

God’s Work.... God’s Way| Herb Miller

There are some days on my drive home from the Juvenile Detention Center that I feel I have wasted my time. The kids were distracted, or my message didn’t connect or one of many other reasons. There are days on my drive home from the Juvenile Detention Center that I’m awed by what God did. Other YFC volunteers have said the same kinds of thing. Our message was spot on, or the video resonated with the boys, or there were some meaningful conversations. I think in both cases it has nothing to do with us and everything to do with Jesus. God doesn’t always minister in the way we think He should.

I see the evidence of His work in the periphery as well – the “supporting cast” of the kids; the moms and dads, detention center employees and probation officers. There was the boy who didn’t want to participate in “church” as it is referred to any time YFC is there. He sat on the far side of the pod as the other boys watched, and then discussed, the video. I noticed during the video, however, that he was watching as intently as the other boys (trying hard to disguise that he was watching). And then he participated in the discussion. He had some pretty strange beliefs, and we talked about those and I explained how Christianity is different. He has participated in “church” in every session for the last three weeks. Other volunteers have talked about how non-participating boys hear. Whether they stay in their cell or sit on the other side of the room, the gospel is being heard.

And then there was an employee who listened in on our session. On the way out, he stopped me and thanked me for sharing the gospel with the boys. In fact, he had even participated in the conversations that I had with the boys. Again, other volunteers tell stories of the employees watching videos, adding to discussions. Even though we’re there to minister to the boys and girls, there are others who are listening in and hearing the gospel.

And then I got a call from a mom, whose stepson I met over several months of visiting the jail last fall. Her son is out on probation. When talking with the probation officer, he (PO) suggested she contact me in regards to finding help with mentoring. I’m praying her son will be open to it. Those who have mentored our kids talk about how their mentoring touches family members of the kids they mentor.

While the focus of the YFC detention center ministry will always be those boys and girls who are incarcerated, it’s humbling to know that God works beyond our efforts. It’s encouraging to hear those stories that show God is not limited to our expectations. Jesus taught us to minister to the least of these (Matthew 25:40)! We never know of God’s unlimited reach even as we struggle to understand how limitless His grace is.



April 2021

Wrench and Ride| Steve Pausch

Part of the independence we all developed as a young person started when we received a bicycle. When I was a young teen, everyone had a bicycle and that phenomenon dates back to the early 1900’s. Almost everyone had a bicycle. Brunswick is a city with many places to ride a bicycle and enjoy the sights, get some physical exercise, and go to the local teen center....if you have a bike! This spring and summer, we are going to be running a program with middle school students in order to build relationships and to teach the skills necessary to fix a bike. Many of the teens who have come to our teen center over the past year and a half do not have their own bicycle and can’t enjoy all the town offers. We want to change that with The Wrench and Ride program. We will be collecting old bicycles from garages, basements, and sheds and turning our teen center into a work shop a couple days of the week. Repairing tires, brakes, chains, and whatever else ails the bike gives us the opportunity to talk with teens about important life lessons. And that is what our ministry is about. The bikes will then be given to the student mechanic along with proper safety gear for them to be able to enjoy everything that bike ownership makes available.

We could repair bikes in so many ways. We could utilize 3 bikes to make one, or purchase some new parts, or clean and paint the bikes. You can be a part of this summer project and get a teen onto their very own bike seat in several ways also.... Donate an old bike that can be used in the program, donate some financial resources to help purchase necessary items, or volunteer to help get a bike running.

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God at Work | Laurie Beal

I was recently working on the lesson for our teen parents group and I got a message from a young mentor in our group. This gal had started in the group about 6 years ago as a teen mom, herself, and soon after joining, the dad of her baby died of an overdose. She is now married and has a third miracle on the way! We have been through MANY of life's joys and valleys with her on her journey. She messaged that she wanted to do the lesson for our next Monday night. I usually do the lessons but often remind the mentors they are welcome to jump in and take a week any time they have something to share. I'm always excited when any of them take me up on it! And I'm still recovering from a concussion, so I welcomed the brain break and looked forward to hearing what she was going to share.



It was a simple but, well-planned lesson that brought about much conversation. We never have trouble getting these young mommas to talk and share! She asked us to write down 5 things that we hated and 5 things we thought God probably hated. We all shared our answers then she shared some scripture explaining what God truly despises and what He loves. It has been a blessing to see this young mentor grow up and grow in her faith. It was cool to see her bravely step up and do the lesson. And what happened the following week was equally as cool!

I got another message. This time it was from one of the teen moms in our program, empowered by the young mentor that had bravely just shared. She said it was ok if I said no, but she was wondering if she could do the lesson the upcoming Monday. She explained that God was really laying something on her heart to share. Of course, I said yes! She was very well prepared. She had each of us write down and then share 5 things we loved about our kids and 5 things we wanted to teach our kids (our lessons seem to be clicked in on the "5 things" since I did a lesson on the 5 love languages in February! Lol.) I loved listening to everyone's answers! Our teen mommas and daddy's sure love their babies! Then this teen mom shared her favorite verses about parenting. She closed the lesson by reading a very special letter to her daughter that had turned one that day. Lots of moist eyes around our circle as she read about the blessing her daughter was, despite the timing, and she thanked all of us for being there every step of the way over the last year, helping her and cheering her on.

I love how God calls us to be disciples. And how He makes those interactions possible. And I love the blessings when we get to witness the fruits of our labors unfold! All glory to God!

That Place For Teens hosted a Dodgeball Tournament where teams of teens came from surrounding areas of Brunswick, Medina, and Valley City to compete for prizes and enjoy a morning of “normal” after a year of anything but normal.



Good Times; Bad Basketball | Matt Mountjoy

It’s almost halfway through the fourth quarter; the Cavaliers have clawed back after a dismal start to the second half to cut the lead to single digits. Cavaliers 7 foot tall Javale McGee gets the ball at the top of the arc, the defenders all quickly back away as if to say: “Go ahead big man, make my job easy and chuck up that three ball.” Defiantly, he seemingly thinks to himself, “Never mind that in 15 seasons of my career I’ve only made 10 of these, this pivotal game moment is the right time to show them not to disrespect my long game and leave me open!” CLANK. The Kings immediately go hit a three of their own to take the score back up to double digits never to look back again in a blowout victory.

If you think I’m going to somehow tie this into some theological statement about how if the enemy is tempting you into something so obviously wrong you should know not to do it, thanks for your faith in me. However, really I’m just a sad fan missing good basketball in Cleveland and needing to fulfill the second part of my article title. Now that is out of the way, on to the good times.

In our ministry, we have many great partners who give in many different ways. In this instance, we have someone who occasionally gets us tickets to events to take our kids to. It’s an incredibly generous thing and a great opportunity to take students to something they probably wouldn’t get the chance to do. In this case, I had the opportunity to have a meaningful one-on-one night with an NBA fan and student. This is a student who had been asking about confidence in faith and shared about the “boost” he had felt when he prayed. Since that time, I’ve had many small conversations with this young man but recently found out that he had gotten himself into a little bit of trouble. His mother was restricting him from hanging out with friends, but he was welcome to do things related with The Garage. After speaking with his mother, she was excited that he would have the chance to go to the game and hoped it could lead to some positive conversations. Thanks to God, it certainly did lead there. On the way up to the game, we were able to talk some about how he had gotten in trouble and how to proceed moving forward, doing the right things and earning trust back with his parents. We also had a great time during the game hanging out. At one point, it was great to see his generous heart as we took a trip to the team shop because he wanted to use a gift card to buy souvenirs for his younger siblings. On the drive home, we went from talking about scary movies back to prayer and we had a great follow up conversation on the one we had a few months ago. He shared with me that he was now regularly praying and trying to set apart daily time to talk with God. He felt more confident in his faith and shared that it was a goal of his to be known as someone with unwavering faith. He also shared his appreciation for all the different leaders at The Garage and the different roles they fill and different ways that they connect to students. Ultimately, it’s the one place in his life where faith is regularly shared and talked about.

Overall, it was a great night thanks to the opportunity provided to us by a generous partner in ministry. It is always special to be able to provide unique experiences to kids. Inevitably, those experiences lead to opportunities for great conversations and relationship building. And while the result of the game didn’t turn out so great, as we were walking out of the arena the student summed it up well: “At least we got to see some good plays.” We did get to see some good plays, but more importantly, we had a good time and a meaningful one at that.