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time. The day begins right after school with sign-in and tickets for snacks, a place for home-work, and tables for catching up and discussions. Pool tables, foosball, and other games make the atmosphere exciting and fun for all. We sit down for a group discussion focused around God’s principles with a special treat about 30 minutes before the session ends. The space is utilized several other nights a week for teen events and meetings and it is even able to be rented for get-togethers by community members. We are in need of several financial partners to meet our monthly needs to keep this ministry moving forward.

A new addition to the teen center was an Eagle Scout project. Several weeks of planning and work produced a dramatic rendition of the American flag made from old pallets broken down and re-



assembled, painted, and fixed to the wall with back lighting and a reminder of God’s blessing on America.

This powerful reminder of our country’s values has been a great addition to the space and a discussion starter among the teens. Thank you to Eagle Scout Nathan Seward and all who helped to make That Place for Teens a brighter place.

We have many amazing adults who are impacting the lives and futures of teens in our ministry sites, We always are in need of more adults as God continues to increase our num-

bers of teens. Would you consider joining the team and being a part of the lives of teens across Northern Ohio? Give the office a call (330-273-5794) and get started today and see what God can do through you! God Bless America and His work!



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YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church



March 2020

Incarcerated Teens, Caring Adults and an Eagle Scout | Steve Pausch

I am amazed at the people God has brought to the ministry of Youth For Christ. On a national level many Christian organizations such as Compassion International, Ravi Zacharias Ministries, and World Vision to name a few, were started by YFC staff. You may not know this, but Billy Graham was the first full-time worker for Youth for Christ. Locally, I am also so impressed with the people God has called to be a part of this movement. Each week when I interact with adults who care so deeply about the spiritual needs of young people and spend so much time in conversation and relationship with them, I am humbled to see what God is doing. Our volunteers range in age from early twenty's to well into their 70's, and God is using each one in powerful ways.

Our team of adults, who so faithfully enter the walls of the Juvenile Detention Center in Fremont several times a week, are an amazing group of people. Led by Herb Miller, they bring the love and hope of Jesus to young people who many times feel so alone and isolated. They are a friend to these young people, sharing God’s Word with them and praying for them. Incarcerated teens often have complicated stories, but this team of leaders is so willing to be there every week and listen and share life with them. We are so blessed by the staff and administration of the detention center who see the need and are willing to let us be involved in the lives of the teens in their care.

Brunswick Teen Center, That Place For Teens, is now open after school 3 days a week. The adults involved have decided to expand operating hours to a third day in an effort to meet the needs of teens in Brunswick. When we started in October, we had 2 teens for the first few days and wondered if this business plan would work. Now, we have had over 50 teens involved weekly and it seems one or two new ones are there each

Continued on back page

Hard Conversations in a Safe Place | Laurie Beal

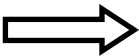
Our role at the Garage is multi-layered. One of the things we have discovered over the years is that teenagers feel safe discussing anything at the Garage. So, we've become a safe spot for some great conversations on topics that society sometimes sends the message, "That's too uncomfortable to talk about." We welcome those conversations on topics like suicide, sex, bullying, depression, self-harm, and addiction because education and a safe place to ask the tough stuff helps us all learn and process.

The last two weeks at the Garage, we've been discussing racism. Some seem to shy away from discussions on race, because they may have different opinions than their friends, or they are confused about what they really think or maybe they are even afraid to offend someone. Lots of reasons can prevent important discussions. A recent cover on the Wadsworth High School newspaper, The Bruin, caused quite a stir and thus, the outrage and conversation surged at the Garage, and even in my home, personally. The headline on the cover that caused such upheaval stated "Black History Month in a White School District." Some could happily assume that the authors meant "predominantly white", and some felt it was another way of excluding non-white people in Wadsworth. For example, many of you know I have a black son. I would never describe our family as a white family. My son may only be 1/6 of the family, but he exists. So I would say we are a mixed race family or a diverse family. Many felt that concept was not grasped by the authors of the title of the article.

The article itself was greatly overlooked because it was hard for teens to get past the cover. Plus, the school paper is not typically widely read by teens. We took this as an opportunity to talk about the fact that we shouldn't judge a book by the cover; to talk about grace and forgiveness; to talk about the apology sent out by our superintendent; and to talk about the treatment of minorities in our community and how we can and need to be part of the change. We talked about how the actual article was an honest and overdue conversation starter that discussed some of the injustices happening within the safety of our schools and community and we also decided to do something! We heard the grumblings all throughout the community and on social media. So, we decided to host a discussion on racial issues and the treatment of non-white people in Wadsworth and how we can begin to make changes together. We invited the community and I invited a panel of 7 people of all ages and a variety of races to speak and



share their stories. They brought an eye-opening perspective to the almost 70 people from our community that filled our Garage Cafe on a Tuesday night. We did a couple of ice-breaker activities that helped illustrate our similarities and our differences. We talked about how both are ok. We discussed the results of a survey we generated that had close to 200 respondents. And we brainstormed ideas of how we can make some positive changes in our community. Five people from our school's administration team including Dr. Hill, the superintendent, joined us. They have begun making some bold moves toward change as a result of the evening. It was an awesome and empowering experience for my sons and for our Garage teens. I praise God that we have a space that we can safely speak and grow and work as a team to ensure that all God's children are treated with kindness and seen as the awesome creations we all truly are. Thank you for all of you who make



God and the Problem of Evil | Matt Mountjoy

In ministry, one of the most frequent questions that comes up, is the question of God and the problem of evil. Or more simply put "Why does an all powerful, all good God allow bad, tragic things to happen?". This is a very real question that many struggle with. Unfortunately, too often you hear Christians spout off an answer that sounds light and happy. Usually, it is either theologically wrong, or leaves the grieving party with a distaste for a trivial answer to a real burning question. We, as Christians, need to be prepared to answer this question. Tonight, at Campus Life after our lesson, a few students were hanging around and one told me that he grew up in a Christian home and his father was a pastor. When he was nine years old, his father passed away and he felt like he no longer understood God and stopped going to church. He said that his family members tried to explain it to him by saying that: "God needed your Dad up in Heaven." Now I understand this response coming from someone who was also grieving and trying to put a positive glow on a tragedy for a child, yet this answer angers him still to this day. He told me, "It didn't make sense. God doesn't NEED anyone. I NEEDED him."

So we began the discussion on why God allows tragedies. In this situation, it's important to be honest, truthful to scripture, and not try to have all the answers. I know I have stuck my foot in my mouth before trying to comfort those grieving. Sometimes in the heat of a tragedy the best thing to do is to not try and make up an answer but be someone who will be there to comfort them. In this setting, many years later the topic needed to be discussed. I started by telling him to be forgiving to the people who have given less than adequate answers because they were trying to be comforting, and second to be forgiving toward me because I do not have the best "bedside manner" when it comes to voicing an answer to this. Ultimately, we discussed that God is all good and He doesn't want to see tragedy, and yes, He is all powerful so he could stop it. But He is also a just God. Because He is Just and the world is a fallen place, He must deal with sin. He is merciful because he provides us a way back to him and eternal life, however we still have to deal with the deadly effects of sin in our physical life. We can't know why God allows some things and doesn't others. Scripture tells us that we can't understand God's thoughts because they are so far above ours. We know that God promises to those who belong to Him to work evil for His good even when we can't see it. We also know that God can take us being upset and confused and He will be there to comfort us as we seek it. He has provided us with the great comfort that for those who are his children whether we experience a physical death or happen to live long enough to see Him come again and make all things new, we will get to experience life with no more tragedy and mourning. The night ended with the young man thanking me for having the discussion and saying that he feels he is ready to start going to church again. He said that during the last few weeks of attending The Garage he has really felt God calling him back.

the ministry sites of Youth for Christ possible. You can view the evening's discussion here <https://my.viebit.com/player.php?hash=ndn2EhwNuJhR>

