

We say, "Hello! How are you?" They say..... | Steve Pausch

People say you should learn something new every day and working with teenagers, I think we learn new things each day. We hear many people say that we are living in really weird times with unrest, a virus, and an overall sense of uncertainty.

Many times when I am not running a teen meeting, I just like to sit in the back and take in the whole picture. On one such night, I watched as a new young lady came in for the first time. Our adult leaders were very welcoming asking her name, school, and grade. They showed her around the teen center and made sure she felt included. Teens are sometimes not as welcoming when a new face invades their space, but one of the girls was friendly and inviting. I watched as she talked about the leaders and how much she enjoys the conversations and the food at each meeting. She shared about herself and introduced the "new girl" to her friends. They all seemed to be hitting it off well as I watched.

Our staff are trained to ask questions and draw out information from young people as a way of getting to know them. Questions help make someone feel cared for and involved. I've been around teens for many, many years, but the next question that was asked was a new one for me. The young lady who was welcoming our new visitor was casually asking about school, and making small chit chat when she asked, "So what are your pronouns"? I have been to seminars and received training on some of the struggles people have with identity today but, I had never seen it asked right in the context of a conversation as a way of introduction. When I was in high school, I am sure I did not even think about pronouns outside of English class! Our new guest didn't even pause as she answered, "They, Bi, Ze."

We should learn something new each day, and I learned something new that day. Next month we will take a little deeper dive into gender identity and how to reach today's teens.

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The Harvest | Steve Pausch

In Matthew 9 Jesus says to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

The cold weather has returned and we know what is just around the corner here in Northern Ohio. Just a few short months ago in the Spring, we were given the opportunity to utilize a piece of land near our teen center in Brunswick to plant a garden. We had several weather set backs and some liability insurance issues that pushed our planting back a few weeks and limited what we were able to plant. We decided on planting a pumpkin patch and using them with kids this Fall.

Despite a lot of heavy rain due to several storms this summer we were able to see a harvest just in time for teens to decorate pumpkins and take them home. The picking time for the pumpkins was also a time to talk about how we plant the seeds but God brings the harvest.

The Harvest is ready and the workers are few but we have been blessed with some unbelievably committed and caring adult leaders. These leaders are willing to spend countless hours with teens dealing with issues, talking through questions, and pointing them to Jesus. I am incredibly blessed and encouraged to see how much they care about teens and how teens respond to that love.

Teens are struggling socially now in this world of COVID, but our adult leaders at YFC are going the extra mile to make sure their needs are met. Thank you to the men and women who go the extra mile each day to help kids find their way to Jesus. The harvest is ready and so are we. Thank you for your support that keeps workers in the fields. We expect to not only fill a car with pumpkins but see God fill up the Kingdom of Heaven with the souls of young people.



From the Mouths of Teens | Laurie Beal

Our Youth for Christ mentors are scrambling to connect with teens, to provide normalcy in very abnormal times and to offer them the HOPE and stability that only Christ can offer. Now more than ever, these young people NEED connection and people that care about them, pray for them and remind them that things will be ok. We can't thank you, our supporters, enough for helping to make this happen. Here are a few messages recently received from Garage Ministry teens...

"The Garage to me is a safe place to go. Everyone is so caring and nice and it's a relief to be there especially in the pandemic." Ahna

"The Garage is a place where everyone fits in. Its a place where you know that you will always be welcomed and accepted. And if you ever need a friend or someone to talk to you can find that there. You really learn to love and appreciate what everyone does. And you grow to be close and practically become family to everyone there." Kierstan

"The Garage is an amazing place! I have been going since I was a freshman in high school, I am currently a senior. They have been so helpful to me and my family and friends I know. Helped me get a new car, bicycles, food, school supplies and have given me opportunities and experiences I never thought I would ever do. If I could keep attending even after I am out of high school, I definitely would." Owen

And from a former Garage gal...

"I went to the Garage 6 years ago. I moved down by Columbus. I didn't have anything like it when I moved to my new town. It sucked. The Garage always was the place to go and forget about all the hard times you were facing. I always knew about that Garage. When I was younger my brother Jake and Caleb went. When I started, my brother was a volunteer. The Garage is a place to help everyone struggle and forget all the hardships of the world and just live and have fun as a middle schooler, high schoolers and even adults. There is nothing like the Garage and I'm every thankful to have had it in my life. Thank you to all the volunteers that help and still help today you guys are doing an amazing thing." Jennifer

These are just a few of the kids that you are helping us reach, helping us teach about Jesus and helping to give them a place they can belong in today's uncertain and sometimes harsh reality. Thank you!

Wednesday Night Follow Up | Matt Mountjoy

As I mentioned in last months newsletter, we have started up our Wednesday Night Club night. If you are unfamiliar with this group as opposed to our traditional Thursday night group, don't worry. I'll catch you up now! Last year, we began a weekly meeting aimed towards a new demographic in our community. The Thursday night crowd is normally focused on the "at risk" or "fringe" kids in our community. Wednesday nights we are targeting the athletes and their group of friends. It's important to note that neither night is exclusive and any youth can show up for either night. Fortunately, being a football coach I have established relationships with many of the players, and the goal is to start with them and build out from there. We had an exciting year last year with a good core group that really engaged and had a lot of fun. However, the group was almost all seniors. So, basically, this year, we are starting from scratch.

Week one left me frustrated as I waited at the Garage and no one showed up. I had initially been told by a handful of the football players that they would be there. Yet, the night did not go to waste as I began messaging some of the kids that regularly come to Thursday nights and let them know I had free food. So, the first meeting was spent with a handful of hungry teens from our regular crew. Week two arrived and I had lowered my expectations and ordered less food. God reminded me of His faithfulness as 10 kids showed up, and I barely had enough to get everyone something to eat! Week three came and we had another group of 10 kids, this time a few new ones, while the ones the week before had let me know they couldn't make it but intend on continuing to come. So, currently we have what appears to be a good core group of kids, most of them sophomores and freshmen. They definitely are fun and do a good job listening when it's time to be serious, but right now they are a little hard to get to engage in the serious conversations.

Please continue to pray for the growth and development of this group. Some specific areas of prayer is for more adult volunteers who are interested in working with the Wednesday night group. Also, be praying for our plan to feed them. Last year, Little Caesars was around and I was able to get several pizzas for a cheap price. Currently with the group's size (and hopefully it grows), the cost of feeding them is a big addition to the budget.