

# CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

*Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church*

October 2024



## It's a Stampede! | Steve Pausch

Every Tuesday and Thursday during the school year in Brunswick, there is a scene reminiscent of an old western movie. Many Westerns have the scene of cowboys moving their cattle across the prairie. Suddenly, the smell of fresh grass or a cool watering hole excites the cattle and sends them off running into an out of control stampede.

The Brunswick Middle School is located directly across the street from our teen center, ***That Place For Teens***, and is the school day home to just over 1500 6-8th grade students. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons when the final bell of the day rings, the students who have been corralled all day in the school are released to the waiting busses, or family cars, and a large herd heads to the crosswalk. Once they cross the road and reach the sidewalk, the stampede begins to our door where a great group of caring adults wait to greet and welcome the students.

The next two hours are filled with homework time, dinner together around a table with discussions about life and faith, and a variety of games and activities to keep the herd busy. This scenario happens each week and in the midst of the activity you will see a staff sitting with a young person engaged in a deep conversation. One such recent conversation, dealt with the issue of the occult and family issues with a young la-

dy. This young lady did not even know about Easter or what the cross was. Our staff person was able to show her in the Bible where it was located and then give her a Bible to take home. Stories like this play out every week and not just with our after school program, but at our high school outreaches at the teen center also.

The old West stampede in the movies is a hectic, chaotic few moments before the herd can be calmed down and brought together. Often, a cowboy will ride out and find the one lost member of the herd. Thank you for making it possible with your prayers and financial support to help us find the **lost** young people of Brunswick and introduce them to Jesus.

**We need your help...** this Fall we are seeing more teens weekly and we have more expenses. We have some amazing adults and churches that provide meals on some of our program days but not every day. Would you be able to invest in the lives of these young people with a special financial gift to help our staff keep helping the lost teens of Brunswick?

## Seeing Growth | Matt Mountjoy

*“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity” – 2 Peter 3:18*

I can only think of one word that accurately describes the first full month at The Garage this year: GROWTH. I don't mean that we've grown drastically in numbers,. This growth is more important. What we have seen is a growth in maturity, a growth in behavior, and a growth in understanding God and desire to learn more.

First, I want to provide an update on the Wednesday night group. When working in youth ministry there are a lot of great times, but it can sometimes be frustrating. This is because, well...kids are frustrating. However, this group has been awesome to work with, and I am genuinely excited every single week to get there and dive in with them. We started off the year with allowing them to just ask questions and set of topics to teach them. The amount of thoughtful questions and topics they came up with showed their genuine desire to learn more about God. I generally plan on having a 20 minute lesson, but with this group's engagement it normally has been around 40

minutes each week. Afterwards, they also have a great time playing whatever game we have, but it's clear they are getting a lot from the serious portion of the night. Right now we are doing a "famous people in the Bible" series that will probably last us much of the fall. This was requested by the kids, and I realized that I take for granted "basic stories" and that most kids didn't grow up going to Sunday school and learning about the things I did from a young age. Please continue to pray for these guys and that their excitement about the Bible and desire to engage more with God continues to grow.

Thursday nights have also seen a lot of growth. We've had ups and downs this year in attendance with this group. The last few years we have really struggled with behavior from this crew, but it has not been an issue at all so far this year. The kids have been engaged, and we have had great conversations and they ask great questions. A handful of them have been around a few years and they started with zero understanding of the Gospel. Now, they are really able to articulate it and have deep conversations about it! I think many people might be surprised to see the kids that come on Thursday have grown to the level of depth that they have. Probably the coolest step of growth I've seen this year comes from one guy who has been a big distraction in the past. Last year, I had to actually remove his question asking privileges in the lessons! He would raise his hand and I would say "Is this a serious question? Is it about what we are talking about?" He would look me in the eye, swear it was, and then hit me with the most off the wall and random comment ever. This year the first time he went to ask a question I kind of rolled my eyes and held my breath, and instead he hit me with an incredibly thoughtful and on topic question. Please pray for this group that as they continue to grow, there will be changes made in their lives outside of their time at The Garage.

## **Breaking the Cycle | Laurie Beal**

One of the concepts I like to try and weave into all of the lessons that I can at our teen parents support group is that they, as parents, can undo and redo anything that wasn't healthy, that their parents did with them by not doing the same things with their kids. They can be a cycle breaker. They can know better, do better. They can change the trajectory for THEIR kids and make their kid's childhoods healthier than theirs was.

Often "changing things up" is a concept that is new to them. There may have been generations before them defaulting to the "this is how it's always been done" attitude. So, they haven't even contemplated the idea of making changes. Sometimes they don't have the confidence to make a big change on their own but are open to learning how.

And then, there are also times these young parents want to make the changes and even have an idea of how they would rather things be for their kids, but they just need some cheerleaders in their corner to help them take those steps in a healthier direction. And our mentors LOVE being the ones cheering them on!

We've seen teens break the cycle in how they decide they will talk softer with their kids versus

the yelling they endured as a kid, use a time out or time in versus using the physical punishments they received or realize the importance of reading to their kids even though they don't remember being read to and then choosing to read daily to their kids. Some never went to church with their family but have chosen to make church a priority for their family or choose to do bedtime prayers even though they didn't have that comfort themselves growing up.

Our most recent lesson was about recognizing that the places and spaces we are in throughout each week bring about emotions. These emotions can be good or bad, and sometimes both good AND bad emotions happen at the same places. God created us with emotions and the ability to have a wide range of emotions and also the ability to recognize our range of emotions. We then discussed the importance of keeping tabs on our emotions and recognizing when we have spikes in good emotions and what triggers spikes in negative emotions and the art of learning to balance those. And we discussed the importance of staying in a healthy range for our own health and for our kids to see that modeled.

It was neat to hear the conversation naturally turn to the young parents talking about how they can help their kids learn that these emotions are ok and help their little ones learn to recognize the ups and downs and learn healthier coping skills than they, themselves, were taught.

What a blessing it is to be part of a ministry that enables us to not only teach about the unconditional love that Christ has for them, but also teach these young people how to love themselves and their children even better.

Thank you to every person that makes our ministry possible! All glory to God!

 <p><b>YOUTH FOR CHRIST</b> P.O. Box 323 Wadsworth, OH 44282 330-273-5794 www.northernohioyfc.com</p>	<p>Steve Pausch Executive Director</p>	<p><b>Local Ministry Directors:</b></p> <p>Scott Hulet Herb Miller Matt Mountjoy Roger Seward Stacey Stender</p>	<p><b>Board Members:</b></p> <p>John Heese Barbara Moran-Engler Eric Pfeiffer Bobby Puls Kathy Stehno</p>
	<p>Laurie Beal Director of Ministry- Wadsworth</p>	<p>Barb Pfeiffer Office Manager</p>	