

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

May 2022



Relationships | Steve Pausch

Visit any of our ministry sites and teenagers are everywhere around the room! Youth For Christ's mission is to reach out to young people between the ages of 11-19 and formulate programming designed to communicate the Gospel to them. Our weekly meetings and trips are designed with the teenager in mind. We see many young people grow closer to the Lord as a result of them, but not everyone chooses to follow Christ while a teen. Statistics show that most people do decide to follow Jesus before the age of 18 in America, but what about those who graduate before making that choice? It's not so easy to just walk away from those with whom we have spent years ministering. Do we need to? It is amazing how often a "20-something" will stop by or call just to check in. They often still have lingering questions or life situations and just like to reconnect with a caring person from their past. We still take the time to sit with them and even take them out for a quick bite to eat. We are called to reach teens and do that effectively, but we still don't leave others behind.

Recently, I went to a custom car show with 3 young men who graduated 5 years ago and have kept in regular contact. These young adults still haven't chosen to follow Christ. We have had good talks over the years about Christ and revisited that decision at dinner recently. Please keep praying for them. Another place I have found myself in recently is with families from my youngest son's baseball team. We're actually starting a book study with these families this summer. These parents have a spirituality, but not a strong walk with Christ, yet. Please pray for this group on Sundays. I also find myself involved more and more with those not walking with Jesus through coaching, social interactions, and community events. We, as YFC staff, have been called into a ministry that is geared to reach the lost young people of a community, but we also have a responsibility to others around us.

The Apostle Paul said it like this...¹⁹ *Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.* ²⁰ *To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win*

the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

We can't be everything to everyone, but we do attempt to capitalize on the relationships God has placed before us and do everything we can to help them choose Jesus. We are so grateful for your faithful support to make this possible.

Sharing a Meal | Matt Mountjoy

One of the first things that you learn in youth ministry is that food is your friend. I know this isn't groundbreaking, but TEENS LOVE FOOD. This is one of the reasons that part of our ministry model is at almost every event we do, we feed the kids. It is an incredible draw for students. Another reason is that for some of our kids, meals aren't as easy to come by. An opportunity for a big meal and the chance to take home leftovers goes a long way for them. A third reason that food is such a big part of our ministry model is that sharing a meal with kids is a great way to build relationships and have good conversations.

Every once in awhile I will make the prize for a bigger game the chance to pick a leader to take the winner and a friend (or in the case of partner games both winners) out to dinner at a place of their choosing. This week, I had the opportunity to have a dinner out with two of our 8th grade guys. It was a really cool chance to get to know them more and have some good conversations about life. In the past, when my wife and I have taken a couple of the girls out for a meal, they are quick to jump into conversation. They will talk forever. With guys, however, it can be a little more difficult to get the ball rolling. My first problem was overcoming their need to be staring at their phones. While the temptation to be a curmudgeon and tell those young whipper snappers to get their nose out of their phones was there, I'm glad I was able to just get them to engage through continuing to ask questions. They eventually opened up and talked more and it was good for me to think about different ways to engage and get to know them and show them that what's going on in their lives matters. It was a great night and great opportunity to share a meal and "dig in" a little deeper with the two young men!

Busy Summer on Tap in Brunswick | Steve Pausch

That Place for Teens, our teen center in Brunswick has been bustling with excitement lately with lots of young people and different ministry events. A recent open house set the scene for summer as students signed up for our summer programming. Offering various programs was a huge hit last summer.

This time around, we will be once again spending time teaching kids how to get around in a kitchen with a "super sandwich" day, a dessert day, breakfast menu and a few culinary surprises mixed in. Teens can also learn to fix a bike and get to take it home, build a basic robot, make special crafts, and by tapping into some home improvement skills, will be learning some basic plumbing and carpentry skills. A community bike ride, a nature hike, and some 6th grade social events will be rounding out our summer programming.

We are looking forward to a very eventful summer of ministry in Brunswick, showing teens how to use the skills and gifts God has given to them..



That Place 4 Teens was nominated to receive 95.5 The Fish's Friends and Neighbors Award.

Teen Moms | Laurie Beal

Teen parents have always had a special place in my heart. I was born to teen parents and saw first-hand the young energy, the huge love they had for me and each other and the drive they possessed to give me the things they didn't have growing up. I also saw how some in the community, even the Christian community, looked down on them. They didn't have the abortion Christians pray they wouldn't have, yet somehow the subsequent embracing and raising me while they were so young brought less than the ideal support. It seemed confusing to me because I had the BEST parents ever! I even remember on more than one occasion people saying "oh, you were a mistake" when they'd learn of my parents age when they had me. The comment naively seemed so obtuse to me and I'd reply with..." No? My dad said I was the best thing that ever happened to them!"

(They've been married 53 years now!)

As I grew older and realized the hypocrisy and lack of support for young people choosing to bravely have and raise their babies, I hoped to one day provide support in a tangible way to these courageous parents. So, when I heard about the need for someone to lead a teen moms group at The Garage, I jumped at the chance I'd been praying about for years! Now, 13 years later, I've had the blessing to embrace and cheer on over 130 young moms and dads and look

forward to our Monday nights, weekly!

Our team is honored to provide the support these young families need and to remind them of the unconditional love of Jesus and the HOPE he offers for their future! Thanks to all of you who make this program possible! Here are a few words from gals and family members who have been impacted by this ministry.

Alyssa writes: "The Garage has been somewhere that I haven't felt judged for being a teen mom and has taught me a lot I didn't know. Being pregnant with my second kid I am excited to have a great bunch of people I know I can count on."



From Maddie: "Being in this group has helped me out so much it's helped me emotionally and physically. With all the baby stuff or even just someone to support me and help me get through the tough times with being a young mom and not knowing what to do or how I'd do it. They were always there to just talk to. Laurie and Leigh were always there to lift your spirits and always make sure you knew you could do it!"



Grandma Heidi: "The Garage is a great place for teen parents and families to go for love and acceptance. Over the latest three years The Garage has provided not only diapers and wipes but emotional support for my daughter and granddaughter. They surrounded us with advice for not only our children but for us as we live daily life. I will be forever grateful for Leigh and Laurie and all they do for us!"



Raquel's thoughts: "I started coming to this group when I was pregnant with my now 8-year-old. Coming to group made a huge impact on my life with the friends that have become family, the help during my trials and being able to stay on a good path with my faith. I'm now married with my 8-year-old a 3-year-old and 1-year-old and I can see things on the other side where I'm inspired to motivate other moms. Because of this group it's been one of the tools in life to help mold me into how I have become the woman I am today."



Happy Mother's Day to my amazing Mom! And to all the amazing young mommas I get to cheer on! God is so good!

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