

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

August 2024



Faithful Service | Steve Pausch

On May 24th, the young people of Northern Ohio lost a faithful and tireless advocate who had been a board member at Youth For Christ since 1995. Kathy Stehno went to be with her Lord leaving behind a legacy of care and concern for the young people of Northern Ohio. Kathy was a founding member of Medina County Youth For Christ, which is now Youth For Christ of Northern Ohio, and was an ever-present voice for this ministry. Kathy, along with other board members, would gather via phone each Saturday morning to pray for the teens this ministry serves. Kathy and her late husband Charlie were faithful regular donors to our ministry and were a blessing and encouragement to our staff and volunteers.

Kathy was a voice to her church and community about the issues facing teens today, and she looked for ways to help teens find the Hope only found in Jesus. She was a faithful follower of Jesus and was an example of that faith to family and friends. Kathy has left a legacy to all those who knew and loved her, and she will be deeply missed.

New Faces and Lost Phones | Matt Mountjoy

Last month, I wrote about the cool opportunity of meeting many new kids at our end of school year event, Water Wars. The trend of new kids continued as we got to meet even more new faces at our most recent event. Let's set the stage:

Every summer we have created the tradition of taking The Garage kids to see a family movie at Blue Sky Drive-In. It's a fun event and usually a pretty popular one. This year, we only had 8 kids confirmed to go and at the last minute had some back outs. We only had 3 confirmed and I wasn't sure if we should try to reschedule it, but we went ahead with it and I'm glad we did. I pulled into The Garage and soon a truck pulled in with 4 kids, 2 of whom had come to the last event and 2 new ones! I wasn't even sure how they found out, but I had the opportunity to meet some of their parents. The students were middle school kids, and both moms asked them to leave their phones in the truck with them, but both kids protested and kept them. More on that later. We ended up with a few more kids showing up. Eventually we took 11 kids to the movie. They had time to hang out beforehand, get some snacks and even played on the old playground.

Shortly before the movie, one of the two new kids (who was told to leave their phone behind) realized it was missing. We had to contact their mom, and let them know the phone was probably back at The Garage. So, the mother drove back to search for it. We had a great time watching *Inside Out 2* (it was entertaining watching a few skateboarding high school guys and how into the movie they were) yet towards the end of the movie THE OTHER girl whose mom told her not to take her phone started panicking. She couldn't find her phone! We don't stay for the second movie, so in the intermission in the dark, I took the kids to search the playground, around the concession stand, and all around our vehicles. They searched desperately for the phone, but it was time to leave. We got back and dug through all the nooks and crannies of Laurie's big old Suburban but to no avail. The night ended with them going back to the drive-in to search more and I got a phone call at 12:30 am, asking if we could search more for it.

This silly story ends in victory as Laurie discovered the phone buried under the seats of the Suburban the next morning and returned the phone to its rightful owner. While this story wasn't exactly hilarious at midnight as we were digging through the car in the parking lot, and the night didn't exactly provide any deep spiritual teaching or growth, it was a really cool opportunity to get to build relationships with some new students and get to establish connection with their families. Sometimes it's fun to see how God can work through little things like lost phones!

Roller Coaster | Laurie Beal

Working with young people has many layers. There are blessings and fun times and moments you truly feel God using you to share His love and break down barriers... and then there are the worries and hard times and stressful situations that overwhelm and lay heavy on the heart.

It is not an endeavor that you can pursue and expect fruit at every turn. There are days you feel that the plants God has entrusted in your care are withering and, despite your humble yet valiant efforts, may not blossom in your presence. And you have to be ok with that.

Just in this last month, the life scenarios I've been privy to in the lives of young people has been nothing short of overwhelming. Here are just a few of the stories ...

There's been a young mom nearing her 18th birthday, living in a volatile situation where the police have been involved multiple times, knowing she will soon be kicked out and that her parents will be trying to get custody of her child. I scrambled to get her all the resources to get shelter, necessities and advocacy to enable her to keep her child. She has to make the final calls to make all that happen...and as far as I know she hasn't.

Then there's the struggling young couple. We've been part of their lives pre-baby and now in the parenting stage. Just as we were starting to see a bloom budding in specific things we have been working on with them, we got a call that they have been kicked out of her parents' house with none of their belongings. They are now living a distance away in a small space with other family. Next thing I know, my husband and I are at the police station meeting her parents who are willing to meet us to hand off the belongings. We load their life from one old truck to another and head the distance to deliver it since the young couple doesn't have a car. And as we are driving away, I realized that with no car, that also means they will not be able to come to our weekly teen parents support group. And the progress we have been making with them might be paused or lost.

And there's the 2 gals, with boyfriends in tow, who come together to shop in the baby store. One has lost custody of her baby and now only has weekly visits and shares some horrific details of what happened to her baby (and shared that it wasn't her doing) and tells of the investigation currently going on. The other gal shares news that she's pregnant and has had several positive tests. This little one she's announcing was unexpected but seen as a blessing. As she is happily loading a bag with all things baby, she starts developing symptoms of a miscarriage. We encouraged her to go to the hospital and later that night hear the news she is not pregnant and is not showing evidence that she was. I help her unpack the confusion and the sadness.

The roller coaster is real.

But then there's also the good stuff.

Sweet Ahna started coming to the Garage when she was in 7th grade. She was unsure where she stood with God when we met. Like many of us have experienced, disappointments and other people can cause some questioning when it comes to matters of faith. That's where she was.

But God....

In these last 6 years since meeting Ahna in our cafe, God has shown up in so many ways and blessed all of us mentors to be part of so many cool stories involving Ahna, her growing faith, her growing confidence and all the ways she blesses other's lives all around her....so much FRUIT!

My favorite Ahna moments from this past month were going to her graduation party and celebrating her acceptance into a Christian college, hearing the stories of her summer trip to Japan and my favorite , the sweet blessing of getting drenched while giving her a big hug after watching Ahna be baptized! She had been anticipating this for a couple years and the smile on her face was priceless!

I'm so thankful that God is in the details of all of it. That HE gives us the strength and the endurance and the desire to share His love with these amazing young people, walk through the ups and downs with them and that He lets us taste the sweetness of fruit, sometimes.

And I'm also so thankful for all of you who support what we do, so we can keep doing it.



**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**
P.O. Box 323
Wadsworth, OH 44282
330-273-5794
www.northernohioyfc.com

Steve Pausch
Executive Director

Laurie Beal
Director of Ministry-
Wadsworth

Barb Pfeiffer
Office Manager

Local Ministry Directors:

Scott Hulet
Herb Miller
Matt Mountjoy
Roger Seward
Stacey Stender

Board Members:

John Heese
Barbara Moran-
Engler
Eric Pfeiffer
Bobby Puls
Kathy Stehno