

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

September 2023



We Were There... | Steve Pausch

There seem to be moments throughout history and in life that are locked in our memories, and we can remember them almost like they happened yesterday. A quick Google search brings up a few of the most memorable moments for people:

JFK Assassination, Moon Landing, Berlin Wall Coming Down, September 11

There are many personal things from our family that seem to stick out: *Taking my driver's test ; Seeing my bride-to-be standing in the back of the church; I can remember each of my children being born and taking first steps; I can think of our kids, different accomplishments over time; I can remember signing a contract with YFC in 1989*

One of the key attributes of the Youth For Christ ministry is this idea... **Being There!** That's what we do, we go where young people are and share life with them as we share the importance of Christ to them. Our staff are not sitting waiting for teens to come to them, they are out in the communities supporting young people in all they do.

As a result , our staff and adult leaders have been there at some vital moments in the lives of the teens we serve. Not all of these times were celebratory, but all were meaningful to a teen.

Here are just a few over the years..

We were there at funerals where a teen had passed away to minister to those in attendance.

We were there as fans of high school players and were present at big game wins

losses.

We were there when a young lady started crying because she just found out her parents were divorcing.

We were there when young people we ministered to in high school were married.

We were there in the hospital after a car accident involving several teens.

We were there at the birth of a baby for a teen mother and helping her afterward.

We were there at the middle school volleyball game when not many were in attendance.

We were there at the band concerts, choir concerts, and school musicals cheering on our teens.

We were there when a young man was returned to the detention center who was determined to start over.

We were there when many teens made the life-changing decision to follow Jesus.

We were there because you cared enough to support our work. Thank you for your prayers and support that make it possible for our staff to be involved in the lives of young people and to see the important times of their lives in Real Time!

New Year, Familiar Routines | Matt Mountjoy

It's that time of year again. Kids are officially back in school, and we are kicking back up our regular weekly programming. Summer has been a good opportunity for special get togethers, time off for our volunteers to recharge, and efforts toward much needed ministry fundraising. Now it's time to get back into the routines of club nights. As I write this, this week brings our kickoff nights for both our Wednesday and Thursday night crews. We will begin the year with more of an open house feel. Instead of a bigger lesson, we want a chance to catch up with students and give a basic rundown of who we are and why we care about them so much!

The first week is always an exciting one, but unpredictable. We have some years where barely anyone shows up and some years where it's the biggest week of the year and kids

can't wait to come back. Last year was one of our biggest years. And we were also VERY young last year so, I'm excited to see who God brings to The Garage. There is one routine that is quite familiar that has already kicked back up, and that is my phone being blown up with Snapchat messages. It was a nice reprieve over the summer to not be getting notifications 50 times a day from tons of pictures literally of kids eyeballs and messages compiled of ridiculous abbreviations, IYKYK. While social media is certainly a pain, it's important to meet the kids where they are at, and they definitely do most of their communicating on there. One positive of it is that it does seem that many of the kids are excited to be getting things rolling again!

Please pray for us as we embark on a new year. Pray for God to be preparing the hearts of the kids and that they will receive His truth and love and make a life changing decision to follow Christ. Please also pray that we are able to have the necessary support through volunteers, work groups, and finances that we need to help the ministry thrive. And, please prayerfully consider if any of these are things that God is calling you to get involved with.

Unclumping | Laurie Beal

I love hanging out with teens and hearing their stories and discovering what makes each of them unique. At our Garage nights and cafe nights and teen parents support group nights, our mentors have many opportunities to connect with young people. As conversations unfold, we learn about their families, their interests, their fears and struggles, their strengths and goals, and how they are doing in school. As we build these relationships and build trust, we are able to engage in meaningful conversations about where these teens are with their thoughts on God and faith.

Another way we connect with teens on an even deeper level occurs when we take one or two out for a meal or kayaking, etc. Often, the prize for a game is that the winning kid(s) get to pick a leader to take them for dinner. This inherently creates extra opportunities for discussion.

I was blessed to be picked by 2 gals that won a Thursday night game in the spring. We finally found a day last week that worked for both of them and the 3 of us headed to lunch. Neither had any idea what they were hungry for, so I gave them several options. They picked the small 50's diner that I mentioned. The fun and quaint atmosphere was perfect for conversa-

tion. It was super cool to hear the gal who is now a senior talk about how her experiences at the Garage helped her see God as a God who cares about her and a God that she can trust. It was amazing to hear her talk about ways she had been sharing her faith with peers and to hear her excitement about wanting to get baptized soon. This gal was a middle schooler when we first met, wise beyond her years and broken from some horrible things that had happened to her. At that time, she questioned if she even believed in God anymore because the stuff done to her was done by someone claiming to be a man of God. She was clumping together her experiences, this man and God. We had many opportunities over the years to help her 'unclump', to help her discover who God really is and to help her see who she, herself, really is ...a daughter of the king who is NOT defined by what has been done to her.

The brightness in her eyes and the energy in her soul as she spoke about her faith to the other young gal at lunch brought tears to my eyes. The other gal is a freshman and was definitely tuned in to what she was hearing from her friend, but not real vocal on exactly where she stands on her faith...yet.

All glory to God that we have this local ministry to reach out to teens where they are in life and to help them get to new and healthier spaces with their faith and life. Thank you to all who make this outreach a possibility!

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