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I was blessed to find out that many people were praying for my recovery and friends and loved ones made sure that my family was taken care of while I was in the hospital. I truly appreciate those who helped in so many tangible ways. I am glad to be on the mend, and I am thankful for your prayers and financial support that catapults us into the lives of young people on a daily basis with the power of Gods Spirit.

Re-newed and Re-energized for the mission.

Isaiah 40:31... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Things Picking Up in Brunswick | Steve Pausch

In the beginning of 2020, we were meeting every afternoon with Brunswick students in our teen center, That Place For Teens. The room was full of teens and activity as teens played pool, air hockey, corn hole or did homework at a homework station. We had lively fun discussions about how God can be a bigger part of their lives and how following Him was the right choice. We had teens who did not believe and those with other religious beliefs whp were there and willing to talk. Fast forward to the Fall of 2020. With limitations on gathering and schools shut down, we moved to only 3 open times a week with 10 or less to help with homework and feed kids and regular virtual meetings often with only a few teens in attendance.

The past few weeks, we are starting to see things change as more teens are attending our open times and inviting friends. We are planning to open up more days in February and are planning some special events for teens. In years past, we would meet kids in school or at school events and invite them but new limitations on event attendance and schools make that impossible. We have begun to get involved by contacting parenting groups and PTA groups. We are seeing new teens coming from this new way of contacting kids.

Our discussion this past Tuesday was about how do you know God is real. Several of the teens in attendance gave the pat Sunday School type answers, but then refreshingly, a young lady shared for about 10 minutes how God is so much more to her and why He should be followed and how so many people miss out on God because they don't look for Him. Sometimes, it is better to be quiet and let those around us speak. I didn't need to say anything after she was done.

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A Different Perspective | Steve Pausch

There are moments in our lives when we are forced to look at things in a different light, such as starting a new job, getting married, having a child or living through a near death experience. The COVID 19 pandemic has taken a toll on the world and affected all our lives. We have lost some very good friends of the ministry to this terrible disease, and we continue to pray for their families.

For Christmas this year, I not only received a new recliner from my kids, but I also got the COVID 19 virus, which resulted in a 6 day hospital visit. I was put on high flow oxygen and a full serving of drugs that researchers said would help. I was treated very well in the hospital, but there were several times when a doctor or nurse was not sure about my future health. In the late hours on several nights, when I was alone and it was quiet, I cried out loud to the Lord and asked for His peace. God met me in the middle of the night in a small hospital in rural Ohio many times, and for that I am very grateful.

However, I was left with a burden in my mind. I saw the faces of the many young people we work with, teens struggling from broken homes, teens who are pregnant, teens looking for hope, and addicted teens. In those hours I was distraught, because I don't know where many of those hurting teens stand with the Lord. We routinely and regularly share with kids how they can receive Jesus, but many say they are not ready to accept Him and remain hurting and hopeless.

I never questioned God's Truth in my own life and was assured that I would be with Him if things turned bad in the hospital, but the faces of kids continued to haunt me in the night. On Day 4 of my stay, with the medication, professional care, God's grace, and the oxygen I was given, my recovery process began. The doctors and nurses began to talk about going home soon and what to expect when I got there.

My release from the hospital led into a few more weeks of recovery and medication at home where I was cared for even better. The lingering effects are real... shortness of breath, lack of energy, headaches, body aches, dizziness, but I was given a new passion to reach out to the lost kids I saw during the lonely nights in the hospital. I know that the ministry God called me to over 30 years ago is doing exactly what we need to be doing. Seeking out the hurting and confused 11-19 year olds where they are, building friendships with them, and telling them about the greatest gift anyone can receive... The gift of eternal life, only found through Jesus.

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God at Work | Laurie Beal

I am learning to "let go" when things don't go as planned in ministry...and in life, in general. So often, it is in those moments when we see God show up in BIG ways that we never could have orchestrated in a lesson plan!

Recently, our ministry team was in our pre meeting for our high school club night and realized that no one had planned a game. The teens LOVE the games! One mentor mentioned we could do "getting to know you" questions or "would you rather" questions. So we quickly decided we'd do that, and every mentor would throw out a few questions each for our half hour game time slot.

The night began and the young people were full of energy and started pouring in from the cold. I noticed a new face and went and introduced myself. The gal was sweet and a bit shy and was looking around taking it all in. For a new person, I think we are a lot to take in!

The food was great (the kids love the Fat Boys pizza generously donated weekly and the cookies that ladies from Freshwater Community Church bake weekly!) The lesson brought good conversation and then we went into game time.

A few protested that we weren't playing their favorite game but settled quickly as we explained what we were going to do instead of the game. The first question posed actually ended up being the only question of the night and took up not only the half hour game time, but the last half hour of free time...with no complaints.

We asked, simply..."what was the scariest thing that ever happened to you?" As per all of our conversations like this, our mentors also share. This has proven to be a great tool in relationship building. And we always quickly realize we all have more in common than we might think. Every person shared and as we went along there were some scary things shared, good questions and observations, and similar stories from others commiserating. As we went, the stories became more personal. Many also shared how God showed up in the dark time and helped them through the frightening experience. We moved around the circle taking turns and then we came to the quiet gal that was there for her first time. I expected her to share something simple. Instead, empowered by the bravery of others, she shared something very personal that had happened a few weeks prior that she hadn't shared with anyone else. The other teens and the mentors listened, shared some things with her and helped her talk it out, and we could see the relief on her face to have people to finally talk to about it. We told her how brave she was to share and that we'd be praying for her. Late that night, the teen who had invited her messaged me to say that she really liked the Garage and he was glad that she felt so comfortable sharing deep stuff with us and trusted us. He said he had told her before they got there that everyone at the Garage truly cares about the teens. He was glad she could trust that right away and that he was gonna miss us when he aged out.

Wow. I love when God steers us off course...to His plan. I love the safe space we have to offer to teens struggling in this world. I love the Garage FAMILY that we have!!

Confidence in Christ | Matt Mountjoy

Some nights in ministry are frustrating, others are good but not always super impactful, and on some nights everything feels like God just takes over and you really feel Him moving. Those last type of nights are the ones that make it all emotionally worth it. Those are what gives you the "boost" through the tough nights when you've been working with the same teens and don't see much of a difference, or you even see setbacks. Last Thursday, we had one of those exciting nights. It left all of the mentors messaging on the group chat about one exciting thing after another that had taken place. As a matter of fact, this night was so exciting, I'm pretty sure Laurie's article is going to be written about the same night!

My story comes from after the club night. I was sitting down on the couch messaging with the other mentors when I get two messages. The first was from a new student thanking us at The Garage for the night and the lesson and to let me know she planned on coming every week! The second was from one of our students that has been attending for several years. This young man has gone through ups and downs particularly struggling with mental health. He has established close relationships with mentors throughout the years, attends almost every week, and has even gone through phases in life where he was studying the Bible on his own. He recently has been going through a darker time. While he is still just as friendly, he is more reserved than normal, and he drastically changed his appearance to a dark more gothic look. That look isn't unusual to see around the Garage, but it was different for him and so was the pentagram necklace he started sporting. So, I was excited and surprised to see his message.

Essentially, he shared with me that about a month ago, he prayed to God to help him be happier and to help him believe in God. The way he describes it is, he has done "all the Bible reading and stuff" and is stuck in the middle of believing but having doubts, because of his friends beliefs and fears of judgment from them. However, after this prayer, he really felt God answered him, and he had been happier and felt better about things than ever before. He went on to say that he still struggles with having confidence in what he believes. He wanted to know how the other mentors and I have so much confidence in our faith. We then had a great conversation about how when you completely give over yourself to Christ, God does the work. Ultimately, its about a relationship and I have gained my confidence because I know first hand the experiences of my relationship with Him. I shared that God will be the one that changes him and he has to ask and let Him. More importantly, he kept asking how he could find that "boost" again that he had when he prayed the month before. This really had a pretty simple answer. I asked him why he didn't just go back to the source of the first boost! He had only prayed that one time. I shared just how in any relationship you build confidence through spending time together, even more so with God who you can ask for anything, you can even ask for that confidence and removal of doubt!

It was an exciting night that ended with a great conversation. It's always amazing to feel God moving. How this young man's story will end, I have no idea, but I do know that The Spirit was working on him and many other kids that night.