

# CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

*Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church*

October 2022



## Hopeless Headlines? | Steve Pausch

The headlines are everywhere and we are inundated every day with the shocking details of a fallen world around us. Stories of a society that seems to have gone mad have even reached into the teen population. More and more of the headlines we see are about young people and the dangerous choices and lifestyles they have chosen. Here are just a few, recent headlines:

**Students' excuse for being late... a friend was showing him a handgun NBC 4 Columbus**

**Middle school female student found with loaded gun on bus Youngstown**

**Teens with guns busted trying to enter Cleveland school Fox 8**

**Teen arrested on gun charges at high school football game Fox 8**

The headlines can make us feel like the world is hopeless and like we are losing a generation. In some ways, we are losing a generation of young people. Statistics show that fewer people are attending church every year and the numbers are even more staggering when it comes to young people and church.

Some of these headlines seem hopeless, but I am also encouraged at times when I read some of these headlines. One of the recent headlines had a young person taking a gun to a football game and being arrested which I pray will turn into a good thing. We have our juvenile justice ministry in the county where this took place and this young person was taken to the detention center there. We have an amazing team of leaders who meet with teens several days a week and share life and the message of Christ with them. *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."* Genesis 50:20 This young person may have had a different intention when he took a gun to a game, but we are ready for God's intentions and hope to be able to share the love of Christ with him. Thank you for your prayers and support that make ministry at the Juvenile Justice Center possible.

## **Early Update | Matt Mountjoy**

The school year has started and the first month has been interesting, challenging, and rewarding. You can read Laurie's article about our student who was in a terrible car accident. While he was battling for his life, his family and friends gathered at the Garage and as you can read, we witnessed an amazing miracle.

One of the major difficulties at the beginning of the year was just getting the ball rolling with students. Many of our former students have graduated and a few others currently have jobs. This made the first few weeks of ministry very slow. While it is easy to get frustrated, I'm sure that those first few nights when we had lower numbers, the kids whom God wanted to be there were there. Since then, God has done really cool things and we have developed a really good core group of kids . The past few weeks, we have had nearly 20 kids, and only three of those had been a part of the Garage ministry over a year ago. Starting from scratch is an interesting challenge but it's been cool to see God give us new opportunities to share His word with new kids!

Finally, one of my favorite early year highlights came at last week's Thursday night meeting. Our general format for a typical Thursday is kids show up, they hangout and eat pizza, they listen to me talk and give a lesson, we have a game or activity, and then they hang out until close. Generally speaking I do my best to keep the lesson to around 20 minutes (occasionally I get a little long winded if it doesn't seem I'm losing them) but this long winded session was not my fault! We have been doing a lesson series of some of the core things about having a relationship with Christ. My discussion on prayer opened up to a bunch of questions from the kids. We ended up talking for an hour. Great questions were asked and great things were shared from many of our leaders. There were tears, laughter, and the night ended with a really fun game. It's nights like that where I am encouraged and can clearly see that God continues to bless this ministry!

## **Amazing! | Laurie Beal**

We recently received the news that one of the teens from our Wadsworth site had been in a horrible car accident and might not make it. We were told he was on life support, unresponsive, had many broken bones and tears through all his organs. He and his 3 sisters had been traveling the short distance from their dad's wedding to the reception and control of the car was lost and they hit a telephone pole. Two of the sisters were also on life support and the third had multiple injuries.

I have to start this next part of the story by saying that I have never been witness to something so miraculous unfolding in literally moments and there truly are not enough words that

could explain this adequately. What we witnessed was a true miracle. ALL GLORY to GOD and I Praise HIM alone!

The teens who knew this young were obviously distraught, scared and reaching out to us, posting on social media that if he passes they cannot go on with life, etc. So, we opened our doors on Labor Day and hosted a prayer vigil at the Garage Cafe and 41 people showed up...lots of friends, a few parents, some family and an administrator from Wadsworth High School. The young man's Grandma was there and updated us on his condition and the extensive injuries. She told us that he had cried out in pain, was wiggling toes, but they weren't sure about his ability for conversation nor what the extent of the brain damage was but there was significant damage and they wouldn't know for days what exactly the prognosis was going to be for the future.

Then we all prayed for him. His mom had asked if we could do that on FaceTime so he could hear the prayers. We did. Then someone called her phone so the kids could individually talk on speaker to him and encourage him. His mom warned them at the beginning that he wouldn't speak back but assured them he could hear them. There was not a dry eye by the end of that conversation. As the kids started talking and telling him they loved him and were praying for him, he started responding back from his hospital bed ...first with tears when he heard his brother's voice, then with words and phrases with each person he spoke to. It was clear that a miracle had just happened. He was calling kids by name and nicknames that he knew and remembered. His mom came on the phone at the end in disbelief and thanked the kids for gathering and praying and for the support and let them know, too, what a miracle had just occurred and how he had done NONE of that since the accident.

None of us will ever forget this experience, I guarantee it. What a blessing that these young people got to see, first-hand, GOD answering prayer in such a HUGE way. Then 13 days after the prayer vigil a group of teens were able to stand by his wheelchair in the rehab facility he was moved to and see the miracle unfolding in person.

We are so thankful to God for the mercy and for the healing we see now, and for the healing to come after the many surgeries in the coming days. This young man has a traumatic brain injury, lots of other injuries, no movement in his left leg and he cannot be weight bearing for months ...but we know God has big plans and can and does perform miracles every day!

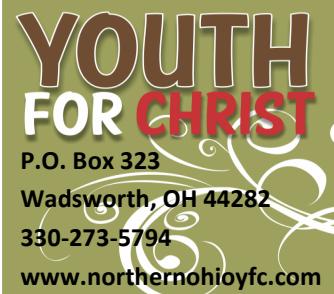
Please continue to pray for all 4 siblings and the parents and family members that are struggling to adapt to a new normal and please pray for healing for all! "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

## **Opportunities Abound In Brunswick | Steve Pausch**

It was a very busy and productive summer of ministry in Brunswick at our ministry center, That Place for Teens, and the fall is setting up to be just as active. During this past summer, we were recognized as an organization going “Above and Beyond” by Fox 8’s New Day Cleveland which featured our Wrench and Ride bicycle program for teens. Through our summer programming, we taught teens how to cook, make candy, and desserts, make craft projects, tie dye t-shirts, and do community service projects. The summer provided countless opportunities to begin and grow relationships and start conversations about following Jesus.

This fall, we are continuing our after school programming on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are also starting a new career discovery group. Members of the community are coming to talk about and introduce teens to their career. So far, we have professionals in the areas of human resources, banking, sales and marketing, career coaching, the armed forces, law enforcement, transportation and logistics, interior design, nursing, construction, and the list goes on. Our Campus Life program, which has been in Brunswick for 30 years, continues on Monday nights, and we are working with local schools unlike anytime in the past. The school has started a new community program working with faith-based organizations and churches to help kids deal with issues.

Several new adult leaders have joined the team this fall alongside our long-time leaders who have been sharing Christ with teens for many years. We look forward to what God will do in and through these opportunities. May He draw many teens to Himself.



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