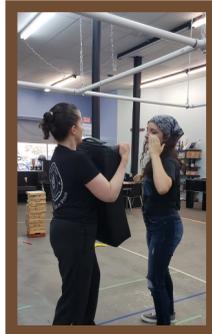


Hope continued

mentors are now able to respond not only with compassion and a listening ear, as we always have, but also with the ability to connect these teens to trained counselors and other resources to meet their physical needs. We are excited to have been chosen as the second Safe Place site in the city of Brunswick. A Safe Place placard is now displayed outside of our facility so that teens know that there is hope and help inside our facility. We look forward to increasing awareness in our schools and community of this new resource that is available to them.

With the importance of feeling safe and secure in mind, we kicked off our Life Hacks for High Schoolers series this year with a self-defense class. A local black-belt and instructor in Krav Maga spent the evening working with our teens to teach them situational awareness and practical self-defense skills. Our mixed group of guys and girls left the evening with practical ways to defend themselves and a boost in self-confidence.

Our volunteers have been working to develop trusted mentoring relationships through many different activities at our Brunswick youth center for almost two years now. I am grateful for the prayers and support that so many have provided. Led by the words of John 15:12 where Jesus tells us to “Love one another as I have loved you”, we look for ways to reach at-risk teens leading by example to demonstrate love, because we know the difference that the hope of a relationship with Jesus Christ can bring. God is blessing our efforts and we need additional support and volunteers to help with this growing ministry. More teens & families means greater demands on the ministry and staff. Whether you have a skill set that you’d like to share with high schoolers or just feel God nudging you to get involved, we’d love to hear from you.



CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

October 2021

A Busy Summer Pays Off | Steve Pausch

The pandemic changed a lot of our normal routine and I’m sure yours as well. The “normal” summer at YFC is backing off the weekly teen outreaches and taking teens on a couple of trips. Normally, we do not have regular meetings and get together. We spend a lot of time planning for the next school year’s curriculum and events and we spend time meeting with financial partners. We encourage our staff to take vacation time with family and recharge their batteries. This past summer was different in many ways. Staff were still encouraged to get away with family, but we did many get together and special meetings with teens, often several times during the week. Scavenger hunts, bike repair sessions, cooking classes and trips made for a busy summer full of activity.

The reward for the summer chaos has been that we are seeing many of the students attend our weekly club meetings, study groups and our after school time. The time that was put into relationship-building over the summer has paid off in new and continuing relationships for fall. There are also more opportunities to partner with schools and local churches as a result of the summer ministry and we see that growing deeper now that school is in session.

We missed a lot of time with students over the last school year due to COVID restrictions and lack of access to kids but we are seeing the doors open as the school year has started. All indications are that it will be a good year of ministry and proclaiming the message of Christ to a generation of teens who seem to be in the dark about Jesus.

Please pray for more opportunities for our staff to reach out to teens and tell them about Jesus. We all know the world needs Jesus.

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Building Trust | Laurie Beal

I recently hosted an overnighter/ mental health retreat for gals 18 and over at our lake-house at Chippewa lake. The idea was prompted after former Garage teens started a Facebook group entitled "Keeping Wadsworth Youth Alive." The Facebook group was their attempt to address the recent deaths of 3 local young women and one young man. Suicides and overdoses are the collateral damage of the pandemic that we aren't hearing enough about! Anxiety, depression, isolation, lack of connections are all things that our young people are facing.

We had 21 signed up for the get-together at one point during the week, but as work schedules came out and the week unfolded we ended up with 8 of us. I learned long ago to not get too tied up with the numbers and that GOD was in charge of that. He always brings just who He wants to be there! This was no exception. I've also learned at the overnighters to have a loose list of options of things to do so we can be as busy as the guests want to be, but flexible enough to let the night unfold as GOD would have it.



The night ended up being a time FULL of talking and sharing and encouraging one another. There were 5 young women and 3 of us that are not so young anymore. As each person shared during an icebreaker activity (that turned into most of the night!) we discovered we all had experienced the same type of struggles, and had carried some pretty HEAVY loads over the years. We came from all different backgrounds, yet our stories were SO entwined and similar. It was crazy. Lots of unpacking happened and we each shared tools of how we have been coping... creating a shared "toolbox" to grab from on the tough days. Leaning into God and talking to others and exercise were 3 tools that continued to be mentioned. As I listened to the stories, sometimes whispered, and shared the tears with those in our little circle I realized without a doubt why 21 wasn't the best number for our night. All of those things wouldn't have been shared in a huge circle. The safety and acceptance of our little ring of new friends was the perfect place to be real and be heard and be embraced!



We talked and ate til late and didn't do ONE thing from the "activity" list until the next day. And that was with the ONE that ended up spending the night. She went home and brought her little girl back for the day. And that low-key time ended up being another whole "God at work" time.

I am so humbly blessed to be used by God to share HIS love with others... especially when I remember to get out of the way!

Shout Out to Those Who Feed Us | Matt Mountjoy

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink..." Matthew 25:35

A major part of our ministry is that we are always trying to keep our kids fed. This is for many reasons. First off, it is clear throughout the Bible that God thinks that giving food to people is a pretty good idea! Second, we have many kids for whom it is a struggle to get good meals at home. And third having some good food is a great way to get kids in the door so they can experience what God is doing at the ministry.

Feeding 15-30 teens for a night on a weekly basis is not a cheap or easy task. Fortunately we have had many people partner with us to help with this. Some folks have made donations toward this specific need and for many years going back toward the beginning of the ministry, Jon Wertz and Fat Boys pizza have taken care of all our pizza loving needs EVERY WEEK on Thursday nights. What a blessing that is! Recent years have brought the added night of meals on Wednesday nights. And another big prayer of praise is that there has been a group of people from The Wadsworth Chapel that has taken on the task of preparing meals for the Wednesday night crew. With feeding the kids being so important to what we do in ministry, I wanted to take the opportunity to share our appreciation for the people who have sacrificed their time and resources to partner with us and help keep these kids fed!

Hope and A Safe Place | Stacey Stender

Two of the most basic, human needs that we have are to feel safe and loved. Working with teens I am reminded daily of how much times have changed and how these basic needs are not met for many of the teens we encounter. The fast paced and broken world that we live in with technology overload, instant access to information, and a culture of subjective truth has certainly affected how our families function and our children develop. We see the effects daily at That Place for Teens, our Brunswick ministry site. We see broken home lives and anxious teens who don't feel comfortable talking so they hide behind their phone screens; Teens who come in because they don't have someone at home they can talk to and don't know yet that they can reach out to God; Teens who don't love themselves or know their own worth; Teens confused by the world; Teens dealing with real life issues who have little hope, but they've learned that our staff cares and will listen, so they come in. These are opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love.

Recently That Place for Teens, gained recognition as a Safe Place under the National Safe Place program. Our volunteers have been trained on how to respond when a teen enters our facility in crisis and needing a safe place to be. Whether the threat is physical, mental, or verbal our

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