



**August 2025**

## **Sandusky County Juvenile Justice Center Ministry (SCJJC) | Steve Pausch**

Herb Miller leads our team of volunteers at the SCJJC. Each week, this team faithfully visits the teens who are in the center. His article on the inside page talks in broad strokes about this ministry. It's difficult to share the details of individuals involved in the ministry and yet, I want to give you a picture of what our volunteers deal with each week. As you might imagine, they never know who will be at the center each week. There are highs..... We've had multiple teens ask for Bibles this past year, and we've had several ask Christ into their lives. Many of the teens say they want to be mentored by our volunteers once they are released. Often, their commitment to this wanes once they are released. And yet, this year, we've had an incredible opportunity with one teen who was released and committed to mentorship so much that she invited her cousin and her grandma to be involved with our staff!

There are also lows..... many times a teen is released only to show up in the center weeks or months later. Sometimes, teens who have committed to Christ while in the center and have been released, return. And most times, the teens in the center have stories that break our hearts. Please pray for this team as they minister week in and week out.... And enjoy the reflections below from Herb.

I'm a fan of the late Chuck Colson, a central figure from the Watergate days. I have read and re-read many of Colson's books. Colson was the founder of Prison Fellowship, one of the most active prison ministries in the world. Colson shares many relevant and meaningful stories in his talks and books. They come from his experiences in government, his law practice, but mostly from his experience in ministry. One of my favorite stories happened at the end of a prison mission weekend. After the services were done, as the prisoners left the room, one inmate happily shared with Colson that he placed his trust in Christ that weekend. Colson

asked what convinced him about accepting Christ. Was it his preaching, the music, or something else?

The man quickly responded that it was none of those. (Colson admitted his ego was growing until the man responded). The inmate said that as good as all those things were, it was none of them. He said that while the service was going on, he could hear the Prison Fellowship ladies back in the kitchen, cleaning up after cooking and feeding them all. He couldn't stop thinking of them. What compelled them to do that? He concluded that the only rational reason for their hard work, was their service to the living God. Because of those ladies, he concluded that Jesus was real.

I can't help but think of our ministry at the Sandusky County Juvenile Detention Center when I remember that story. There are no heroes in our group. We consist of believers in Jesus who are obedient to serve the at-risk teens in our community. We each have our different gifts and talents and experiences. I know that no matter who sees the kids, they are hearing the good news and are experiencing people who are a part of the kingdom of God. I see even how God often uses our different talents to complement each other.

God doesn't call us to be successful. In fact, if we evaluated our ministry by the world's standards, we probably don't look very successful. He calls us to be faithful. God brings the results. I recall times as I left the JDC, I felt like I wasted my time, or I just didn't connect with the kids. Other volunteers have expressed the same sentiment after one of their visits. We have often found out later – usually from a staff member or a member of our group - that one of the kids says how much something touched them when we were there.

As with most ministries, great things happen for God when no one cares about who gets the credit. I suspect that most everyone who has ministered to teens, has experienced what I'm talking about. If that describes you, I encourage you to keep on keeping on. There will be kids in Heaven who have watched you and listened to you and are closer to God because of you. In many cases, you won't know until you're both in Heaven.

Galatians 6:9 - Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (NIV).

## Student Spotlight | Matt Mountjoy

I'm excited to share with you all a student spotlight this month on Colton. I've had the privilege of getting to know him through The Garage, and also through coaching him in football. He is a young man of outstanding character and has a really good heart. I'm excited to see what God has in store for him as he is going into his senior year and beyond!

How long have you been going to The Garage?

**I've been going to The Garage since my freshman year, so it has been about two and a half years now.**

What is something coming up in the ministry that you are looking forward to?

**One of the things I'm really looking forward to this year is going out to Steve's house (for the Manly Man Night) I'm excited to compete in challenges with my friends there and build a greater bond with them.**

What is one of your favorite things you've been a part of at The Garage?

**My favorite experience at The Garage is during Thanksgiving. I enjoy the fun lesson, food, and especially the frozen turkey bowling!**

Is there any way that you feel like your time at The Garage has had an impact on your life?

**I think that I have been more conscientious about my decisions since going to The Garage. I prioritize God in my life more than I ever had.**

What is something you feel like you've learned from your time taking part in the ministry?

**The main point that I have taken away from going here is that just believing in God and obeying Him are different things. I can't be a "lukewarm Christian" and I have to be all in.**

## **Serving Together | Laurie Beal**

Having my husband, Jim, be part of our young parents group has really been a cool addition for many reasons. Selfishly, it's fun to serve together and to have him understand the dynamics of what I do on Monday nights because he's doing it now, too! More importantly, having a leader for the guys has also increased their attendance significantly and according to the young moms, has increased positive interactions with the dads and their kids and with the gals!

We can split into groups for the lesson part of the meeting and that has been a benefit on many levels. The gals can talk freely amongst each other, as are the guys in their group. Then, when we get back together, we discuss the night's topic as a group. We have seen growth on the part of the individual parents AND the couples this past year.

The smaller groups have also been more conducive to more personal discussions about spiritual matters and where the young people land in their walk with Christ. One of the moms and one of the dads have both recently made decisions to follow Christ. They are very eager to figure out what that looks like for themselves and for their relationship with each other and for their little family.

Our gal mentors are discipling this young mom and answering her many questions and guiding her in growing further in her faith. They also gave her a Bible of her own, which she was very excited about. She was also excited to share that they have been reading the Bible each night to their 2 little ones.

And Jim has been discipling the young dad, answering many in-depth questions, taking him out to eat and they have another fishing trip planned! He had never fished before Jim taught him. This young man has recently shared some vices he has struggled with and how the holy Spirit has been convicting him to seek help for his addiction. He is excited to even think about the freedom that sobriety will bring for him AND his family.

What a blessing it is to be able to pour into the lives of these young families, to share Jesus with them and to cheer them on! Thank you to all who give to Garage Ministry/Youth for Christ and make these relationships possible!

## Every Once in a While | Steve Pausch

I wonder if your life is like mine sometimes? You are going along, and it seems that everything is fine and then, the car breaks down, or the water heater doesn't want to heat water anymore, and the list can continue from there. We understand that things wear out or things break, but that doesn't change the fact that this inconvenience often puts us in a bad mood. We forget that the car has run for thousands of miles between break downs or that the water heater ensured us many a hot shower and kept our dishes clean. Things are good until they aren't.

In this ministry, things are no different. We have had great meetings over the summer with young people, seeing many new and old faces. We have had quick and deep conversations dealing with the issues teens face. We have shared the ministry with churches who are excited to see what we are doing, and we have had 7 young people from different ministry sites become regular church attenders this summer. But we have also had a summer that has seen our financial resources fall below budget. Some of our supporting churches and individuals have run into their own tough times and those often filter down the line. We are behind where we need to be and are asking for help. If you would be in a position to help with a little extra toward this ministry it would be greatly appreciated.

I don't like to have to ask like this and don't do it often but, every once in a while we find ourselves in a tough spot. Thank you for your faithful prayers and support of this work here, we are seeing it make a difference in the lives of young people who need to know Jesus.

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