

Out of the Gutter continued

Change is hard and painful; the leaves may fall off. We have to move away from the comfortable, the known, the easy into new soil/new territory if we are going to flourish. Our job as leaders is to help guide that process. We can't do it for them even though I moved to the tree in my analogy, they are going to have to move themselves. The change has to come from within and that's where God comes into the picture. He has to change their hearts by making them **want to change**.

Seasons of life. There is, of course, a season for everything. The little maple tree has been hardwired to go dormant for a time and then to begin a new season of growth. People are much the same. We all go through cycles of amazing beautiful growth, dormancy where not much seems to be happening, and then fruitfulness where we are mature enough to have an abundance to share with others. I have faith that they will not only grow but will ultimately become fruitful. One day, we will not only meet some of these young people who are flourishing but are actually interested in ministering to the next generation. I can't wait to see all of the beautiful fruit that God will bring from the Garage ministry.



Fremont Volunteers Awarded | John Roush

Barbara Engler and John Roush, Youth for Christ (YFC) Juvenile Justice Ministry (JJM) volunteers in Fremont, each were named 2018 Line Staff Worker of the Year at the annual meeting of the Ohio Juvenile Detention Services Association in Columbus in early May. Barb received her award for her work each Wednesday afternoon with the girls in the Sandusky County Juvenile Justice Center and John for his work with the boys on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. The accompanying citation recognized both for their inspiring efforts in bringing guidance and comfort to all incarcerated youth in the Center every week for no compensation or reward. It further read that their commitment to serve the youth in their special way is commendable and appreciated. Barb has been holding a Bible study with the girls as a YFC volunteer since 2012, while John started volunteering in the old Center in the 1990s, and later moved to the new Center. When the national YFC started a JJM, John soon organized the other volunteers at the Center into a local YFC JJM. This spring, Barb and John realized the fulfillment of a dream when Herb Miller organized a mentoring program for "graduates" of the Center. Barb and John are also members of the Board of Directors of Youth for Christ of Northern Ohio, the seven county YFC Chapter that includes Sandusky County. When John first started serving at the Center, he told Ruben Rendon, a long-time volunteer, that he, John, lamented the youth having to be in detention. Ruben said, "On the contrary, you should be happy that these youth are in the Center because, due to our presence, each one will hear the Gospel and be offered an opportunity to make a decision for Christ. This may be the "special way" mentioned in the citation that accompanied Barb and John's awards. PTL!

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YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

June 2018

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church



Graduation | Steve Pausch

This is the time for high school graduation, and in many ways, a test of how well we did our job. Statistics tell us that most people choose to follow Christ before the age of 18, so a graduation stage is a good indicator of how well we got to know kids in a school. As each name is called and grads walk across the stage, we are forced to look back and wonder if we did enough.

Recently, I have run into several students who have changed that perspective. Kids who, while in high school, were definitely not walking with Jesus. Today, they are involved in college ministries or in churches that are dynamic and Bible believing. One of these young people shared with me how after high school the things we talked about while in high school just started to make sense, and they were drawn to search more.

Sometimes, graduation can be an end to our years of ministry with a young person and sometimes, it is just the beginning of new life in Christ.

Thank you for making it possible for us to be involved in the lives of 11-19 year olds and even sometimes those older.

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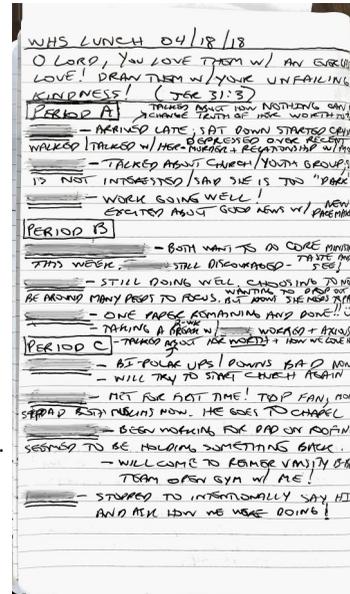
Lunch! | Scott Hulet

As you may know from past newsletters, we are blessed and grateful to be able to go into Wadsworth Middle & High School each week for all 3 lunch periods. And as you might imagine, we encounter a wide variety of precious souls and unique situations during our time there. Before I share more about that, I'd like to make 2 requests:

- We covet your prayers during these time periods: WMS on Tuesdays from 11am to 1pm, and WHS on Wednesdays from 11am to 1pm. We have a lot of fun getting to know the kids and school staff; many genuine relationships have developed over the years! However, we find that we often need to navigate awkward/sensitive moments as we spend time with these kiddos. We also encounter the enemy on a constant basis as we gain insight into their lives and find that they are struggling with a lot of darkness. Please pray for spiritual discernment, that we would be continuously filled with His Spirit, and that these dark forces would be increasingly countered and rebuked!
- We have a critical need for more adult females who would be willing to go into both schools with us! If you think you may be interested/called, you are welcome to visit with us a couple of times to check it out. After that, you would submit a YFC application to become an official volunteer. If you are interested, please contact one of the ministry directors on the back of this newsletter.

So, what does a typical visit look like? I have included a recent log entry from my prayer journal to provide some insight. Here is a longer list of some of our encounters/activities over these past 3 years:

- Group hacky-sack or frisbee in the WMS parking lot between lunch periods.
- Play various group games as we sit at tables together (Spot-It, Amish Dice, LCR, Bananagrams, etc.).
- Eat together.
- Listen to music together.
- Encourage someone after a break-up.
- Share memes, jokes, GIFs, clips, etc; and laugh a lot!
- Constantly remind kids of their worth/value; how NOTHING can change that Truth.
- Help mediate/resolve fights between friends.
- Listen to their problems with various relationships (dating, family, work, friends).
- Congratulate and rejoice with kids as they succeed, mature, overcome, etc.
- Tutor kids during lunch.
- Talk about future plans - summer, vacations, work, life in general.
- Share and compare life stories (especially from our life at their age).
- Recommend and/or connect kids to resources when struggling and willing to accept help.
- Put an arm around a kid who is upset/crying.
- Talk to kids about consequences of bad choices, habits and addictions.
- Encourage and provoke kids toward important life skills and responsibility.
- Allow kids to speak openly about their dark thoughts or negative view of self.
- Arrange to attend their important events (sports, recitals, dramas, award ceremonies, graduation, parties, etc.)
- Talk to school staff (principals, teachers, aids, police officer) about ways that we can serve them as we spend time with kids.



Brunswick Happenings | Roger Seward

We've switched to "Summer mode" at Campus Life in Brunswick. We're meeting twice a month on Wednesday evenings until school starts back up. When the weather is nice, we're outside doing campfires, nine-square, and "summer" stuff. We had a major marshmallow war two weeks ago! If the weather is bad we're indoors: air hockey, foosball, and board games. Each evening ends with a "check-in" around the campfire. It helps us keep up with where each of us is in our walk with Christ and with what's going on in our lives. Campfires seem to set the mood for some interesting discussions.

It looks like the club will be relocating in the fall. The Brunswick Recreation Center is a great facility, but recent changes (call that rental costs) mean it's time to look at other options. Prior to meeting at the Rec Center, we met for many years at Brunswick Reformed Church (BRC). We've met some teens we might not have at BRC. But due to the cost at the Rec Center, we'll be moving again. The teens we met at the Rec Center will be staying with us after the move. – a good thing! We think we know where we're going, and we know the teens will like it, but it's not "official" yet. Watch for details in the future.



Out of the Gutter Revisited | Keith Johnston

As you recall, last summer I transplanted a maple tree from one of the rain gutters at the Garage into a nice lovely pot in my backyard. At that time, I made some observations about how the tree was surely doomed if I left it in the gutter and compared that to how our kids are doomed without Jesus and a healthier environment in which to flourish. It quickly dropped its leaves and for all intents and purposes looked dead. I also mentioned that the transplanting process was quite a shock to the little tree and will certainly be for our kids as well; it'll likely feel worse before it feels better.

I did not lose faith but stored the pot in my barn over the winter and then set it out in the rain and sunshine this spring. And, lo and behold, the tree came back to life and is flourishing. Of course, I cannot take full credit, but I did need to play my part. If I had left the tree in the gutter or out in the harsh winter weather, it would not have survived. Much the same, we offer the kids a different perspective every week and with every discussion, we offer them "words that bring life".

Changing the soil of our life. Our surroundings, our relationships, is critical to our health. We talk frequently about the importance of choosing our friends wisely. Peer pressure, the desire to fit in/conform to the group is probably the most powerful emotion driving the middle school kids. Now, in my analogy, the tree did not choose where it was planted. There are some things about our lives that we cannot choose, (our parents, siblings, where we grow up, family finances, etc.) but as kids mature they increasingly choose who they spend time with. Eventually, they will have almost complete control over who they spend time with. That's why the middle school years are so important, because kids are just starting to learn how to form their own relationships. So, in a very real sense they are the tree, their friends are the soil, AND they are becoming the gardener that has control over where it is planted. Going back to the maple tree in the gutter, without any experience or foreknowledge, it was quite content growing in the gutter; it had no idea that it was doomed. It took somebody older, with more experience and perhaps wisdom to move it. Someone that knew from experience that it would surely die if it remained where it was. The tree needed help and so do our kids.

