

# CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

*Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church*

January 2025



## **A Seat at the Table | Steve Pausch**

2025 is here and we are looking at some new opportunities to be able to meet weekly with more teens. We want to introduce them to the teachings of Jesus through a friendship with caring adults committed to sharing that message. We are in talks to be able to expand our ministry in detention centers into two additional facilities. We have submitted paperwork and begun working on the necessary relationships to add that to our weekly outreaches. Please pray for the approval process while continuing to pray for our current site in Sandusky County that has our adults meeting several times a week with incarcerated youth.

We are also talking with 2 school systems about starting ministry in 2025 that would increase our impact on the young people there. We are meeting with potential partners and churches to make that a reality as soon as possible. Please pray that those talks and meetings will be fruitful in the near future, and we can get the necessary adult leaders in place and trained to help change young peoples' lives.

**A tangible way you can help our ministry right now....** At our middle school outreach in Brunswick, we have family style sit down dinners with the students provided by some local churches, businesses, and individuals. These dinner times have been very productive and the teens enjoy talking about life and issues. But, the problem is they talk so much it is hard to hear with our current configuration. We are currently using some long and very heavy 8 foot tables so the young people are far away from each other when they are talking and the more they talk the harder it is to hear. We would like to purchase some large round plastic banquet tables that would make a huge difference at our table talk time.

The new tables cost \$149.00 each, and we believe it would increase our effectiveness in many ways. Would you be able to help us have better table time by sending an additional gift to help offset the cost of a table. We are looking to start with 6 new tables in the near future when we start back up weekly the first week of January. Thank you for your faithful support of this work!

## Unexpected Moments | Matt Mountjoy

*“We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” -Romans 8:28*

I have written before about God providing unique opportunities by combining my role in ministry with YFC and in coaching. Recently, another moment came about when this was true. Unfortunately, this was not a moment that is easily celebrated, but in light of Romans 8:28 worth highlighting none the less. We know that God can take all things and use them for the growth of the kingdom, even in times of trial.

This past week we had our annual postseason football banquet. It is a great time to celebrate the accomplishments of the team that season. While this was true of this year, we also learned earlier in the day that Colin, the seventh grade son of Wadsworth's Athletic Director, was diagnosed that morning with leukemia. Wadsworth is fortunate to have a man of faith leading its football program, and in light of this, he wanted to make sure there was the opportunity for as many people who could be praying for the situation to be doing so. One of the honors, responsibilities, and often times difficult aspects of being in ministry is these moments when people look in your direction. It is in these moments where I am grateful that it is God who does the work and not me. Our coach created the opportunity for anyone who wanted to stick around after the event to join together in prayer for this young man and asked me to lead the group in prayer. While Romans 8 does not promise that things will be easy or what we want, it proved to be true that God can work in all things. That night, there were hundreds of people that came together to pray for a young man. We believe in the power of prayer, and in that moment there were many people of faith who lifted their voices as prayer warriors for the treatment and healing of this young man. There were also many others who are not believers and stuck around out of care, or politeness. What they got to see and hear was the truth of a God who is bigger than we can imagine, and His love is more than we could ever dream.

I write about this experience to encourage you that God does in fact take any opportunity to spread the word about His Kingdom. Also, to encourage you that there are many people of faith in your communities who still lean into God in times of need. And finally, to ask you to join into the prayer efforts for this young man, Colin, as he and his family face medical procedures and treatment. Pray for healing for Colin, pray for comfort for him and his family, and pray that they can lean into God in these times and see just how great and loving He is.

## B and C | Laurie Beal

Recently, four of us mentors were gathered together, and we were reminiscing about past Garage kids and filling each other in on the ones we had each heard from recently or updates we had seen on social media. It was crazy thinking about just how many young people have been through our doors and tucked in our hearts over the years. We discussed how cool it was that so many of these now-adults still messaged randomly or popped in to see us.

Later that same evening, I heard my phone ring, later than usual. I looked at the caller ID and saw that it was a former Garage kid calling me.... funny, we had just been talking about this same thing!

I answered with a big smile and learned that "B" was calling to let me know how he and his wife and new baby were doing. He talked about his military experience, his new job and his plans for college and how much he loved being a daddy. It was awesome catching up. He then asked something he does EVERY time I see or talk to him.... he asked about a certain former volunteer, "C" and asked how she was doing. Interestingly, that same volunteer asks about this young man EVERY time I talk to or see her.

The three of us have gotten together for breakfast and lunch multiple times. And "B" and I started talking about how we needed to set up another get-together with the 3 of us and his new family.

They say you aren't supposed to have favorites... whoever THEY are!?! Regardless of that, I can guarantee you that "B" is "C's" favorite...and vice versa, which B confirmed with me. I'm ok with that. I can see why "C" would be everyone's favorite! She's one of mine! And so is "B."

Is this starting to sound like a Dr. Seuss book with all the B's and C's, or is it just me?! Stick with me...the cool part of the story is coming up.

"C" became a grandma to all of the kids for the years she volunteered with us. Everyone absolutely adores her, and she loves all of them. Due to some health issues, she currently hasn't been able to volunteer any longer at the Garage. We tried the routine of me picking her up and then taking her home but that was eventually too much for her, too. The last time I was at her house she was talking about still wanting to make a difference. I reminded her that even her neighborhood was a mission field, and that God could use her right there... and was doing that. She agreed and talked of a couple things she was already doing, and we discussed other ideas.

So, then, fast forward to my phone conversation with "B." I was telling him it would probably be easier to meet near where "C" lived and asked where he was living now so we could coordinate. He started to explain his new neighborhood and how he was trying to make an im-

fact on people around him and had already connected with a couple people and even had one over to play pool and talked of how being at the Garage had helped him realize how God can use each of us right where we are. He then started explaining how to get to his house from Wadsworth.

I said ..."sounds like you're explaining how to get to Cs house.' He said, "no, I live about 20 minutes from Wadsworth." I explained that so does "C." I asked him his address. As we talked, I plugged in his address and C's address. I laughed out loud and was giddy like a kid on Christmas morning...I think I may have screamed..."guess how far away you live from C?!? ...

500 ft! if you take the sidewalk...maybe 200 ft if you cut through the yard across the street from you!?"

I've never seen an address distance show up in FEET on Google maps!

"B" asked me not to tell "C" because he wanted to surprise her after work the next day. He video called me on the short walk over to her door so I could see her reaction. SIMPLY PRICE-LESS! Still in shock, she waved bye so the 2, now- neighbors, could catch up!

Both of these dear-to-me people were looking for a way to impact their neighbors and feel a sense of purpose...both needing encouragement and community, themselves... both missing each other. Now, they have lots of plans for future get-togethers!

The three of us have a game of pool lined up in January and "C" told "B" she can be one of the baby's grandma's and "B" said, "YES...and you can also be mine!"

Isn't GOD sooooo cool?!?

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