, there's time and space for games, fun, and homework help as well!

High School Outreaches We have several weekly meetings for high school teens in different communities to help them explore the answers to life's questions, have fun, and encourage them to seek after God.

Teen Parents We have a team of caring, devoted leaders who help young parents navigate parenting a child while dealing with the issues of adolescence. These weekly meetings help with life issues and share Christ with parents who will in turn lead their

children in Godly ways and direct them to Jesus.

This ministry allows us the privilege of working with many young people across a large area and with many socioeconomic and cultural differences, yet there are many similarities we see across the board. A recent blog (Eden Behavioral Health, May 19, 2026) described it this way, and we definitely see all of this in the lives of the teens with whom we are building relationships.

"The challenges teenagers face today can feel heavier than what many adults remember from their own teen years, partly because teens are growing up in a world that's always "ON". Between social media, academic pressure, changing family dynamics, and constant comparison, many teens are managing stressors that hit from multiple directions at once." Here is a partial list from the article: Anxiety, chronic stress, identity, self-esteem and body image, depression and low mood, peer conflict, bullying, social exclusion, social media pressure and comparison, family conflict and changing relationships at home, academic pressure, substance use pressures, vaping, and risky behavior sleep deprivation and exhaustion, uncertainty about the future and world stress.

These issues often come up as we meet with teens. We know that the certain hope of Jesus is the anchor we all need, no matter the pressures we face. Our heart's desire is to communicate this hope to each teen in a way that meets them where they are. Please pray for these young people and our adult leaders as we seek to help young people in this world and lead them into eternity.

YOUTH FOR CHRIST

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A Few Encouragements | Matt Mountjoy

A while back, I wrote about a fundraiser that was coming up in the form of a Garage Sale that a local church group was putting on for The Garage. Fundraising has been at times a struggle lately, and we were excited for this event. So now that it is over I wanted to write an update on how it went. After a lot of work (anyone who has ever done a large garage sale can relate to this) organizing and collecting items to sell, and after two long days of slinging some pretty cool things: The official amount raised was right around \$2900! Even cooler was that every dollar was doubled by a local ministry partner!! This was an incredible blessing for the ministry and is helping us continue serving and sharing Christ with the youth of Wadsworth.

This event also brought about another cool ministry moment. Many of you may remember several years back when one of our students was in a severe accident. At the time, we held a large prayer gathering at The Garage for this student. He was in recovery from operations and his family had the prayer meeting on speaker phone. At the time it was very touch and go as to if he would survive. Then a miracle happened, he woke up...and he started talking.... .during the prayer meeting! We were able to be on the phone with his family in the moment! He even got to talk to some of his friends on the phone. From that point on his recovery progressed and brought healing. He finished school and I saw him off and on over the years and his younger brother continued coming to The Garage. But it had been awhile since I had talked to him. And then I saw I had a message from him. He had seen the advertisements for the garage sale and wanted to reach out and check and see if we needed any help with volunteers to run it. I thanked him for his offer and let him know we had an army of volunteers. But we were able to chat briefly and catch up. He signed off by saying "I got ya'll like ya'll had me." It was a really humbling moment of seeing a direct example of the impact that this ministry has had on so many and continues on with them into adulthood!

Different Roles | Laurie Beal

While I have many roles at The Garage in Wadsworth, there are other opportunities that come along, as well. I'm often asked to speak at various groups within the community or at churches to share what our team provides at The Garage. It's always an honor to share about the kids whom God is allowing us to have an impact with and to tell about the many services we provide.

We also get invites to set up a table at different local events and non-profit fairs. This gives me an opportunity to share stories with individuals and help steer them in the right direction for needed services and answer questions. A bonus to these events is exchanging contact info, ideas and ways to partner with folks at the surrounding tables. I always leave so encouraged and hopeful that together we can help make our community a better place.

We have worked hard to partner with the community and our local schools and it's an honor for our ministry and members of our team to be recognized as assets to the school and community. It's a natural extension in ministry to reach out to teens in other spaces, besides our own.

The bonus role in the community that I love the most is the blessing of mentoring students, one on one, within the walls of the schools. This year I'll have 7 students at various schools whom I am mentoring. I've met with 6 of them so far and I'll be seeing them weekly. These are kids who have been identified as ones who would benefit from having another stable and consistent adult in their life to be there for them. So, as I see it to cheer them on, offer hope and remind them of their worth in this world.

I usually take games and art supplies and we have about a half an hour for them to share what's going on in their world. I often find myself helping them unpack some hard stuff they've been carrying around, as we are painting or playing Uno.

One interaction has stuck with me all week. Confidentiality is important, so I'll share without all the details. I met with one of my students for the first time this school year. She has had a very hard life. She was sharing the ups and downs of the summer and then had a big smile on her face as she was sharing about how she was recently allowed to have contact with a family member whom she had really missed. As we were wrapping up our session I told her how awesome it was to see her again and that it was great seeing her smile and have such hope as she was talking and that it was evident that seeing this family member had clearly made an impact on her. She paused and said ... "it's not just her." With eye contact which she usually doesn't give much of, she continued, "I've been excited to see you, because I haven't seen you all summer and the only time I don't have anxiety is when I'm with you or her!"

I'm not often speechless. I managed to tell her I loved hanging out with her and that I was honored to be her friend as the bell rang.

But it hit me hard. I fought back tears til I got to the car and unpacked the layers of that raw statement. What an honor, right? What a blessing God let's ME be with this amazing gal once a week. BUT, I also get the sadness of that statement. And I don't take the role that I have in her life lightly. I will use that half hour wisely and pack as much HOPE into it that I can, so that it hopefully will spill out into the time outside of our time together.

So, so thankful to be in the lives of teens!