



YOUTHFORCHRIST

of Northern Ohio

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September 2009

Blackberries & Ministry

Welcome to the end of another summer. We trust you had a blessed and relaxing summer filled with the best of times. Summer has been full of excitement here at Youth for Christ, with many trips, overnights, events and meetings with kids.

As the Director of Youth for Christ, I often feel that all of my correspondence with you needs to be positive and full of all the ways we are changing the world. I must apologize. I am not sure I feel that way now. We are seeing kids who seemed to be on the right track spiritually, suddenly change direction. I feel we are often fighting a battle that seems un-winnable. This economy has turned support raising into a decision between financially participating in God's work or paying the bills for many people. The news reports show that as a movement we, as Christians, hardly affect our neighbors and friends at all. Well, despite my lack of a positive outlook, **God has been faithful**, and we are seeing great things happen in the lives of kids. I wake up nearly every morning feeling we need to do more to reach kids, and often I feel way behind of that boat.



Winners of fishing derby at In the Whisper property

A few weeks back, I had the privilege of taking two of my daughters blackberry picking. Ever since I was little, I have loved eating blackberries. As we were picking and filling our baskets, God showed me some parallels between blackberry picking and ministry. I would like to share those with you.

It is hard, tedious work to fill up a basket with blackberries. Teens are getting busier than ever and have more to entertain them. So to be able to get to know them and have an opportunity to tell them about salvation is becoming harder and harder.

Blackberries sit ripened on the vine for only a short time, and then they fall to the ground and are wasted. We only have a short time before kids go away and may not be able to be reached. Stats tell us that 85% of people who make a commitment to Christ do so before the age of 18.

We discovered that the best blackberries are often found behind the biggest thorns. We are seeing that behind the pains and hurts, disappointments and hopelessness are kids who need God to do His best work, but we need to take time to get past their defenses.

As we picked blackberries, we found other things are actively looking forward to eating them, too. There are so many other forces trying to get our kids to follow them



Champions of a greased pig contest at the In the Whisper property

that we need to be diligent and faithful to what God has called us to do.

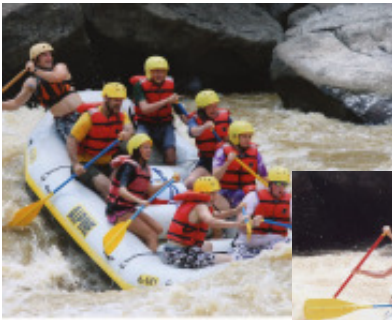
Blackberries need to be turned into something soon after being picked or they lose their flavor. We are aggressively trying to get kids into Bible studies and churches once they decide to follow Christ. Would you be willing to help mentor a kid?

Cobbler, pie, milkshakes, pancakes, bread, coffee cake are just a few of the things that blackberries can become once they are picked. The kids that God has called YFC to reach have

unlimited potential as well. I have been so blessed this summer to spend time with former students who are now well on their way to becoming a doctor, pastor, two teachers and business men. They are seeking God's direction for their lives and following His voice.



7 students from The Garage in Wadsworth who were baptized this summer by Seth Frink, pastor at Radiant Life Church



Highland Huddle's summer rafting trip

Thank you for your faithful support of this ministry. Picking blackberries is full of scratches, bee stings, bad berries, and thorns, but the rewards are sure worth it. Thank you for sending us out into the bushes looking for kids.

In Memory of Kyle Milich

On Friday, August 21st, Mr. Kyle Milich went home to be with his LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was a volunteer worker with the Highland HUDDLE, a ministry sponsored by Youth for Christ of Northern Ohio. Kyle was one of the original founding leaders of our group and will be sadly missed by the rest of our team. Many kids chose Christ during the school year 2007/2008 because of his powerful influence.

Kyle continued to minister to our group even after his brain surgery. He last spoke to our HUDDLE group in February of this year. His message was titled "When You Are at the End of Your Rope." A portion of his message is as follows: "I have learned through this experience with cancer

that Jesus is my Knot when I am at the end of my rope. In The "Message,"

a paraphrase of the Bible, we read in Matthew 5:3-4: "You're blessed when you are at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule." You can read the rest of Kyle's sermon on his website found at: www.tenorguitarpsalmist.net His desire was to continue ministering even after his death.



From left to right, Highland Huddle leaders, Mark Raczynski, Kyle Milich and Ron Hall

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Psalm 116:15 states: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." God took the best flower in His garden and planted it in heaven with Him. Cancer was permitted to take his physical life, but his spirit and soul were never in jeopardy. Despite our loss, the Highland HUDDLE will continue to move forward with the encouragement Mr. Kyle Milich gave to all of us. We will continue to trust God as our anchor.