

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

July 2022



The Lazy Days of Summer? | Steve Pausch

I'm sure you have heard the expression "the lazy days of summer", but at our ministry centers it is anything but lazy. In these photos you will see several of the activities that our teens are involved in so far this summer.



Craft days, bike repairs and bike rides, building a robot from Legos and competing in a race, learning how to make great things in the kitchen, building a 36 inch wooden toolbox, fishing trips, and just hanging out with others have made this summer a good one so far. While kids are learning skills, we're building relationships and sharing the love of Christ with them.



Thank you for your support as we engage in the lives of young people and share the Love of Christ with them.

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Where Are They Now? | Matt Mountjoy

Whether its former athletes, child actors, or old friends it is always interesting to hear “where are they now stories.” So, I am excited to share with you a very encouraging one! Many of you who have been keeping up and praying for the ministry over the years will remember the name Teon. If you don’t remember, Teon is a young man who began attending The Garage when he was in middle school and continued through graduation. Teon came from a rough home situation with a father spending much of his youth in prison. Teon had some struggles with anger. It would be easy for someone going through life with rough circumstances like Teon to be angry and have a good excuse for it. But Teon also has a big heart, and loves to have fun. I got to know Teon very well not only through The Garage but also through coaching football. Because of his personality, most people immediately liked him. However, despite how likable he was, his struggles led him to be highly at risk. He often missed school or practice, or got into trouble for acting out. I don’t think that it would be an exaggeration (and he would agree) that he was on a path entering high school where if he didn’t make changes he would end up on the wrong path and end up dropping out, in jail, or worse.

During his time in high school though, through his relationships with adults at The Garage and some great coaches, he was pushed to do better than just the easy way. He was a big dreamer with big goals and he learned that he needed to be committed and make good decisions to accomplish those goals. He got to know God and know that God had GREAT

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plans for him. He became an excellent football player, graduated high school and actually had the opportunity to try college football. He became a strong leader amongst the students at The Garage, and came back the year after he graduated as a guest speaker for our kids.

Unfortunately injuries derailed his football playing days. Again it would have been easy for Teon to fall into bad habits out of frustration when all his work didn't pan out. Instead he continued to persevere and began to pursue a new path. In spite of the difficult times of the pandemic, as well as everything in the wake of police protests, Teon decided to pursue a career as a police officer. It was his goal as a young man who is a minority to be a bridge in the community and be able to connect to people in a different way. A year ago, Teon defied the odds and graduated from the police academy. But things weren't easy from there. Yet again, he persevered and after searching for the right situation, Teon was just hired onto the Hartville Police Department! We are very excited for all of Teon's hard work to pay off and proud of the young man that God has molded him into!

“Be the I in Kind” Mural | Laurie Beal

The Garage has been part of the Wadsworth community for 17 years! We have connected with countless teens and families in a variety of ways over the years. We've adapted our services as various needs in teens have emerged. In the last few years, with the pandemic and increased smart phone and social media usage, the mental health of all teens has suffered greatly. Teens are more isolated than ever before. Depression, anxiety, self-harm, and drug addiction are all on the rise and families are struggling to help their kids. This is a reality that we have been seeing unfold firsthand in young people from ALL types of families, churched and unchurchd. So, we've been scrambling to creatively reach out even further into our community. We're constantly thinking of ways to invite teens and their families into our Garage space to welcome them and to help them see all the ways we can support them.



Our most recent project and event was yet another effort to connect in a new way with teens and families and our community. Main Street Wadsworth hosts a First Friday event each month in downtown Wadsworth. July's First Friday event landed on July 1, and included food trucks, activities for families and fireworks.

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We invited everyone to a community block party on our lot, complete with cotton candy, games and prizes, live music, open skate ramps, etc. to get to know even more families! Our main event and draw was a huge mural project. **Nick Wemmer of Wemmer Painting** prepared the surface of the side of our building, donating his time. One of our former mentors, **Paul Grywalski**, helped bring my vision to life of a huge coloring book page on the side of our building. Then we invited our community to help us color it all in!



Be the "I" in kind is the mural's theme and it has been humbling to become known as a ministry that offers the kindness and love of Jesus to those around us. Our lot was packed throughout the night and we saw many, many new faces and were able to give tours and extend invites to lots of new young people to join us sometime...and to meet parents who now know what we are about over here tucked in a block away from the downtown square. We are excited to see what God does next!



The verses and messages of Hope we have included on the mural are 2 Corinthians 5:17...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come! And Ephesians 4:32, Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God has forgiven you.

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