

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

December 2022

Ministry is Messy! | Steve Pausch

“We need to call the police, and he needs to go to jail”, was my initial reaction to the phone call I received recently from one of our ministry directors. Our mission at Youth For Christ is to reach out to all young people, and many times those who attend our meetings are from troubled backgrounds and struggling families. Our adult leaders are aware of the type of teen and of their family situations. Yet, that doesn't affect how we care and love these young people who don't yet know Jesus. Recently, we were involved in a personal way and saw firsthand how sin can damage those relationships.

On a day when teens didn't have school, a couple of our leaders set up a trip to go hiking at a local park and spend the day with the teens from one of our ministry sites. At one point in the day, the group stopped to use the restroom and when one of our leaders came out she noticed a young man “holding” her purse for her. She thanked him for watching it for her. The next day she realized that two of her credit cards were missing and started to rewind the past day and found out that they had been used at Dairy Queen and a convenience store. She quickly put the pieces together based upon where a particular couple of the students (brothers) lived. She called the bank and stopped future purchases, and that's when I received a call. I was irate, apologetic, and saddened by this. We know the type of young people we often work with and understand their situations, yet that doesn't make this situation any easier to stomach.

The damage had been done and no further charges could be made. So our caring adult leaders talked me through until cooler heads could prevail. We formulated a plan of action. We have a very good relationship with the school and the school police officer, so a meeting with them was put together. They felt the best course of action for this family was to talk with them and develop a plan of community service and work at our center. We are working through that now, and are hopeful that this young person has learned a lesson and can learn from this. Ministry is messy.

And as we approach Christmas, I am reminded that Christ chose to enter our mess. He willingly chose to bear my sin in his body on the tree.... He chose to enter my story and your story.... So that we might share the freedom and joy of His story with teens, just like the one above. The adult leaders involved in our ministry give so much of their time, energy, and love to teens. I am so grateful for the way they exemplify Jesus. Please pray for this situation and so many like it in the lives of teens we minister to. **Ministry is Messy! Thank you to each of you who make messy ministry in the lives of teens possible. Merry Christmas!**

Day Trip to the Boss' House | Matt Mountjoy

I have written before regarding the unique opportunities of getting kids out of their normal environments for retreats. The cool thing is that this remains true for quick day trips as well! There is just something special about getting away from home a little bit and doing some new things. It leads to not only memorable experiences, but also chances for bonding between those that go. Both of these things were certainly true on our day trip this month.

Earlier this month, we took the Wednesday night crew on a Saturday day trip a little over an hour away to Steve's house for a little outdoor in the country fun. And yes, you read that right...Steve drives over an hour to make it out to Wadsworth weekly to see these guys, and I think they appreciate that even more now! The timing for this was good because most of this group are football players who had unfortunately been eliminated from the playoffs the night before. I think this provided a welcome distraction.



While we were there, Steve had a full day planned for us, which started with some fishing. The wind was freakishly strong but it didn't keep from having a great time and catching some real err...monsters (check out the pictures!) From there we had some spontaneous chicken chasing, Steve grilled burgers and brats for us. We then went over to his friend's several hundred acre farm where they had planned out some great unique competitions doing things the guys had never done before like knife and axe throwing and BB gun shooting. We closed the evening with a hayride to the woods for a bonfire and a lesson and story given by Steve. One of the other unique opportunities about the quick day trip was the drive back we got to have good discussion about the lesson! Overall, the day was filled with fun, good discussion and memories that the guys will be able to hang on to.



Reflections on the Year | Laurie Beal

As we wrap up the year with the the Thanksgiving holiday and approach the festivities and wonder of Christmas, I find myself reflecting on the blessings of 2022 at the Garage. Of course, the teens and all the connections and memories we are making with them is at the top of the list. The opportunities that have presented for us to share the love of Christ with them and the good news of HOPE and PEACE that they can find in a personal relationship with Jesus is a true gift.

We've had multiple new babies and mommas and daddies join our teen parents program. We've met many new young people at our weekly programs and through our visits to the high school weekly at lunch. We've been able to help young people get plugged into local churches, hosted overnights and other group events, taken kids on one on one lunch outings, hosted kayak outings with struggling teens, met kids where they are at at the local detention center and in so many more ways, we have connected in meaningful ways in the lives of teens in our community.

YOUR support makes all the above happen. And we are soooo thankful! The Garage has also evolved into a place that the FAMILIES of the young people also look to us for help and support. Because of YOU, we have been able to provide a multitude of necessities year round. We have our onsite food and hygiene pantry that is stocked and shopped from regularly. We equip dozens of students each year with school supplies and backpacks. Hundreds of homecoming and prom dresses and suits and baby items and hygiene items and school clothes have been given to young people



shopping in our free supply rooms each week. We have a new mural thanks to the efforts and teamwork and donations of the community. Our give-and-take coat rack on the front porch of our Garage Cafe has already seen well over 100 coats, boots, hats, gloves, etc. come and go over the past month and will continue to help people in the community stay warm all winter long.

Also, whenever our teens have a specific need throughout the year or we want to do something special for our teens, all I have to do is make a Facebook Post and let people know of the need and within hours the need is usually filled. One of the most recent requests I posted about was the desire to take our teen parents group for a fun night out to dinner and Blue Men Group. I asked if anyone wanted to sponsor a teen for dinner or for the ticket cost or write letters of encouragement that I could give to the young parents. Friends enthusiastically stepped up to embrace young people in this tangible way and the entire event was paid for by people who care about kids and wanted to let them know that people see them and their courage and are cheering them on!



It's humbling to be surrounded by so many like-minded people and churches and small groups and small business that care about the same teens we care about and who sacrifice and share of their time and resources to help us make it ALL happen year round. And we are thankful for those that continually pray for us.

I am thankful for YOU! May God richly bless you this holiday and in the next year. It's a joy and a privilege to serve Christ WITH you!

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