

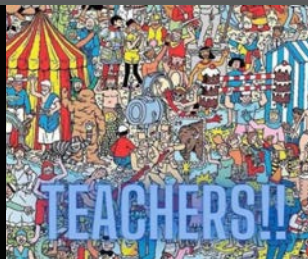
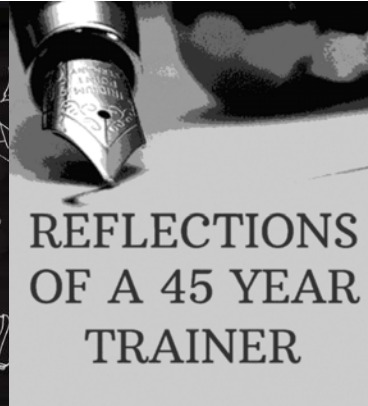


# 5 FOR FRIDAY

GLOBAL INNOVATION & GROWTH

**younglife**

## Global Volunteers



## Global Volunteers

### 2018:

- 4000 COLLEGE STUDENTS, 16 PROPERTIES, AND A WEEK THAT CHANGES LIVES
- DAY 7: THE START OF YOUR MINISTRY YEAR
- RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU'RE A TRIP LEADER
- THE LINCHPIN OF YL MINISTRY- VOLUNTEER TEAM LEADERS.
- A YEAR OF CONTACT WORK IN A WEEK
- DO WE REALLY NEED CLUB? REALLY?
- HOW MANY HOURS DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A FRIEND?
- SCRATCH AND SNIFF: MAKING YOUR AREA CULTURE THE AROMA OF CHRIST
- THE POWER OF THE WORD GO!
- NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN THE WORLD... YOU NEED THIS PERSON
- LEVELING UP OUR MINISTRY MODEL

### 2019:

- THE SIMPLICITY (AND BEAUTY) OF THE HANDOFF!
- SUMMER STAFF...IT'S A WIN-WIN-WIN!
- MEETING KIDS VS. CONTACT WORK
- WHAT DOES A 5 STAR YOUTH MINISTRY LOOK LIKE?
- YOUNG LIFE'S KODAK MOMENT
- WHAT HAS 5000 LEGS BUT NEVER STANDS AROUND? SUMMER STAFF
- YL IS LEARNING TO LAND ON THE MOON (AGAIN...)
- GETTING YOUR BANQUET MESSAGE DOWN TO A FINE POINT
- HOW TO DOUBLE THE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP IN YOUR YL AREA IN 45 MINUTES
- PRESENTS / PRESENCE AT CHRISTMAS - WE WERE ALL TOGETHER

### 2020:

- (SUMMER STAFF = SUMMER INTERNSHIPS)
- PROOF OF A CHANGED LIFE? TRANSFORMATION
- GROWTH IN UNEXPECTED PLACES
- HAVING A VISION FOR OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES - PEOPLE
- EQUIP YOUR WYLDLIFE LEADERS LIKE NEVER BEFORE
- CAN THE ANSWER REALLY BE AS SIMPLE AS GOING FOR A WALK??
- THE VALUE OF A RESET! VOLUNTEER 101 TRAINING
- THE THREE R'S INSPIRED BY A PANDEMIC: RESET, RESTART AND REDEFINE

### 2021:

- FALL 2021 STARTS THIS SPRING
- DID YOU KNOW? WYLDLIFE
- ARE YOUR LEADERS READY?
- THE STOREHOUSE
- COMMITTEE ACADEMY
- WHAT IS YOUNG LIFE'S W.I.G.?
- DO YOU HAVE VOLUNTEERS OR YOUNG LIFE LEADERS?



## 4000 COLLEGE STUDENTS, 16 PROPERTIES, AND A WEEK THAT CHANGES LIVES

At work weeks across the country, you won't find college kids going down the slide, competing in a volleyball tournament or racing go-karts. Instead, you'll find these campers building benches, painting backdrops, shoveling snow and deep-cleaning bathrooms.

And yet, many college kids would still say that work week was the greatest week of their lives.

Whether they come to camp already in a relationship with Jesus or they're still exploring, students get to experience firsthand what it means to give their lives away. They're given a vision of something bigger than themselves. The tasks they're completing may seem insignificant, but students learn that what they're doing will impact thousands of summer campers – some for a week and others for eternity.

At the end of each day at work week, hundreds of college students gather for club. They laugh, play, worship and hear the Gospel clearly proclaimed. At many work weeks, club is followed by cabin time where students can process all that they've heard and experienced.

Anthony Adamson, YL College Director in Houston, has been taking college students to work week at Crooked Creek Ranch for many years. He says that work week is much like a backpacking trip with high school campers. Working hard with their friends "allows the walls to fall down and the Gospel to come forward."

"I have so many students who say work week was the time they started following Jesus. It's when they went from knowing Jesus to following Him," says Anthony.

Work week is a unique opportunity to get our college friends in front of the Gospel. The bonus? It's one of the most inexpensive options out there. Whether kids are driving with a group of friends or riding a bus, they are often only responsible for the cost of transportation.

Anthony says the low cost has been especially helpful as he works with lower-income college students.

"Work week is a no-brainer," says Anthony. "It's a great option for both students who are already leaders but also for our students who don't know Jesus."

Written by Julie Clapp, Mission Director of WyldLife & Camp Director for Numerous Work Weeks



## DAY 7: THE START OF YOUR MINISTRY YEAR

Summer camp is not the end of your ministry year! It's actually the starter's pistol for your fall club start. There is no other place or time in the world where your kids will be more enthusiastic about Young Life and sharing Christ with their friends than during the last days of summer camp. If we don't take advantage of that fact, momentum and opportunity will be lost and be nearly impossible to get back or recreate six to eight weeks later when school starts again.

Day 7 of the camp experience is one of the most important days. There are plenty of staff folks who believe the area meeting at the end of the camp week to be a pivotal time of vision casting and celebration for kids (and leaders) on a summer camp trip. You might even be a trip leader who would value some direction on how that time can best be utilized.

SOME ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU FOR THAT TIME COULD INCLUDE:

1. Explaining what's ahead in the days to come (camp follow-up)

You've just eaten 21 meals in a row together. Without proper planning, 24 hours from now, many of those kids will be sitting on the couch at home alone eating something out of a fast food wrapper, wondering if what happened this past week was real. Who does the lion attack? The sheep in the middle of the pack or the one who is off on their own? Who does Satan attack? The kid who is in the middle of the pack or the one who finds himself suddenly alone?

Within 24 hours of being home, your entire crew should all be at a local burger place swapping stories, breaking bread together, laughing hard, and living life together. For the next two weeks, we need to provide a place daily for kids to gather and learn to spend time with the Lord. (Resources for these camp follow-up weeks can be found below.)

The adventure has just begun! Don't dare wave at the bus and say we'll get together in a week. That's too LATE!

2. Share the story of Jerry Kirk and Cy Burrell, the two Silver Cliff work crew boys who "prayed big things."

You can download the story [HERE](#), about how two sixteen-year-old work crew kids prayed for Frontier Ranch. The idea is to let kids know they can change their school and that God wants to use them!

I always ask my high school friends after telling this story in our day seven meeting at camp, "What are you praying for your friends... safe things, easy things, anything? Or are you praying "big things"" because we have a big God? Two sixteen-year-old kids prayed big things 60 years ago, and many of your lives have been changed. Two sixteen-year-old kids prayed big things and thousands have come to know the Lord at Frontier. You can do the same!!!



## DAY 7: THE START OF YOUR MINISTRY YEAR (CONTINUED)

3. Vision casting for the upcoming school year with Young Life and how to get their friends (and new freshmen) in on it. Talk about (with great enthusiasm) what the upcoming school year could look like if “we all” stacked hands on making Young Life great at their schools. What if we dreamed big and prayed big? They could be the difference makers! Give them a vision for a reputation and legacy to grow into! And give them a vision for doing something REALLY different...embracing freshmen and bringing them along for the ride!

4. Have a few kids talk about how this camp week impacted them. It might be a great thing during your area meeting to hear from two or three kids about how this camp week impacted them in ways they didn't see coming. Give them 30-60 seconds to give a “quick word” about their week. Or it might be an excellent time for a second timer to share about the importance of sticking together after camp and also being a part of the camp follow up things.

5. Have each kid write to a donor back home on a postcard. Nothing fires a donor up more than hearing first-hand from a kid! The area meeting is a great time to have each kid on your trip write a postcard or two. Put a template on a screen or flip chart to show the “bones” of what to write. But don't make your template force words they're not prepared to write. Give them options of sentences to write.

Take your area picture on Day 2 after the volleyball tournament or rodeo and then use an online company ([clubflyers.com](http://clubflyers.com) or [gotprint.net](http://gotprint.net)) or the Service Center and have them quick shipped back to you at camp before the area meeting. It may cost a little bit, but it's worth it!

6. Handing out area t-shirts so everybody can wear them on the last day. Everybody longs to be a part of a bigger story, to belong. There's just something about everyone on your trip running around with the same shirt that reminds kids and leaders that we did not experience this week alone. Not only that, we don't go home alone. We came to camp as individuals, but we leave as a family. Trip t-shirts help create that feeling and serve as a reminder back home of the decisions and relationships that were made at camp.

**REMEMBER:** The Area Meeting on Day 7 is yours to run with. These are merely some ideas to help get your wheels spinning... not meant to overwhelm you with “have- to's.” The time is yours. Use it well!

Written by Brian Summerall



## RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU'RE A TRIP LEADER

**TRIP LEADER:** A GUIDE DESIGNATED TO OVERSEE THE SMOOTH RUNNING OF A TRIP.

By definition, a TRIP LEADER means: A guide designated to oversee the smooth running of a trip. In reality, a Young Life Trip Leader coordinates everything from the training of the volunteer leader team to:

- Health forms
- Spiritual health and focus of the team.
- Training and Communication to kids, parents and volunteers.
- Communication with Airlines, Bus Companies, Camps, Head Leaders, Program Teams etc
- Collecting and protecting and dispersing cell phones, devices, medicines, dietary needs etc.
- Getting kids to and from camp safely
- And most importantly, ensuring that YL Camp is the 'Best Trip of their Life!' ....and lots more!

Over the course of a Young Life summer we take over 3000 CAMP TRIPS both US and Internationally. They range from overnights, to week-long trips and everything in between...from our US and International properties, to Camps on Wheels, to adventure camping, to backpacking and service projects.

That's thousands of trips and on average - OVER HALF OF OUR TRIP LEADERS EACH SUMMER ARE YOUNG LIFE VOLUNTEERS! As a young staff person, I remember the trip leader role was a privileged position. It was a position of high responsibility typically reserved for the local Area Director. Decades later, I've noticed that the title is even more significant. On average, the local area staff person is 'out of the area' several weeks of a given summer (2-3 camp trips, a summer assignment and a family vacation) To address the busy schedule of a typical YL area, the 'trip leader' role often times is given to a senior volunteer leader. What a gift to have volunteers in the local area who give of their time and talents to serve in this way! What a responsibility it is for local staff and committee to train, support, pray for and empower this group to serve well each summer! The Trip Leader plays a vital role in the success of a camp week for their area, caring for leaders and kids and partnering with the Assigned Team to ensure excellence across the board.

Several years ago several Areas/Regions/Divisions started 'Trip Leader Training' for all Trip Leaders (staff and volunteers) as they prepared for Summer Camping. The desire was simple: to affirm the role while giving clarity and expectation to the trip leader during the camp week. We had great success in our desire to equip and encourage Trip Leaders in their role during a summer camp week. As we prepare for the 2018 summer camping season, let's equip, affirm and encourage the key people who serve in key roles in making sure kids have the best opportunity to hear the Gospel.

As we continue to say around the YL Mission, 'we are a volunteer led ministry and as we head into our 76th year, we are too good to not get better!' Let's care for our best: Volunteer Trip Leaders.

Author: Kimberly Silvernale



## THE LINCHPIN OF YL MINISTRY- VOLUNTEER TEAM LEADERS.

After 77 years of ministry, the one thing that Young Life has plenty of is - MANUALS! From medical benefits, to payroll, to WyldLife skits there is a manual that explains, informs and tells the reader what to do in a few easy steps. With an organization our size-manuals are needed to insure common language, understanding and quality of ministry. That has never been more true!

That being said, in 2 Corinthians 3:2, Paul mentions that “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.” While Paul is speaking in regard to the validity of his message, the concept is the same: people indwelt by the Holy Spirit are our most powerful resource. Like we have become fond of saying, “God’s method is men and women!” That is why all throughout scripture believers are describe in terms like salt, and light, a wellspring, a garden, an aroma, etc. All things that draw people in and attract others. The strongest argument for the existence and presence of God is our own transformation because the manual (letter) is written on our very selves.

Recently, I helped our Region compile resources for a Volunteer Team Leader handbook (another manual). As a region we wanted to affirm our commitment to the care, support, encouragement of the VTL’s and their important role in holding so much of ministry together (much like a linchpin in a wheel). The goal was to provide a simple notebook for an Area Director to walk through with a team leader over the course of a year. While the handbook turned out nicely, it quickly became clear that it was not the best and never would be the best. The reason why was simple. The very best Team Leader Training Manual is YOU!

While a handbook allows for a good progression of topics and resources, at best, it serves as an outline. The real work is the relationship between a staff person and a team leader. The way we walk alongside others is simply one of the ‘secret sauces of YL.’ Nothing can top the consistent cycle for a growing team leader than a rhythm of Watch, Do, Reflect, then Repeat. Reading a section of the handbook may only take minutes, while the life on life training cycle may take many hours. At the end of the day, it may not be efficient, but it is effective.

So as you prepare to train team leaders this year, here are a few questions to consider.

1. Have I set aside consistent time to meet with my team leader(s)?
2. Am I facilitating modeled competencies for them to witness?
3. Am I getting to watch their work?
4. Are we reflecting on the competencies that are being practiced?

In the same way we are incarnational ministers, let’s strive to be incarnational trainers for the linchpins in our ministries. Volunteer Team Leaders are one of the precious resources of the YL ministry and deserve our best. Of course, if you would like a copy of the handbook you are welcome to download it here. But remember, YOU are the handbook that will provide the best training!

Written by: Jacque Abadie



## A YEAR OF CONTACT WORK IN A WEEK

Back in the mid-eighties, John Vicary and I drove a van of kids to Frontier Ranch. He was the Area Director of Waco, and I was a really mediocre college volunteer leader. Sure, I could play guitar, lead songs, and perform skits, but my contact work was severely lacking. I was a walking example of “form without function.”

I’ll never forget that trip, as it changed everything for me. It wasn’t just the fact that a big offensive lineman named “Mackie” would sing Neil Diamond songs at the top of his lungs from the middle seat. It was the fact that I got to experience a year of contact work in one week.

THINK ABOUT IT: IN THE SPAN OF 7 DAYS, WE DID THE FOLLOWING:

- Took a 28-hour road trip
- Ate 21 meals together around a round table like a family
- Sang 50+ songs at the top of our lungs together
- Laughed incredibly hard
- Experienced high adventure, fear, and trust
- Lived in extremely close quarters (those old cabins were small!)
- Leaned in and listened to God’s word
- Talked about the things that are important in a safe environment with friends
- Made critical life-changing decisions about Jesus

If all of those things happened in a year, it would have been an outstanding year. But in 7 days? It was the best week of our lives. And it changed the way I did Young Life. I finally got it. It was so MUCH more than my guitar skills, song leading, and skits. Contact work clicked.

A day after we got back, I called John Vicary and asked, “Do you think Jonathon and Rayford (two guys from our cabin) would want to go to a movie or do something this summer?” I’m sure he smiled when he answered, “Yes, I think they would.” That started a summer of movies, water volleyball at every Baylor apartment complex pool we could sneak in, too much fast-food, and hanging with those guys and all their friends. I even filled in for their baseball coach when he had to miss a game. (I never played baseball.)

Life from then on would be lived with kids and just two years later I found myself on staff. What will you do with your “year of contact work in one week” this summer? Don’t let it be the end of your ministry year! Let it be the start of living life with your kids. You’ve got relational capital. Cash it in!





## A YEAR OF CONTACT WORK IN A WEEK

Back in the mid-eighties, John Vicary and I drove a van of kids to Frontier Ranch. He was the Area Director of Waco, and I was a really mediocre college volunteer leader. Sure, I could play guitar, lead songs, and perform skits, but my contact work was severely lacking. I was a walking example of “form without function.”

I’ll never forget that trip, as it changed everything for me. It wasn’t just the fact that a big offensive lineman named “Mackie” would sing Neil Diamond songs at the top of his lungs from the middle seat. It was the fact that I got to experience a year of contact work in one week.

THINK ABOUT IT: IN THE SPAN OF 7 DAYS, WE DID THE FOLLOWING:

- Took a 28-hour road trip
- Ate 21 meals together around a round table like a family
- Sang 50+ songs at the top of our lungs together
- Laughed incredibly hard
- Experienced high adventure, fear, and trust
- Lived in extremely close quarters (those old cabins were small!)
- Leaned in and listened to God’s word
- Talked about the things that are important in a safe environment with friends
- Made critical life-changing decisions about Jesus

If all of those things happened in a year, it would have been an outstanding year. But in 7 days? It was the best week of our lives. And it changed the way I did Young Life. I finally got it. It was so MUCH more than my guitar skills, song leading, and skits. Contact work clicked.

A day after we got back, I called John Vicary and asked, “Do you think Jonathon and Rayford (two guys from our cabin) would want to go to a movie or do something this summer?” I’m sure he smiled when he answered, “Yes, I think they would.” That started a summer of movies, water volleyball at every Baylor apartment complex pool we could sneak in, too much fast-food, and hanging with those guys and all their friends. I even filled in for their baseball coach when he had to miss a game. (I never played baseball.)

Life from then on would be lived with kids and just two years later I found myself on staff. What will you do with your “year of contact work in one week” this summer? Don’t let it be the end of your ministry year! Let it be the start of living life with your kids. You’ve got relational capital. Cash it in!



## A YEAR OF CONTACT WORK IN A WEEK (CONTINUED)

HERE ARE JUST A FEW SUGGESTIONS...

- There will never be any easier contact work than the first few days of camp. Be rested and ready before you go so you don't miss out on reaping the dividends of a week well spent.
- Let your leaders know that camp is actually three weeks. One week is out of town, and the other two are back home.
- During those two weeks, it's time to run hard! Kids want to be together. Take advantage of that fact and build a foundation of contact work that will carry you through the year.
- After those two weeks, start summer campaigners up and own a night of the week. Cabin time does not have to end.
- Lastly, speak vision into your kids over the summer and prepare impact they will have over the coming school year through their Young Life club.

And if you are not sure if your kids really want to spend time with you after camp, do what I did and call your staff person. I have no doubt they will smile like John did when they respond with a resounding, "YES."

Written by Brian Summerall [bsummerall@mac.com](mailto:bsummerall@mac.com)



## DO WE REALLY NEED CLUB? REALLY?

Recently at one of our “Brilliant at the Basics” cohorts (where regions bring selected staff to Dallas to train in Ministry Strategy and reaching more kids), the question came up, “Why have club?”

In other words, “Can’t we just hang out with kids, do contact work, go to camp, and start Bible studies?”

Before I jumped in with any quick answers of my own, I wanted to know what other, younger staff, staff thought. I texted my friend Caitlin Carr, Young Life Area Director, who happened to be eating with a group of her campaigner girls when I reached her. She was able to take advantage of the moment and ask her campaigner girls why club was important to them.

Here’s what they said:

- “Club was the first step we took in trusting you.”
- “Because you came to our school, and seemed normal and invited us to something that was fun, we went. If you had invited us to something with Bible in the title, we would have bailed fast.”
- “It was a social event that ended up changing our lives.”
- “It was the first place in high school where older kids were nice to us - we all wanted to be a part of this crazy fun party they all talked about.”
- “You never rushed us into anything. When I think back, all along we were taking steps together and with you... but you let us get to ‘here’ on our own terms.”
- “Those boys that go to Young Life would never want to go to Bible study. They come to meet girls. Because y’all are the one group of people in their lives not calling them “bad kids” y’all let them be exactly who they are... and someday they’ll get it - that’s what Young Life club is about.”

I think Caitlin’s girls got it right.

Young Life without some regular form of club (a relational, fun, non-threatening, proclamation gathering... not necessarily five songs, skits, and announcements) can be like a bus without tires. We’re loaded up with kids and ready to go somewhere, but it’s difficult to move anywhere.

Club is a natural product of excellent contact work. As leaders know kids and kids trust their leaders, it’s natural if all those leaders are gathering somewhere on a weekly basis, that the kids that know and trust them would want to be there as well. It’s a weekly celebration of relationships.

If club numbers lag, it can be a weekly barometer revealing a lack of quality contact work.



## DO WE REALLY NEED CLUB? REALLY? (CONTINUED)

John Evans, trainer of Regional Directors, puts it like this:

“Club keeps me honest. Club and numbers are not THE critical standard, but they are a gauge. They let me know we are reaching a certain group of kids.”

Don't get me wrong. Contact work drives everything, but Club is a natural result of it. One leads to another

Summer camp is wonderful, but not accessible to everyone. Weekend camps in some parts of the world are filled to the brim, but in most areas, happen only once a year and have limited space.

Club is a weekly opportunity celebrate relationships and for EVERY kid in your area to hear a leader they know, stand in front of them, open the Bible, and proclaim the gospel in a way they can understand, relate, and respond to. There's no deposit required, no scholarship money needed, and no limited number of seats available.

Why have club? To quote John Evans once again...

“Club still works... At the end of Monday night when club is over, I'm thankful. Kids had a great time, heard about Christ and were with people who love them. I'm convinced this is as powerful as anything we say.” To read John Evans' entire article on the importance of Club, click [HERE](#).

By Brian Summerall (bsummerall@me.com)



## HOW MANY HOURS DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A FRIEND?

I was recently texted an article from the Southwest Airlines inflight magazine with the headline, “How Many Hours Does It Take to Make a Friend?” Immediately, my mind went to a letter written by our founder, Jim Rayburn, in 1952.

“For example, take our ‘contact work.’ By that we mean the hours and hours that our leaders find it necessary to spend with the kids, meeting them where they are, going along with them, living with them.”

While Jim Rayburn couldn’t put a specific number on the hours that are spent by our volunteer leaders, earning the right to be heard, science is trying to.

“The Journal of Science and Personal Relationships” recently published a study by K.U. Professor Jeffrey Hall, which reveals:

- It takes 50 cumulative hours of hanging out (contact work) to go from “acquaintance” to “friend.”
- It takes 90 hours to go from “friend” to “good friend.”
- It takes 200 cumulative hours to become someone’s “best friend.”

“We have to put that time in,” Hall said. “You can’t snap your fingers and make a friend. Maintaining close relationships is the most important work we do in our lives — most people on their deathbeds agree.”

That should not come as a surprise to any Young Life leader, and it indeed would not be a surprise to Rayburn.

In today’s world, it is important to note that these hours refer to “face-to-face” time. Social media and texting simply won’t do. None of those technologies will ever replace showing up at the school or a Friday night game.

LET ME PUT THIS IN A YOUNG LIFE CONTEXT:

- 50 hours — Sounds like a weekend camp to me.
- 90 hours — That’s a great semester of contact work at lunches, games and just hanging out with kids.
- 200 hours — Add a 20-hour bus ride to seven days of summer camp, plus follow up, and that’s what you will get.

If you are a leader struggling to get to that next level of friendship with your kids, you might consider what Hall calls a “context shift.”

“What seems to be the case is that doing something I call a ‘context shift’ matters; this means that you want to spend time with somebody outside the place you met them,” Hall said.



## HOW MANY HOURS DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A FRIEND? (CONTINUED)

What Young Life calls “Level 1 Contact Work” (just showing up/being seen) and Level 2 Contact Work (conversing with a kid) has to experience that context shift to move to Level 3 (doing something together). Without that critical shift, leaders are left with superficial relationships with kids that have little or no impact.

If you are a volunteer and feel you are stuck at “Level 1,” just showing up at the school or a game for an hour or two every week, ask your team leader to help you make that “context shift” with kids. Pray that God would help you see new opportunities ahead of you to deepen those relationships.

Maybe we didn’t need the “The Journal of Science and Personal Relationships” to tell us these things, but it’s helpful to see the science to back up what Rayburn knew. Those hours and hours of contact work you are putting in are not a waste of time. The Lord is using them!

“ ... (M)any well-meaning Christians have felt that we are wasting time. Yet it is this time spent with the youngster, before and after his confession of Christ, that has made Young Life something far more than the ordinary youth movement. Not only do we win a hearing among the most difficult and hardest to reach, but after reaching them we stay with them, as a true missionary should. The winning and establishing of a soul for Jesus Christ cannot be done on a hit-and-run basis. The Lord Jesus Himself is our example in this.”

Keep logging those hours, volunteers. Science backs you up. But better yet, Jesus backs you up as well!

Written by Brian Summerall (bsummerall@mac.com)

## SCRATCH AND SNIFF: MAKING YOUR AREA CULTURE THE AROMA OF CHRIST



There are a lot of metaphors about what Christ followers should be and one of those is to be an aroma that others are drawn to. In your Young Life community, that “aroma of Christ” is one of the most powerful and potent elements of your fellowship. If you want to see Young Life thrive in your area, you need to become a culture-shaper. When you do — you can almost smell the difference.

Culture doesn't have to be influenced by you, it's happy and glad to continue evolving with or without your input. But you have influence, you can shape it. If you want to be a kicktail culture shaper, you start by being a kicktail listener.

Consider this ... what if you aren't really aware of the current status of your area's culture? What if your assumptions aren't true? What if your team really doesn't like sharing ideas because they think you're closed off? Better yet, what if this is a great moment to show your team that you want to listen to them? Having a great culture makes the work of your team more productive, enjoyable and creates a magnet for your recruiting efforts. When your area culture is thriving, people will speak favorably about their experience, you will see more and more great leaders, staff and committee come through the door, tenure of leadership will likely increase, and the snowball rolls down the hill. “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” — lots of people

Do your volunteer leaders love being together? Do they feel successful? Do they feel supported in their role? Do they feel a sense of pride and ownership about Young Life in your area? Do they feel that their ideas are welcomed and valued? These may seem like little things, but THEY ARE NOT. For example, if people feel their ideas aren't welcome, they are less likely to bring them to the table. What if their idea is the innovative thing that helps reach the next kid? What if their friend is the next best leader? What if they could be a leader for 2, 10, 20+ years? Without a healthy area culture, we may never know.

You know how you can smell if a gallon of milk has gone bad? You have to open up the jug and pay attention. Periodically, you need to do the same thing with the culture in your ministry. Feedback is a gift to the person on your team sharing it, and pure gold for us as leaders. Practice this two or three times a year, and you will have great intel to help you pay attention to the right things. Here's a simple way to listen well:

- Send a survey to your leaders (survey link here for you to copy: Volunteer Leader Culture Make sure to duplicate this survey, do not send this one. Click the three little dots in the upper right-hand side and select, “make a copy.” Change it up, make it yours, make it anonymous if you dare.
- Ask each team leader to give 10-15 minutes at the beginning of their next meeting to have leaders fill it out.
- WAIT, don't read responses as they come in. View the results all at once with a few trusted friends (committee member, team leader) and see what trends come up. What parts of your area's culture are thriving? What parts need attention? What can you foresee as the leader that will have a huge impact if you invest now?
- Pick a few things you want to influence and get after it together. How do you do this? ... That's for another day, but for now, see the resources below.

Remember, YOU HAVE INFLUENCE, and you can make a difference. The scent of a healthy community focused on Christ is hard to miss. Listen to others, love like Jesus, then notice the change. “For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 2: 15).

Written by: Christian “Bo” Gross (christiangrossyl@gmail.com)



## THE POWER OF THE WORD GO!

In a recent “Forbes” magazine article, writer Dan Diamond makes some interesting observations about the Apple Watch. “All the Apple Watch has to do to be successful — all it has to do to make us healthier — is do one thing: Get us to stand up. And the device is perfectly designed to do just that.”

### WHY IS STANDING UP SO IMPORTANT?

Diamond goes on, “Simply standing for a few moments matters because we’re increasingly a nation of sitters. The average American adult now sits between seven and nine hours per day between work and during the commute — basically, we spend more time sitting than sleeping. And this ‘sitting disease,’ as MayoClinic.com puts it, shortens our life expectancy and increases risk of heart disease and cancer.” What does this have to do with Young Life? While this “sitting disease” shortens our life expectancy, a similar “sitting disease” in Young Life can shorten our ministry effectiveness and impact.

See if you can relate to a few examples of what might be deemed “Young Life sitting disease.”

- Texting kids from the comfort of your desk or couch.
- Posting a club flyer or promo on Instagram.
- Downloading this week’s club skits and songs on the Internet.
- Ordering club or camp T-shirts from a jpg sent to you by another staff.
- Keeping up with your kids via social media.

Are any one of these things in and of themselves completely wrong? No! But if you’re like me, and begin to rely on such sedentary things from the comfort of your office or home, then the individual symptoms can collectively become a disease. This Young Life sitting disease’s main effect is that it makes us forget one of our most important mandates from Jesus: “Go.” In other words, contact work.

It’s been said that the worst thing that can happen to a church youth minister is that you give them an office. I wonder if the same is true for a Young Life staff person. In our high tech, social media, instant-access world, it can be easy to fool ourselves into thinking we are “in a world of kids” when actually we never step foot in it.

How would the above list look differently if we cure the “sitting disease” and actually “go?”

- Get off the couch or out of the office and take a stroll through campus before or after school. You might be surprised at the conversations God brings your way.
- Gather with a few kids to make an actual physical flier that can be taken to the school (if allowed) or places where kids gather. Give them to kids so they have an excuse to walk up to a table of underclassmen and invite them to your event and maybe leave behind a phone number if a ride is needed.
- Meet a group of kids at Starbucks and create a song list. Search YouTube or the Young Life Leader Blog TOGETHER to plan next week’s club.





## THE POWER OF THE WORD GO! (CONTINUED)

- Meet a group of kids at the mall, grab Chick-fil-A, and search the stores for new T-shirt ideas. Gather kids at your place to vote for the most popular design.
- Call your leaders and show up at the game, musical or school event. Then you'll be in the pictures with kids on social media from the event rather than just "liking" them.

All of the above aspects of your ministry should create CONTACT WORK. If our MacBook Pros and iPhones have provided a "workaround" that no longer requires us to go where kids are to do ministry, then we are not doing ministry. We are simply administrators of events who will eventually pass away from this ministry sitting disease.

Now reminding Young Life staff to do contact work is kind of like reminding Starbucks employees to make coffee. It seems ridiculous. How much time have you spent in the office this week or in meetings about ministry in relation to how many hours you have spent where kids are doing contact work?

How can we cure this Young Life sitting disease that causes us to leave contact work behind and settle for technology from a distance? Let's go back to the Forbes article ...

"My own research in the workplace has shown that a prompt on the work computer every half an hour, reminding people to stand up, reduced prolonged sitting by 40 minutes a day," writes Philippa Dall, senior research fellow at Glasgow Caledonian University. Apple Watch will go further than a computer prompt ... "it taps you on the wrist," according to Apple marketing material — to remind you to stand up every hour, along with a digital reminder: "You've been sitting for a while," a sample Apple Watch message reads. "Take a minute to stand up."

What would it take to make sure you get a "prompt" to do contact work every day? There's no app for that, but perhaps a discussion with our supervisor or coworker about contact work accountability is in order. How can you daily remind each other to keep contact work front and center and not let it get lost in the shuffle?

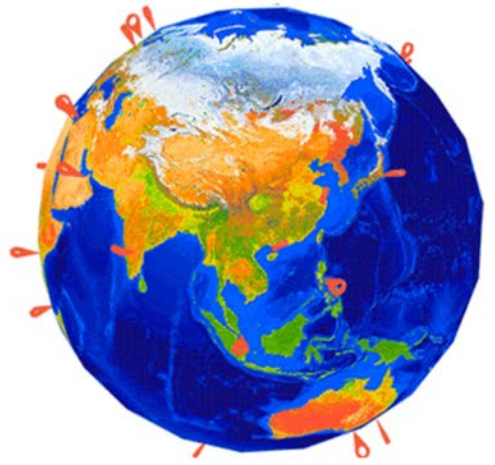
And don't forget to pray. During those times we are tempted to fall into sedentary ministry, pray the Holy Spirit would nudge you (or at least tap you on the wrist as the Apple Watch does!) and remind you to get out of the office. Go where kids are! After all, Jesus didn't sit around the temple all day hoping people who needed Him would stop by.

Apple CEO Tim Cook has even called sitting "the new cancer." That might be a bit extreme as sitting is not actually a disease but a chosen behavior, but I still get his point. It's a real public health issue.

Lack of contact work is a Young Life health issue and a threat to a healthy ministry. The cure is to "GO."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will GO for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"  
— Isaiah 6:8

Written by Brian Summerall (bsummerall@mac.com)



## NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN THE WORLD... YOU NEED THIS PERSON

“Fundraising in this city shouldn’t be this hard.” That was the driving thought that brought together a group of friends of Young Life to figure out how to raise more support across Cincinnati for all of the seven distinct areas. As we unpacked this issue, we discovered just how stretched the staff were in each area. The numbers that stuck out the most to me were 12 staff, 400 volunteers. That’s roughly 33 direct reports for each staff person. From my perspective, we were in desperate need of middle management.

Some people bristle at that idea, but I teach management, so I have a special appreciation for it. What’s more, Jesus only had 12 direct reports; should our staff people have roughly three times that? Fortunately, we already had some of these middle managers in place — volunteer team leaders (VTLs). So we decided to invest more in VTLs by creating a basic handbook and gathering all the VTLs across the city once a semester.

We created the handbook ([click here to download](#)) with the idea of it being a short, quick-reference tool for all VTLs, but especially with new VTLs in mind. The aim of the handbook is to give an overview of what a VTL does, why they do it, what are the expectations for each responsibility, and what are some best practices. This serves as a baseline for new VTLs to understand the role. We introduced these handbooks at one of our first all-city VTL meetings.

The vision for the all-city VTL meetings was to encourage, honor and train the VTLs. Every staff member in the city strongly wanted to convey their deep gratitude and appreciation for what VTLs do. We executed on this by holding our 2.5 hour meeting at a unique location, catering lunch, and bringing in a top speaker to develop the VTLs. Our speakers were typically former staff or local business leaders who would teach on leadership skills. Our aim was to develop them more broadly than to train them solely for Young Life leadership. Themes were conflict management, learning from failure and personal growth among others.

The second half of each meeting involved structured sharing among VTLs. We organized VTLs in different ways each meeting — by ministry type, by club size, by tenure as a VTL — and gave them a topic to discuss — preparing for camp, initiating new leaders, team conflict and more. The VTLs consistently told us that the sharing time was the most beneficial time for them. Encouraging each other, commiserating, and sharing ideas proved to be the best nourishment, which in turn makes them more ready to serve and lead their teams.

### Typical Meeting Schedule

11 a.m. to Noon — Speaker

Noon to 12:30 p.m. — Lunch

12:30 to 1:30 p.m. — Small Group Discussions

Over the last three years of meetings, we have consistently heard from VTLs that these times together encourage and honor them. New VTLs join other leaders of leaders in community, and veteran team leaders learn that it does not have to be lonely in leadership. Get our handbook and make a plan for VTLs in your own ministry! ([click here to download](#))

Written by: Chris Welter ([chriswelter@gmail.com](mailto:chriswelter@gmail.com))



## LEVELING UP OUR MINISTRY MODEL

In our Mission, Methods, and Values document it states that Young Life accomplishes its mission by “going where kids are and building personal relationships with them.” But, what if “where kids are” is on their screens, online playing video games? Do we go there?

We do if the values we list on our website are correct. We say that we value “the next kid - developing innovative approaches to reach the uncommitted, disinterested young people around the world.”

According to Common Sense Media, teens spend an average of 9 hours a day online and much of that time is dedicated to gaming. Ask any staff person what keeps kids from coming to club and you’ll be very likely to hear the word, “Fortnite.” And they’re not just skipping club. According to a recent survey by LendEDU, 35 percent of high school and college Fortnite players admit to having skipped school to play. So if that’s where kids today are, why wouldn’t we try to find a way to meet them there?

Some might argue that video games are not relational. You might picture a kid alone in his room staring at a screen with a headset on. While that may be true in many instances, significant investors in the US are betting on that dynamic changing. Arlington, Texas is home to the Dallas Cowboys AT&T Stadium and the Texas Rangers Globe Life Park. Not satisfied with that, this year the city announced it’s getting yet another new stadium -- one that will home to one of the fastest growing sectors in the sports entertainment world, eSports. Arlington is partnering with Esports Venues to open a new 100,000-square-foot, 1,000-seat eSports Stadium right between the Cowboys and Rangers. Cowboys owner Jerry Jones himself has purchased his own eSports franchise to compete there.

The point? It’s not just a single kid in his own bedroom anymore.

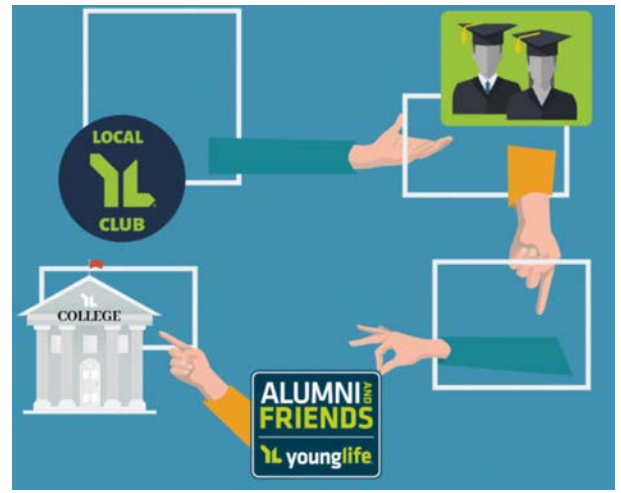
Hong Kong Young Life Metro Director Josh Powell sees great potential in reaching kids through gaming. “We were considering opening a gaming house storefront and staffing it with YL leaders as a business to meet and engage kids that we’d never otherwise meet and to practice hospitality, and have a venue for gatherings and ministry events,” says Powell.

This idea came to him when he saw the places where kids were hanging out. “Most of these gaming places in Hong Kong are dark dens of nothing good. They’re packed with kids, mostly boys,” continued Powell. “I was imagining us opening up something similar but with a twist and adding an element of YL hospitality into the mix to see if we might build a profitable and unique ministry opportunity.” If you are wondering what YL Founder, Jim Rayburn might say about all of this, I think it might be good to go back and look at what he said in the original Young Life training manual.

- “Why not seize on new methods and different ways, especially when the old have largely lost their hold on young people? Why not seek the MOST EFFECTIVE way of getting a hearing for the gospel? Are you sold on trying to find the most effective way?”
- “I am never going to be satisfied with what HAS BEEN done; the job must be DONE BETTER than before.”
- “The Campaign is committed to getting the Gospel to young people by ANY, AND EVERY means that God may direct.”

I think Rayburn would say it’s worth a shot to meet kids where they are. Do you currently have some type of “Gamer” outreach ministry in your area? If so, would you email me, Brian Summerall, at [bsummerall@mac.com](mailto:bsummerall@mac.com) and tell me about it? You could be on the ground floor of something new.

Written by Josh Powell & Brian Summerall, [bsummerall@mac.com](mailto:bsummerall@mac.com)



## THE SIMPLICITY (AND BEAUTY) OF THE HANDOFF!

In August 2014, I received an email from a Young Life College staff person at Miami University of Ohio that read, “Could you send me a list of the freshman coming our way? We're gearing up for a big year!” After looking into our Alumni and Friends network, we were able to send information on 44 high school graduates that were heading to their way! Five years later we got an update on what happened with those 44...

- All 44 were contacted and received a personal invitation to stay connected to Young Life and get involved at their school.
- 25 became Young Life leaders!
- 14 are still leading post-college!
- 2 are on Young Life staff or participating in a Summer Internship!

This is one class, one school, one story, in the midst of thousands!

- Did you know that last year we were able to stay connected to and serve more than 26,600 graduates from the high school class of 2018?
- Did you know that the office of Alumni and Friends responded to more than 600 staff requests for information on incoming freshman to their universities and areas?
- Did you know that this effort has ripple effects touching individual lives, families, ministries and mission units in the U.S. and abroad?
- Did you know that we are working diligently to provide the opportunity to stay connected students in the 103 Countries around the World where YL has a presence?
- Did you know that we are only scratching the surface of the potential?

Conservative estimates are that there are more than 90,000 high school graduates every year in the U.S. alone who were involved with Young Life. Whether heading to college, the military, or the work force, these graduates are going through a significant transition and many want to stay connected. Giving them this opportunity is an extension of our commitment to discipleship and helping them “grow in their faith.” This effort will also result in more people being capable and willing to serve in numerous ways for years to come.

So, what can you do? (5 EASY STEPS)

1. Every region in the U.S has an Alumni Advocate/Graduate Manager. Listen to them. See who they are [HERE](#).
2. Make sure you're capturing information on the students you and your leaders know. Club cards are not a thing of the past, they are a crucial first step to staying connected to, and serving your graduates.
3. Check out our Graduate Campaign web-resources, and consider growing your local effort.
4. Prepare seniors for their upcoming transition and the opportunity to stay connected to Young Life.

Written By: Jonathan Schultz ([jschultz@sc.younglife.org](mailto:jschultz@sc.younglife.org))



## SUMMER STAFF...IT'S A WIN-WIN-WIN!

Summer staff is a WIN-WIN-WIN for camps, areas and college-age students! Everybody wins on this deal.

**CAMPS:** When over 2,500 summer staff volunteer at Young Life camps, camps WIN because they rely on lifeguards, boat drivers, bakers, cooks, housekeepers, and landscapers, among other key roles, to make camp hum.

Summer staff work hard, yet it is meaningful service with ample doses of care, discipleship and encouragement from staff. There is still time to apply if you know a college-age student who would benefit.

**AREAS:** Making summer staff recruitment part of your area's camping strategy is a WIN for the area because you are providing a continuum of leadership development for alumni Campaigners and club kids.

On summer staff, they will learn, refine and apply leadership skills that can translate into solid volunteering back home in the local area. Serving on summer staff also provides a continuum of care in discipleship. It's a rich discipleship experience as they work and live with a diverse community of peers under the shepherding care of summer staff coordinators. Finally, the community-building skills summer staff learn will only enhance your ministry community in your area.

**SUMMER STAFF:** The biggest WIN of all is for our college-age friends who serve on summer staff. It provides a space and place for them to live and serve as their authentic selves, which is often lacking in everyday life.

Because it's such a win, we are in the process of enhancing the summer staff experience. Last summer we studied how we prepare and care for summer staff through THE SUMMER STAFF PILOT PROJECT at specific camps with hand-selected summer staff. Before their session, these summer staff created personal discipleship plans in order to prepare spiritually and attended a training session led by a Young Life College staff person, who in most cases, was also their summer staff coordinator.

From the findings, it was clear that summer staff who had pre-camp preparation and a strong relationship with their summer staff coordinator experienced higher ratings of spiritual growth, ability to work hard and being prepared to live in community while at camp. These critical findings prompted us to expand the pilot project this summer to include more camps, more summer staff and more summer staff coordinators. Selected summer staff coordinators recruited students from their ministries to serve on summer staff with them.

As part of phase two of the pilot project, summer staff will receive pre-camp spiritual guidance and in-person training to help them better prepare spiritually, prepare to work hard and live in a diverse community of peers at camp. As we continually invest in and care for summer staff, the win of deeper discipleship, leadership development, meaningful service and rich community will only become stronger for all. Volunteerism, Leadership Development, Discipleship, WIN,WIN,WIN! - Summer Staff!! Learn more about the Summer Staff Project Pilot [HERE](#).

Written by: Tami Ostlund [yltamiostlund@gmail.com](mailto:yltamiostlund@gmail.com)



## MEETING KIDS VS. CONTACT WORK

Like many city school districts around the nation, Pittsburgh City Schools are on a lottery system, which means kids can apply to a different public school than the one in their district area. Young Life leaders in a given community can do contact work in a neighborhood and meet kids who attend schools all over the city.

Doing contact work at dismissal is pretty universally utilized by Young Life leaders across the board and is still effective in the city. However, trying to find alternative places where critical masses of students meet and hang out can pose a real challenge. Recently, I had the opportunity to brainstorm with some of our staff and leaders in the city about different means of contact work and going to where kids are as we attempted to think outside the box.

Someone brought up that they had noticed waves of high school kids after dismissal hanging around the Wood Street Subway Station, which serves as a main transportation hub for mass transit in the city with subway cars and multiple bus stops. We became more curious about what contact work would look like post-dismissal at the station. After deciding to see for ourselves, we fought through traffic and eventually found some parking spots near Wood Street. Two of our staff members, Sly Williams and Olivia Horner, were able to join me.

We walked down into the subway terminal and took a loop around. Discouragement was beginning to set in as we hadn't seen any students at this point. Suddenly, we bumped into two kids. One student attended Taylor Allderdice and the other Perry Traditional Academy, the two schools that Sly and Olivia lead in. We were encouraged by this Spirit-led interaction! It re-confirmed the brilliance of the intent to "go where they are" and "meet them on their turf."

We persevered, and as we began to meet more kids, we thought, "OK, this is not a bad option and can be somewhat useful." Soon after, the subway car pulled up and 100 students poured out!

We were surrounded by high school and middle school kids:

We talked to them and realized while they were from schools all over the city, a vast majority of them attended Brashear High School. We do not have Young Life in Brashear High School currently.

Since that day, I have been praying and brainstorming about what it would take to get Young Life going there. The idea of being able to do contact work in the station with access to so many high school kids spurred imagination and excitement. The day was a huge success and sparked multiple conversations about hitting up other stations in town and strategic bus stops in the city. At one point Sly, Olivia and I rode the train down a few stops and popped out where we thought there might be other critical masses of students.



## MEETING KIDS VS. CONTACT WORK (CONTINUED)

Stopping and thinking outside the box with our team was a thrill for all of us, and it helped us unlock and discover new and innovative ways to reach kids. We've now even begun discussions on what it would look like to run a club near the Wood Street station so all the kids would have access to transportation. This had been one of the most energizing times of contact work I can remember! It truly was the best 45-minute window of contact work I could imagine.

### NEXT STEPS: A SIMPLE EXERCISE FOR YOUR TEAM

- Pray for the Lord to help you think in a different and creative manner about the kids He would like your team to reach. No idea is too far-fetched. Pray for a “God-sized” vision.
- Identify the challenges in your “context” to reaching students at school. Busing, district policies, scheduling issues, distance and more.
- Identify the opportunities or non-traditional and “out-of-the-box” ideas that could be available, like the Wood Street subway station opportunity.
  - What could be a ripple effect of the ideas you’re discussing? (new schools, ministries, clubs)
  - What could help us reach new kids, different kids?
  - Are there any adjustments we would need to make as a team to ensure success? (Funding? Travel? Commitment for consistency? More volunteers?)
- Try Something! Land on an idea or two and try it. Give it several weeks. Be faithful and consistent.
- Measure/Debrief/Tweak what you tried. What worked? What didn't? What should be changed? What next?
- Thank the Lord! You listened, you acted, and you were obedient. That is the heart of contact work!

Contact work is the most flexible, informal, innovative and creative thing we do. As we reach a new generation of students with immeasurable challenges, our “out-of-the-box” thinking should be vibrant. Try something! What could go wrong?



## WHAT DOES A 5 STAR YOUTH MINISTRY LOOK LIKE?

What can your weekly Young Life club learn from a world-famous, fine-dining restaurant? I wasn't sure of the answer to that question myself until recently. I stumbled across the Season 2 opener of the "Building a Story Brand" podcast in which author Donald Miller interviews Mark and Brian Canlis. These two brothers own and run Canlis, an upscale restaurant in Seattle, Washington. Ranked one of the top 20 restaurants in America by "Gourmet" magazine, the staff at Canlis know how to put their customers first while delivering unforgettable experiences.

As I listened, I could not help thinking of applications when it comes to kids' experiences when they walk into our clubs. Below are three questions I began to ask myself as I thought through the Canlis experience and the Young Life experience:

### 1. Does our Young Life club create a sense of belonging or exclusivity?

It would be interesting to go back to the first time you walked into a Young Life club. I asked my seniors to do that every year. I wanted them to think back to when they were a lowly freshman and felt insecure about showing up.

According to Miller, at Canlis, "You walk in wondering even if you belong here. You walk in going 'I hope I fit.' And within seconds you get this overwhelming rush from their customer service that you belong here — that you have always fit here. Any insecurities you've had are absurd."

Is that the feeling kids get when they show up at club? Are they greeted? Is there something for them to do (corn hole, giant jenga, frisbees, T-shirt table, leaders and seniors greeting, music playing) rather than standing around awkwardly as crickets chirp?

How do popular dress-up theme clubs (Disney, Harry Potter, America) affect whether kids feel like they truly belong just as they are or don't fit in? What if you are the kid who can't afford a new costume every week? What if the "America" theme club does not necessarily make everyone feel welcome in today's political climate?

Club is our widest open door and it always should be. Kids should always feel welcome and within seconds know "any insecurities they had (about fitting in) are absurd." Let's do our best to remove all obstacles to opening that club door wide so that all are welcome.

### 2. Are we trustworthy with two of our kids' most precious assets — their story and their time?

Each student walks in the door of club with a unique story and a finite amount of time in their day. They have chosen to give it to you to care for that hour. They come from different places that day, and I don't mean just geographically. Their SAT score came and it was not as high as expected. They just broke up with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Someone just asked them to prom. Mom and Dad just had a fight. They just got their first new car.





## WHAT DOES A 5 STAR YOUTH MINISTRY LOOK LIKE? (CONTINUED)

It is our charge to take those kids, no matter their story, and welcome them to a place where they can see, hear, and experience the gospel.

The staff at Canlis understand being a good steward of their customer's time and story, and so should we.

"They understand that a guest walks in the door and tonight needs to matter. That guest brings their most valuable asset ... almost like a treasure ... their time. They walk in the door with this fragile memory, and they are offering it to you and saying 'can you take care of this.' They're coming to make sure tonight will matter, and that's what our staff get so excited about." — Mark and Brian Canlis.

Is that what you still get excited about? Like the Canlis staff, is that what your leaders get excited about? Or has club become something you "have to do" and "paint by numbers" rather than something you GET TO DO and a work of art that you can't wait to share with your kids?

We have the greatest job in the world! Kids run in the door, laugh hard, sing loud, engage with leaders, and then we get to open up the Bible and talk about Jesus. May we always say like Canlis, "That's what our staff get so excited about!"

3. Do you have a strategy or do you simply follow the rules?

"Pay attention to strategies and not to rules." — Brian Canlis

Let me try to make sense of this in a Young Life context. Young Life rules might include raise money, form a committee, have a banquet, turn in your GPS and R1 and R2, do your Concur, have an assignment.

I'm certainly not saying not to do the above Young Life "rules." I just wonder if in our day-to-day experience if our attention is in the wrong place. A staff person who recently went through our "Brilliant at the Basics" training in Dallas said, "We got back to our areas and tried that 'Ministry Strategy' stuff but quickly got distracted by other things."

Other things than charging the hill and going after the next kid? That's focusing on the rules my friends. Again, no great coach's inspirational speech ever began with the words, "Boys, we're going to go out there and not kick the ball out of bounds! Now go get 'em!"

Start and end with strategy, not rules.

Do yourself a favor and listen to Season 2, Episode 1 of the "Building a StoryBrand" Podcast with Mark and Brian Canlis. There are so many more applications to our ministry in what they share. And you might want to stop by Canlis next time you are in Seattle. I guarantee they will be trustworthy with your story and your time.



## YOUNG LIFE'S KODAK MOMENT

Singer/songwriter Paul Simon once immortalized Kodak Kodachrome film in a #2 Billboard charting song.

“Kodachrome

They give us those nice bright colors

They give us the greens of summers

Makes you think all the world's a sunny day.”

That sunny day lasted for quite a while as Kodak captured 90% of the US film market in its heyday and became the world's fifth largest company. However, the bright colors and greens of summer came to a dull end in 2012 when the company declared bankruptcy.

What went wrong? Was Kodak blindsided by the digital camera wave? Actually, no. Steve Sasson, a Kodak engineer invented the first digital camera in 1975.

The problem was that management saw digital as a threat to the sale of Kodak film and instructed Sasson not to tell anyone about it.

As writer Avi Dan put it in Forbes Magazine, “Kodak made a classic mistake: it didn't ask the right question. It focused on selling more product, instead of the business that it was in, story telling.”

Focusing on the wrong thing and not asking the right question can have the same detrimental effect on Young Life as well. Kodak mistakenly thought they were in the film business.

What business are we in?

Fundraising? 'NO' ...Camping? 'NO' ...Ministry Management? 'NO'

We are in the business of -

Relationships...Going where kids are.

Contact work...Earning the right to be heard

Sharing the gospel...and giving students a chance to respond.



## YOUNG LIFE'S KODAK MOMENT (CONTINUED)

When we serve AT CAMP during the summer it is to leverage and develop the relationships we have fostered over the year. When we plan for year toward our FUNDRAISING BANQUET, it is to hopefully showcase the effect and impact that the gospel is having on adolescents in our community. The funding need will follow. . We go to TRAININGS and RETREATS so that we can sharpen our ministry skills. We DELEGATE and DEVELOP TEAMS so that we will have more time to be in the lives of kids. Perhaps the one thing you should never stop doing as a staff person is contact work. It has proven to be the non-negotiable of ministry and one of the historical 'marks' of YL. After all, there is not a staff person who got into this gig to sit in an office all day. So go. Go to the game tonight. Show up at school today. Go to the pep rally. Camp out at Starbucks or Chipotle closest to the school. What could be more fun or energizing for the other parts of our job? Go.

GO.

YOU.

HAVE.

PERMISSION.

PERMISSION, TO DO WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS DONE.

GO, SHOW UP IN THE LONELY PLACES.

SHOW UP IN THE STANDS,

IN THE HALLWAYS, AND CAMPUSES.

SHOW UP WHERE NO ONE ELSE WOULD THINK TO GO.

GO. SHARE YOUR LIFE SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH A KID.

IT IS THE METHOD OF CHRIST. IT IS THE METHOD OF YL.

THERE IS NO OTHER THING.

THERE IS NOTHING BETTER. GO.

GO, WASTE SOME TIME WITH A KID TODAY.

GO, IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

...GO.

Contact work may not be the most photogenic thing we do , but it is the most beautiful.

'GO' by Lauren Bocci



## WHAT HAS 5000 LEGS BUT NEVER STANDS AROUND? SUMMER STAFF

In all of my Young Life experiences, the deepest relationships with students came from taking them to camp and coming back home with them to live life together. While we call this outreach camping, there are just as many discipleship experiences where kids build a community of unlikely friends, living and sharing life with each other.

So how, after all these years of life-changing, community-building, discipleship-shaping experiences, did I miss the goldmine that had been directly in front of me for the same amount of years?

What goldmine? The Summer Staff Experience. I am embarrassed to say that I did not prioritize this in any of my Young Life positions—until now.

Some of my favorite moments of Jesus' life are when he was walking, eating, and sitting by the fire with his disciples. They talked honestly about life, unpacked the day's events, and shared important yet uncomfortable feelings. It's where they worked on being human. Irenaus, an early church father, said, "the glory of God is a human being fully alive." This is where the glory happens, where we come alive: in real, authentic, life-giving community.

All this happens on a Summer Staff assignment—hard work, service, challenges of jobs, living in community, processing uncomfortable feelings in a safe space, daily learning more about Jesus—and it typically leads to one thing: transformation. If this is true, then let's get to it! It is who we are, what we do, the second half of our mission statement, a pillar in YL FORWARD (Deeper). Besides, we have a Bible full of Jesus modeling shared experiences with people that he hoped would join him in shaping the world into his image for his Father's glory.

Taking college students deeper into the heart of Jesus is a part of who we are, from YLC staff to AD's in college towns. Let us not overlook the goldmine of Summer Staff while searching for a different speck of gold on the ground. These students are in front of us and so is this opportunity, right now!

## WHAT HAS 5000 LEGS BUT NEVER STANDS AROUND? SUMMER STAFF (CONTINUED)



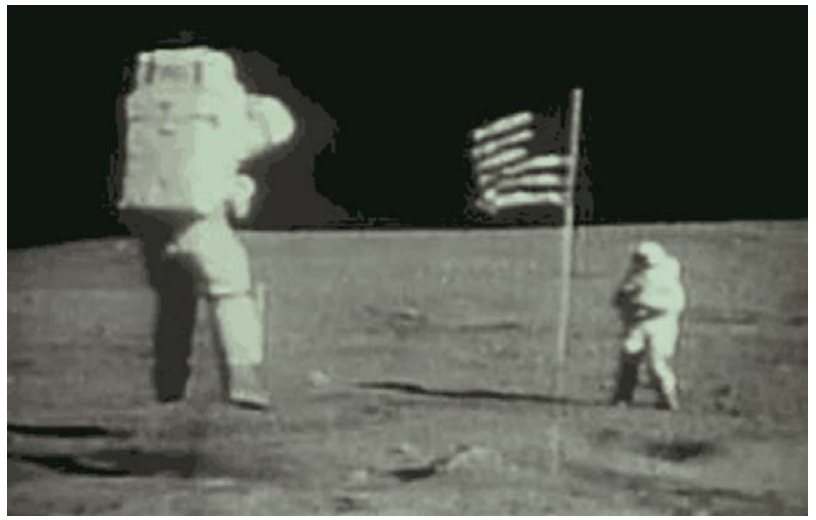
Here are five practical ways for staff to strategize with their college students:

1. **PRAY:** Summer Staff can be a pivotal moment in a student's life. Ask the Lord to help you identify specific College Age students who are ready for the challenge of SS.
2. **LIST:** Start a list (now) of students you want to personally invite to do Summer Staff
3. **ANNOUNCE:** Starting now!- Start announcements at Club, etc., about Summer Staff.
4. **INVITE:** Starting on or before October 1 - Start personal invitations.
5. **TRAIN:** Invest in students before, during, and after their SS Experience. Need a goal? If you train and place 5-10 students you would be in the top 20% of staff in the US utilizing Summer Staff!!

The Young Life College Summer Staff Pilot has provided YL staff across the country like Brittany at Palm Beach Atlantic University an opportunity to bring students with them on assignments. Lily, a sophomore at PBAU, said it was an easy decision to serve on Summer Staff because her leader Brittany invited her and would be her SS Coordinator, and she'd spend a month in Colorado with several of her friends. "It was truly a life-changing experience that I couldn't be more grateful for," Lily said. "One of the coolest things about the experience is that I get to go home with five people who were at Crooked Creek with me experiencing this change and growth."

Let's be a part of the 5000 legs that don't stand still, inviting students into a transformational experience—and then celebrate their change at home with them.

Written by: Kenny Nollan (knollan@sc.younglife.org)



## YL IS LEARNING TO LAND ON THE MOON (AGAIN...)

If you saw the news on July 20th this summer, you probably caught some nostalgic interviews and footage of the 50th anniversary of man setting foot on the moon. You may have also heard scientists and explorers talking about Artemis.

In Greek mythology, Artemis was Apollo's sister. In NASA-speak, it is our NEXT attempt at putting an American on the moon (this time, fitting with the name, a woman). It is exciting to think about. It will also be unbelievably expensive – nothing less than 30 billion dollars, and likely more. So, sometime in the 2020's, we'll be doing a more modern version of exactly what we did in 1969.

How did we get in this position? Some people call it “lost knowledge.” Think of it like this – in the 1970's, we decided to wind down trips to the moon to save some money for other projects. What might have been intended to be a “pause” became a “stop.” The scientists aged or passed away. The mechanical systems rusted. The factories and craftspeople who made components moved onto other work. We accidentally forgot how to get to the moon.

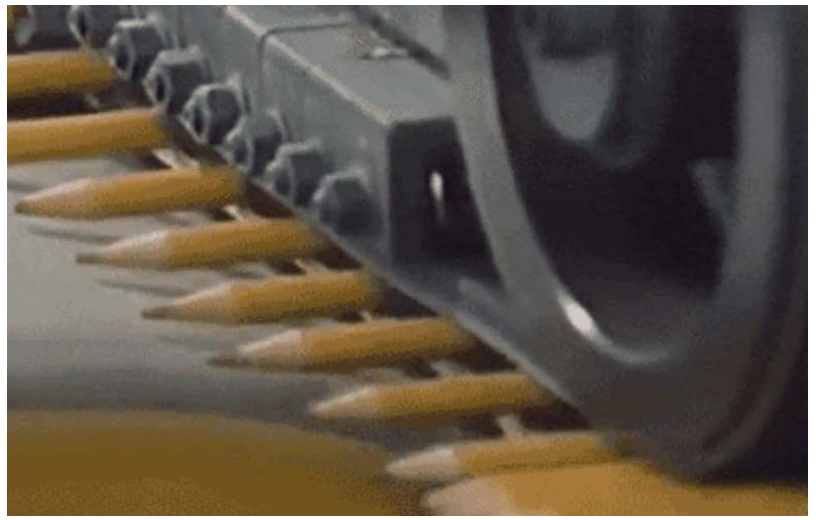
I don't know about you, but I think our moonshot in Young Life is “showing up” - contact work. We go to campus, to sporting events, and to neighborhood hangouts. We go in discomfort at being out of place, in solidarity with other leaders and Campaigners, and in hopes of being Jesus' presence. It has gotten harder in many places to go – because of school rules, kids' busyness, the administrative burdens of running Young Life, you name it.

The temptation is to slowly stop going. To text a kid instead of saying hello in the hallway. To over-engineer the club skit at the expense of cheering at the field hockey game. My challenge to teams is to fight that. At your next team meeting, make a plan to:

- Prioritize Contact Work – how can we each be at the school once a week this month?
- Identify Distractions – what is eating up your time that we could be handling differently?
- Recognize the Cost and Benefit – know what you'd lose if you stopped showing up the school. What fruit have you seen by the discipline of being “on their turf?”

It is easy to slowly stop doing the important things. And it is very hard to start doing them again. It will cost you time, money and energy that we don't have the luxury of wasting. Kids are waiting for us to take that “one small step” into their worlds. Let's never stop.

Written by Josh Griffin



## GETTING YOUR BANQUET MESSAGE DOWN TO A FINE POINT

Tell me a story.

Don't tell me all of the stories. Tell the right story and tell it well!

I've found this encouragement, instruction, pro tip—call it whatever you like—to be more than helpful as we continue to work through the Banquet Project in the Northwest Division, alongside the Field Events team at the Service Center. We continue to discover ways that Areas can produce consistent, excellent fundraisers. This one statement is significant: tell the right story and tell it well.

In the interest of honoring your guests and to be a good steward of your stakeholder's time, don't miss this! Tell them what their supporting. Make it clear. Keep it simple. Identify a problem or a void and tell them how Young Life in your community is solving the problem or filling the void.

Please don't lose their interest by over-telling the story.

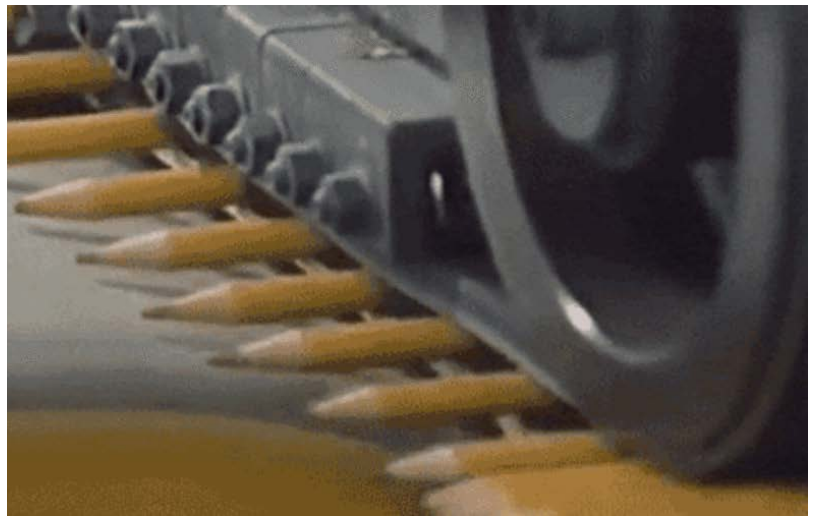
As a staff person or volunteer leader, you give and receive to this mission in remarkable ways! I'm certain that you could tell all sorts of amazing stories. Believe me, each of those stories have value. Yet, telling a single story and telling it well may be our greatest challenge in our fundraising efforts today.

Could you tell me in one clear statement what you're expecting me to know at the end of your fundraising event?

When you plan a banquet, auction, 5k, skeet shoot, game night, or whatever else, are you considering this question: what is the one story that I'm telling my guests?

Let's imagine for a moment that one day you get home in the evening and decide to make a large pot of soup. It's a good soup and there's lots of it! Then, you just sit around and wait for your friends to show up and eat it...right? NO! You've never done that. When you prepare a meal for your friends, you invite them over first; then you're careful to think about what they like or if they have dietary restrictions. You'll consider how many are coming and what time of day it is; you'll prepare a table or a picnic; you'll buy wine or lemonade. Whatever you produce, it will be completely dependent on who will be there.

Can we give that same attention to our Banquets? What if your entire banquet plan began with "who's coming?" Begin every part of your strategy with that filter. What have they seen/heard in our community recently? What drives their passion? How are they currently connected to our ministry? What will offend them? What problems exist in their lives and how can Young Life help solve them? What burns in their gut and makes them stand up and cheer?!



## GETTING YOUR BANQUET MESSAGE DOWN TO A FINE POINT (CONTINUED)

It's likely that, of everyone at your Banquet, you care the most about the mission of Young Life. Think about that reality for a second. You eat, breathe, and sleep Young Life. I think we owe it to your guest to give them one, clear story to grasp. Tell them the right story and tell it well.

Like every good recipe for a meal, our fundraiser should include elements or ingredients that come together to make one great thing. Your MC, Program Team, Kid Testimony, Committee Member, Auctioneer, Speaker, and whomever else gets on that stage to share will honor your guests if they blend their messages together to tell one story.

Written by: Blake Raney ([blakeraney@gmail.com](mailto:blakeraney@gmail.com))





## HOW TO DOUBLE THE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP IN YOUR YL AREA IN 45 MINUTES

At the end of the 45 minutes, our cumulative Matthew 9:38 list was 147 NAMES! Remember, our need was 15, and we had close to 10x that on our prayer board! At the end of the meeting we realized that if only 10% of the folks that we had listed responded to the invitation to join us- we would be good to go! So as the dust settled, we decided on a few things going forward-

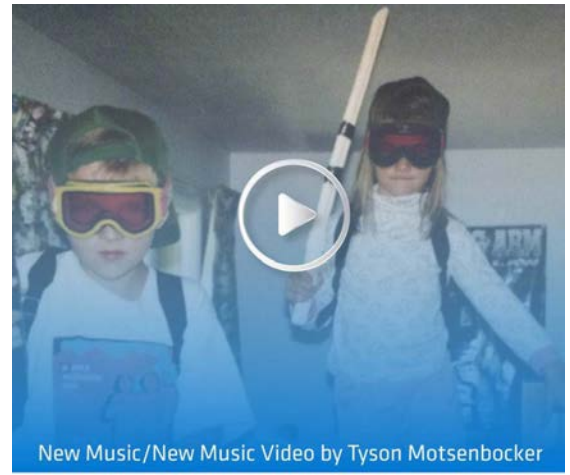
- o EVERYONE in the YL Area had a vested interest in recruiting the next volunteer. Not just staff or Committee but everyone in the community!
- o We were going to continue to EXPAND that list by talking to our existing Volunteers in the area who also had Mt. 9:38 lists. (that was another 75 people and 75 lists! )
- o We were going to continue praying, dreaming and inviting this group. This list was going to grow and be a significant part of EVERY TIME we were together.
- o Lastly, we decided that we would be PERSONALLY INVITE all those people on the list to join us in becoming volunteers in the Area. The invitation would be face to face, specific, and intentional.

Yes, we doubled the number of volunteers because of that day! Finally, we realized that if we did three things well in our YL Area we would always identify enough volunteers but we would retain them too because they would be un-recruitable. They were:

- Live out God's calling in our life within the mission of YL.
- Seeing change (transformation) in our community and in our own lives.
- Having fun while we are at it!

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU! If you think walking through these steps may be a fit for your area then we want to help. Over the coming months we are accepting applications for 12 YL areas around the Globe to go through the same process that I went through as a cohort in an attempt to significantly increase the number of volunteer leaders in your area. We will do it together, step by step, and celebrate what happens when you invite someone into an area of gifting and a community of transformation. If you are interested in being one of the 12 - email TANK ([kenbtank@gmail.com](mailto:kenbtank@gmail.com)) and tell him you are interested in the +1 PILOT and we will send you a brief application and get you going. You may be 45 minutes away from doubling your leadership base!

By Ken Tankersley



## PRESENTS / PRESENCE AT CHRISTMAS WE WERE ALL TOGETHER

When we were kids we always had three traditions during Christmas. We had this box of terrible old ornaments for the tree, so my dad would bring a noble fir home in early December and we'd put the ornaments on, remembering the story of each one. We listened to the Muppets holiday cassette featuring John Denver and then we'd watch a Charlie Brown Christmas.

My mom died when I was in my mid-twenties and I came home for Christmas seeing all the empty spaces, "The ornaments are silhouettes from when nothing bad had happened yet." I was drinking while my sister slept, while my high school friends were in other places. I realized that the holidays are a really symbolic time for a ton of people. It's a symbol of how things are not how we want them to be and how they could be maybe. They are much more like a reminder of how things didn't work out for us. I think the opposite side of that coin is the idea that Christmas is, itself, a promise of how things could feel when the world reconciles with itself, when there is peace on earth, good will towards men. In loss, in missing pieces, we have the option to discover a greater hidden meaning, that all missing pieces imply the possibility of redemption. In other words, if there is a piece missing, then there is also a missing piece. It's the promise that separation is only a distance, that fractures can be mended, that reconciliation is a universal longing. I wondered what the promise of reconciliation would sound like:

Would it sound like coming down?

Like a quiet voice...

Or a turning page...

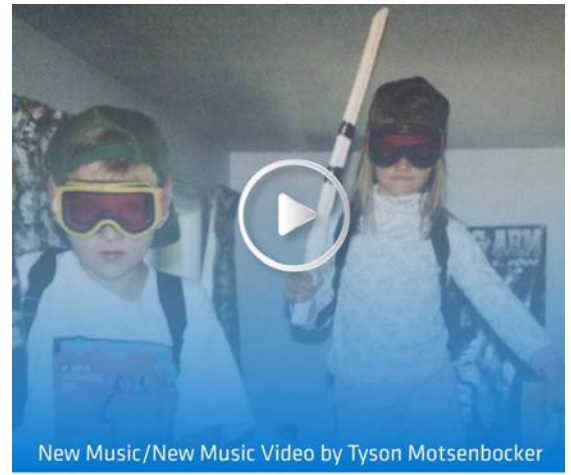
Like Linus standing on that stage...

Like where we are is not where we are going...

I have a new song, it's called We Were All Together. It's a Christmas song about the hard side of the holidays for some of us. It's also about the promise of Christmas. Both things at once.

My dad got our family VHS tapes together this fall and sent them to a guy in a garage in Ellensburg, Washington to have them converted from the tapes. I watched through them. It was an odd experience. I saw young me with a new perspective, how smart I was, how much I was trying to curate likeableness with an infinite energy, how irritating the combination was. I had a lot of compassion for that kid, because in some ways I am the only person who really understands him, which is what he wanted the most - and also, I am the only one who knows exactly what that kid is in for.

Written by Tyson Motsenbocker (tyson.motsenbocker@gmail.com)



## PRESENTS / PRESENCE AT CHRISTMAS

### WE WERE ALL TOGETHER

In everyone's life and leadership there are pivotal 'aha!' moments that simplify, clarify, and define our next steps going forward. Basically, they become teachable moments! I want to share one of mine. It happened to me 20 years ago as a young Area Director. Every Friday, we would gather for our three hour staff meeting. The time was rich but not unique in YL circles: food, fellowship, community, devotion, some to-do's, and a teaching.

When I arrived Friday morning, I didn't make it past the front door of the office before my staff barraged me with different needs they had for the YL Clubs they supervised. The list was long: ...a male to work with the freshman boys...a team leader on a WL team...a whole group of volunteers for a new Club... Parents to support the Capernaum ministry ...a musician...etc. They were desperate, passionate, anxious and somehow I had become the 'clearing house' for all volunteerism in my YL Area. I was immediately overwhelmed.

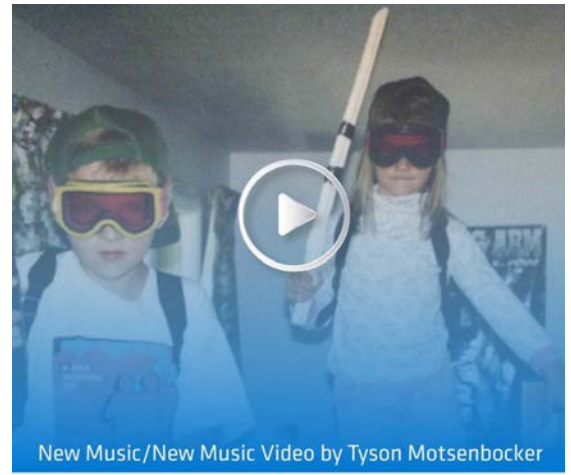
So we got to work, once the screaming and yelling had subsided, we made the decision to set aside the agenda for the day and sit down and talk about what had become the most pressing issue in the Area: 'WE NEEDED MORE VOLUNTEERS!' This is typical because 'more volunteers' is always at the top of every YL area's list of needs. However, the next 45 minutes changed my perspective and approach on volunteerism forever.

#### HERE IS WHAT HAPPENED:

First, I got out a pad and pen and asked everyone to list for me the 'right now' needs they had in their individual Clubs. We wanted a baseline of what we had to have to keep the area running. We went around the circle and the result was that we needed 15 VOLUNTEERS immediately! Men, women, parents, WL to College and everything in between!

Then, I asked everyone to bring out their Matthew 9:38 List. ("Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."- Mt 9:38) We had been keeping this list of potential 'workers' to join us in ministry for a while so that wasn't new either. For some that list was in their journal or notepad, for others it was tucked away in the back of their mind somewhere but we all had a list.

Now here is where it got fun! We shared our list of people, but then we brainstormed more, then we prayed some more, then we talked some more, then we debated, discussed, prayed and dreamed some more. What we typically gave a few moments of attention, we allowed to take the next 45 minutes. Talking, praying, thinking, dreaming, scheming, and asking 'who else?' It was amazing! The list kept growing and we slowly gained God's perspective. I think sometimes we give five minutes to a topic, need, or problem that maybe deserves 45 minutes. We gave this one 45.



## PRESENTS / PRESENCE AT CHRISTMAS WE WERE ALL TOGETHER (CONTINUED)

When we were kids we always had three traditions during Christmas. We had this box of terrible old ornaments for the tree, so my dad would bring a noble fir home in early December and we'd put the ornaments on, remembering the story of each one. We listened to the Muppets holiday cassette featuring John Denver and then we'd watch a Charlie Brown Christmas.

My mom died when I was in my mid-twenties and I came home for Christmas seeing all the empty spaces, "The ornaments are silhouettes from when nothing bad had happened yet." I was drinking while my sister slept, while my high school friends were in other places. I realized that the holidays are a really symbolic time for a ton of people. It's a symbol of how things are not how we want them to be and how they could be maybe. They are much more like a reminder of how things didn't work out for us. I think the opposite side of that coin is the idea that Christmas is, itself, a promise of how things could feel when the world reconciles with itself, when there is peace on earth, good will towards men. In loss, in missing pieces, we have the option to discover a greater hidden meaning, that all missing pieces imply the possibility of redemption. In other words, if there is a piece missing, then there is also a missing piece. It's the promise that separation is only a distance, that fractures can be mended, that reconciliation is a universal longing. I wondered what the promise of reconciliation would sound like:

Would it sound like coming down?

Like a quiet voice...

Or a turning page...

Like Linus standing on that stage...

Like where we are is not where we are going...

I have a new song, it's called We Were All Together. It's a Christmas song about the hard side of the holidays for some of us. It's also about the promise of Christmas. Both things at once.

My dad got our family VHS tapes together this fall and sent them to a guy in a garage in Ellensburg, Washington to have them converted from the tapes. I watched through them. It was an odd experience. I saw young me with a new perspective, how smart I was, how much I was trying to curate likeableness with an infinite energy, how irritating the combination was. I had a lot of compassion for that kid, because in some ways I am the only person who really understands him, which is what he wanted the most - and also, I am the only one who knows exactly what that kid is in for.

Written by Tyson Motsenbocker (tyson.motsenbocker@gmail.com)



## (SUMMER STAFF = SUMMER INTERNSHIPS)

“Sorry I have to do an internship this summer.”

Have you ever been told this when you are talking to a college student about Summer Staff? Me too. It seems like unpaid internships (free labor for companies) have been increasing each year. These prevent more and more sharp students from serving on Summer Staff. Instead, they file papers, answer phones, and go get coffee when they could be growing in leadership and faith through Young Life Camp.

What if instead we could answer: “I’m so glad you said that. I have the perfect internship for you.”

More often than not, the Summer Staff experience has all the required components of an internship. And so much more! We know how special this experience is. It is unique and better than almost all other classic internships and offers discipleship, sacrificial service, leadership growth, supervisory skills, a front row seat to many kids deciding to follow Jesus, hard work, teamwork and team building, community, and much more.

Summer Staff can most likely count as an internship for an employer, university, program, etc.  
[Guide to describing Summer Staff as an internship]

We need to be flexible. Creative. Innovative. And take the initiative. So here’s the plan (special thanks to Tami Ostlund for her input):

STEP 1: Have your potential student find out exactly what is required by your student’s internship. Requirements vary greatly from school to school, job to job, and program to program. Some have almost no requirements and some have stringent standards.

STEP 2: Send your student this guide [link to guide—Build your own mini internship] and see if you (together with integrity) can craft the Summer Staff experience and description to fulfill the requirements of the internship.

STEP 3: If there is a specific job that would help with the internship requirements, request that job for your student by calling the camp. (No promises or guarantees, but make sure that the camp knows that this is a factor)

STEP 4: Look at this short Summer Staff recruiting best practices list and rally your best students. [linked best practices doc]

Thank you for having a vision for who kids could be.

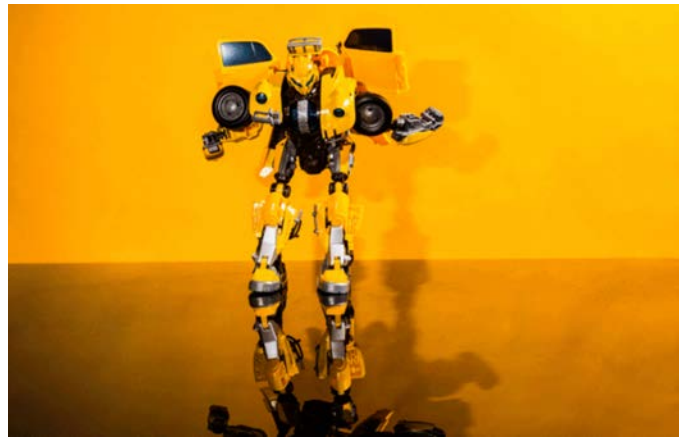
Thank you for going the extra mile to help kids have the experience of a lifetime on Summer Staff.

Thank you for making that extra phone call, sending that extra text, and going after those “internship” kids.

### Helpful Resources

1. Build your resume after doing summer staff
2. Best practices to recruit more students on summer staff

Written by Pete Hardesty (petehardesty@gmail.com)



## PROOF OF A CHANGED LIFE? TRANSFORMATION

Jesus bookended his mission with a charge to evangelize. He invited the early disciples to come be fishers of men in Luke 5, and then commissioned them at His departure to go and make disciples of all nations. From His teachings in between we can discern at least two motives for this call to mission. First, the Lord's vision is to redeem the entire world, all his lost children, so he privileges us to be his hands and feet toward that end. Second, He wants us to walk in faith and He knows that we grow more when we are pushed out of our comfort zones and are forced to depend on Him. We can't very well share the gospel unless we know the gospel, so the challenge to witness presses us to know Christ and our theology more fully. Once a young believer has seen their life make an eternal impact on someone else, they are hooked, as few things will ever seem as significant.

Pastor Michelle Jones from Imago Dei in Portland, Oregon, is responsible for spiritual formation. She teaches that, "Sharing the grace we have been given is not only evidence of our transformation; it is itself transforming. Every opportunity to share our faith with others challenges us to live out what we say we believe (Reviving Evangelism, p.29)."

Thankfully, Young Life has historically embraced a passion for reaching not only the lost, but the "furthest out kids." We are all about outreach; BUT, our mission statement reminds us that effective outreach only occurs when we disciple our converts and in turn invite them into this missional calling with us. That is why there should never be Young Life without Campaigners. Just as the Lord delegates to us the responsibility to reach the world, we entrust and equip kids with the vision to reach their inner circle. Even if we could do it without them, we wouldn't, because it would deprive them of the opportunity to grow closer to Jesus as they put their faith on the line.

Witnessing is a multi-faceted gift from the Lord. I love the story in Luke 8 where the man for whom Jesus cast out the legion of demons begged Jesus to let him go with him. Instead of granting this request for sweet fellowship, Jesus tells him to "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." Jesus didn't need this man to do His work for Him; rather, he offered him this role for the sake of his own faith development.

Seminaries have gotten a bad rap through the decades for training men and women with head knowledge but too little application. Jesus doesn't want fat little Christians who are content with fellowship alone - He wants world changers willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of establishing His Kingdom here on earth. Bill Gothard said, "We either send our kids to school as missionaries or they become mission fields themselves."

Tried and true Young Life theologian, Darrel Guder, speaks fondly of YL as "a witnessing community," where we are saved in order to be sent. It would be anathema to gather believers without giving them vision for their impact on others because of Christ in them. "Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Written by Rick Beckwith



## MAKING THE MOST OF SUMMER CAMPAIGNERS

If you ask middle school or high school friends about their favorite part of camp, you will hear an array of things. For my friend Ruby, it was “the actors who made everyone laugh.” For my friend Allison, it was the fact that she “felt like an adult” and didn’t have her parents “breathing down [her] neck all the time.” For my friend Peyton, it was the fact that “the food was all-you-can-eat at every meal.” But for my friend Sienna, it was the fact that “[she] got to talk about real life stuff and hear about how Jesus really cares for what is going on in [her] world.”

Gosh, isn’t that what Campaigners is all about? Long after we pull out of Young Life camp and the “actors,” feelings of adulthood, and all-you-can-eat food are memories, we get to continue talking about real life stuff and learning about how much Jesus really cares.

Most often, we do this through Campaigners (the “help them grow in their faith” part of our mission statement). And, after eight years as a leader in three different areas, I am here to say that there are about as many ways to do Campaigners as there are stars in the sky. (Young Life staff are a go-the-extra-mile, try-something-new bunch.) BUT! There are two things that are consistent throughout every Campaigners gathering I have ever been a part of:

1. We read the Bible together every time.
2. We talk about real stuff.

Now, maybe more than ever, we have the opportunity to link arms (figuratively, at this point) with our middle school, high school, and college friends and invite them to join us in the transformational and missional life Jesus directs us to live (2 Corinthians 3:18 and Matthew 28:19).

### **How might we do that in the coming months? What does that look like?**

Since we are innovative and fluent in our spheres of ministry, I’ll share a few ideas, but leave specific answers (some of the hows and whens) to us individually. However, I hope that these questions provide a helpful and encouraging lens through which we can plan for summer Campaigners this year.

### **What can we do this summer (because of our current reality) that we have not been able to do before? Let’s face it. Our current circumstances have provided both us and kids with more margin than we have had in years. What is possible now that was not possible before?**

- Perhaps it’s meeting in a small group every day for one week. Walk through one of the five-day studies on the Bible app. (Young Life offers several.) If week one goes well, ask kids if they want to try a second week. Or, move to a weekly model, with kids doing a five-day study on their own, using the app to chat with each other about it throughout the week and then coming together once a week to talk about it.



## MAKING THE MOST OF SUMMER CAMPAIGNERS (CONTINUED)

### How can we read the Bible with our friends in a NEW way?

- Give your friends different opportunities to engage with Scripture. Try letting kids read the story like a play – one person playing the narrator and others reading the words of specific people in the stories. Ask them to imagine the scene or draw pictures of it. You'll find other ideas in "A Dozen Ways to Bible Dive" by Crystal Kirgiss, Vice President of Discipleship.

### How can we incorporate fun and laughter?

- It doesn't take much for us to see ways in which the loneliness and sadness of the world have crept into our friends' lives.

### How can we use fun and laughter to break through the walls of sadness?

- Yes, the focus of Campaigners should be the Bible and real stuff, but it can include more. If you're working with middle schoolers, it will definitely need to be more because they don't want to sit still and talk for long. Bake cookies, play basketball, take silly photos. That's not "throw-away" time in Campaigners – it's intentional time to build relationships and trust with your friends.
- If there were ever a group of people to enter into the lives of kids in new and creative ways during unprecedented and uncertain times, it would be you. Over the last few months, I know you have worked tirelessly to come up with ways to continue to get middle school, high school, and college friends in front of Jesus.
- I can't help but think about the paralyzed man's friends in Luke 5. They were relentless in bringing their friend to the feet of Jesus because they knew that He was exactly what he needed. They knew that Jesus really cared about what was going on in their friend's world and that He would find a way to heal him through His words. If reading God's spoken word to us and talking about real stuff are the two most consistent pieces of Campaigners, I truly believe that we have so much to look forward to this summer.

Written by: Emie Salem





## GROWTH IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

'Made for....the HARDEST OF PLACES'

In Young Life, we believe that every kid deserves to hear about a God who loves them. In Kane County YoungLife, in addition to WyldLife and Capernaum, our committee is championing a vision which also means we are looking for ways to share the love of God with incarcerated teens at the local Illinois Youth Center (IYC).

While Young Life ministry at IYC has been going on for over two decades, it has really taken off in the past couple of years. It has grown from a single volunteer showing up once a week to have a Bible study with a small group of guys to over 20 men serving on teams multiple nights a week providing pizza, hanging out in cottages, hosting monthly birthday parties, working out in the gym, studying God's Word and praying together.

IYC - St. Charles, where we serve, is a Level 2 medium security facility. It houses juvenile males whose crimes include armed robbery, gang activity, drug offenses, school shootings, and murder. While some may have a bit of church background, most have little direction or hope in life. During a recent discussion one of the guys shared, "My life has no purpose. I am going to be locked up for the rest of my life."

However, change does happen. Earlier this year, we had the privilege of praying for one of the young men who was about to be released. He shared how his life had been dramatically changed while at IYC. He prays daily and has seen answered prayer. He knows he needs to make different decisions on the outside. He talked of getting involved in a church and being a good role model for his three younger siblings. But not only are the kids being changed. Here is what some of our volunteers recently shared.

- "A year ago, if you would have asked me could I see myself in a prison, helping with a ministry to felons, I would have said no chance. However, this has become the highlight of each week for me."

- "Time just hanging with the kids is precious. They are really good kids who have made some bad decisions. Loving them with our time and resources and telling them about Jesus is a way to give back for the gift God has given us."

- "Serving at IYC has been both a blessing and learning experience for me. Many of the incarcerated teens are just kids who have made some terribly poor life choices. And as kids, they need hope, encouragement and a belief that others care. If we can offer a small amount of that, then we are providing a glimpse of Jesus."

There are about 50,000 incarcerated juveniles in the United States alone. They need to know that there is God who loves them more than they could imagine. Perhaps some of these incarcerated teens are near you.

For more information on lessons learned in Kane County Young Life, feel free to contact area director Dan Griebel ([dangriebel@ylchicago.com](mailto:dangriebel@ylchicago.com)) or committee chair Don Vanthournout ([don.vanthournout@gmail.com](mailto:don.vanthournout@gmail.com)).



## HAVING A VISION FOR OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES - PEOPLE

Outside of Christ's presence in our lives and our calling to ministry, our people (staff and volunteers) may be the most important resource we have in Young Life. Leaders who learn to develop their people accomplish exponentially more and have a richer staff experience along the way. How can you develop the people entrusted to you? Here are eight ways...

Value "Who" before "What." In her book *Radical Candor*, Kim Scott says the best leaders BOTH: Care Deeply and Challenge Directly. The staff who feel cared for by their supervisor are often the most motivated to follow a boss's direction. Do your staff sense you care? How are you investing in them spiritually, emotionally, and personally?

Envision Who They are "Becoming." "For I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you and not to harm you...plans to give you a hope and a future." Why does Jeremiah 29:11 inspire so many? One reason may be because it describes the sort of Shepherd we long for... one who has great plans for us, one who can prosper us and one who can lead us to a future we cannot even begin to envision ourselves. Throughout my career, God has blessed me with leaders who pointed me to who they could see me becoming. How would you fill in the blank for members of your staff...? "I could see you becoming \_\_\_\_\_ one day?" Try things like: "a camp speaker, an area director, a great father."

Teach to Swim...IN the Deep End.

Give Younger Staff a Voice from the Start. Have you ever noticed we have no Junior Varsity staff? Everyone starts on the Varsity team and is a paid professional. While we have different roles, inviting each team member to weigh-in on objectives communicates value and helps achieve the best outcomes. Plus, if they weigh-in, they'll be more likely to buy-in.

Empower Staff with Great Responsibility BEFORE they think they are Ready." This does three things: shows tremendous faith in the person, calls something great out of him/her, and demonstrates the supervisor is not jealous for power or credit. It may scare them (and you) at first, but if you show that you're in it with them, it won't be long before the training wheels come off and they're soaring.

Train "Up" Leaders by Pushing "Down" Decision-making. While a supervisor is responsible for many decisions, it doesn't mean she has to make them all. Pushing decision-making down the org chart, raises "up" other leaders by empowering them to help make big decisions.

Give Honest and Clear Feedback in An Environment of Affirmation. If a team member knows how deeply you care, evaluations happen in a positive environment. Also, try to use the evaluation as a time to agree together on "next steps" in their development and identify new opportunities for them to grow.

Teach Your Staff to Depend on God - In EVERYTHING. Model dependence on God in how you pray, make decisions, structure meetings, and celebrate when He proves faithful. Teaching them it all depends on Him rescues from putting their identity in performance, comparison, talent or experience and challenges them to grow not just vocationally, but spiritually as well.

Remind Them What Matters Most - In a ministry filled with many responsibilities, teaching staff that Christ, kids and people matter most develops the best kind of people for our mission.

Written by: Scott Caldwell



## EQUIP YOUR WYLDLIFE LEADERS LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Imagine that!

We are incredibly grateful for the hundreds of staff and volunteers who serve as WyldLife team leaders; this ministry does not happen without them.

In the United States, 75 percent of WyldLife ministries have team leaders who are part-time staff or volunteers. These leaders get to build relationships and share the gospel with middle schoolers – a unique group of kids who don't see, feel or experience things in the same ways as high school students. So it is important that WyldLife team leaders understand how to meet middle school kids where they are.

During this stay-at-home season, we offered a series of online classes just for WyldLife leaders. More than 400 leaders from 42 states and 3 countries participated in the classes which focused on how specific ministry tools must be used differently when working with middle school kids.

Leaders learned about club talks, Campaigners, contact work, and sharing the gospel in a WyldLife setting. They also learned how to create a parent communication plan and how to connect with parents who are not as available – both important when working with kids whose parents manage their schedules, transportation and finances. In the final class, leaders learned how to build a discipleship program for high school students that gives them the opportunity to serve as WyldLife leaders.

The classes received a great response. One team leader said, "You did such a great job of packing in material about why middle school kids are unique. I can't believe how much I learned in 55 minutes." She added that she can't wait to share what she learned with the leaders on her team.

Another WyldLife leader said, "I loved hearing from the panel who have diverse and difficult experiences but have overcome and stayed so faithful."

It's not too late to train your WyldLife team leaders – or your entire WyldLife leadership team. The recordings of the Zoom classes and additional materials are available in the WyldLife Toolbox on Staff Resources.

Tell us if there are additional middle-school-specific topics that would be helpful for your team. Send your ideas to [wyldlife@sc.younglife.org](mailto:wyldlife@sc.younglife.org).

Written by: Julie Clapp



## CAN THE ANSWER REALLY BE AS SIMPLE AS GOING FOR A WALK??

The following article is written by YOU. Hundreds of YOU from around the US and around the Globe. We curated the answers from all the responses last month's (August 2020 5.4 Friday) email and identified the following 'buckets' of ideas on how to continue to foster a training, discipleship, and missional community among your leadership team in the midst of a disrupted school semester. Bottom line: Comply with Young Life, State, and local CDC guidelines but continue to find a way to develop volunteers and reach kids. Below is the question we asked and some of the best, creative answers. (\* denotes the answer was given several times!)

The results are in. Here was the QUESTION: Aside from zoom calls, what is one creative way you are ENGAGING VOLUNTEER LEADERS and helping to foster leadership development this fall?

### THE ANSWERS-

\*\*\*\*\*Taking my dog on a WALK WITH A LEADER

\*\*\*\*\*Meeting for OUTDOOR WORSHIP

\*\*\*\*\*AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING at a local church

\*\*\*\*\*CALLING EACH AND EVERYONE. Listening to their good things and bad things and in between things.

\*\*\*\*\* Lots and LOTS OF WALKS! One walk with a leader a day!

\*\*\*Leadership MOVIE NIGHTs that related to ministry

\*\*\*\*\* Instilling an Acts 2:42-47 vision in our time together, and going through MULTIPLE BOOKS together.

\*\*\*\*\*We're doing a PRAYER AND PRAISE wall with hand cut outs at our fall kickoff

\*\*\*\*\* gathering, walking, playing and praying in OUTDOOR SPACES!!

\*\*\*Study Groups, Study PODS, Tutoring

\*\*\*\*\*Team dinners with our MISSION COMMUNITY to foster a Total-Area community culture!

\*LEADER FLOAT TRIP ON INNER TUBES on a local river next month. Colder weather? Meet in small groups.

\*\*\*\*\*Giving them WEEKLY TASKS/GOALS to accomplish.

\*\*\*\*\*LEADER BOOK CLUB, Prayer Partners, Double Dates to do Contact work with teen mom and baby

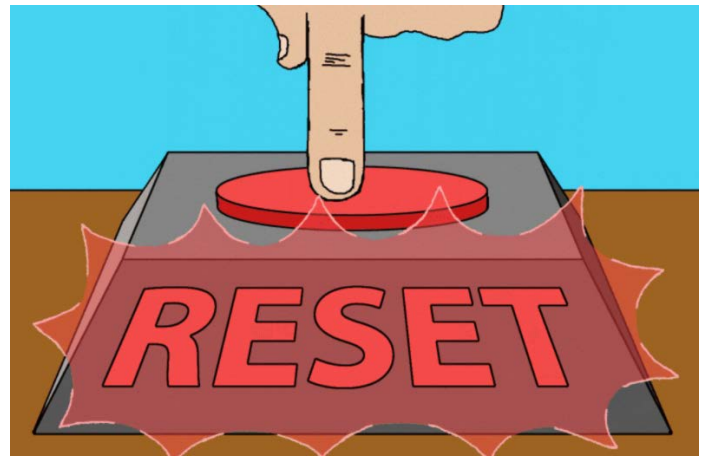
\*\*\*\*\*PRAYER WALKS AROUND THE SCHOOLS at our leadership training day

\*\*\*\*\*DINNER & GAME NIGHTS, going through the principles laid out in the book Margin

\*\*\*We BOUGHT EVERY LEADER TWO LAWN CHAIRS to keep in their car. Being a leader this year is going to mean showing up to kids' world (their drive way even) pulling out some chairs, and sitting down to talk about life, faith, and hope in Christ.

Thanks EVERYONE for your simple, practical and helpful input! These ideas work in almost every context. Gather your team, take a moment, and choose a few ideas and start in your context. Take a walk, talk, and watch lives change. Go on a walk with a purpose!

-Written by 127 Staff around the Globe.



## THE VALUE OF A RESET! VOLUNTEER 101 TRAINING

“Then there are the leaders. We maintain a high standard for our leadership; all of them are carefully trained in our own approach to evangelism... trained, skilled, dedicated people.”

Jim Rayburn - 1952

The number of our volunteers has grown exponentially since Jim Rayburn said the above quote creating the problem that we cannot easily guarantee what Rayburn says about our leaders is still true today. Dedicated and skilled? Absolutely. But well-trained? Every kid deserves a well-trained leader and that is what we all want to ensure.

Obstacles to good volunteer training include time, busy schedules that cause leaders to miss meetings, and distance from training opportunities.

In the beginning of 2020, another obstacle showed up... COVID-19. But, where some people see an obstacle, others see an opportunity. A pause in our hectic world gives time to regroup, reset, and find true north again.

A rocket traveling to the moon that is off course by just one degree will miss the moon by 4,169 miles. We don't want to miss the mark by even a foot when it comes to the training of our volunteers.

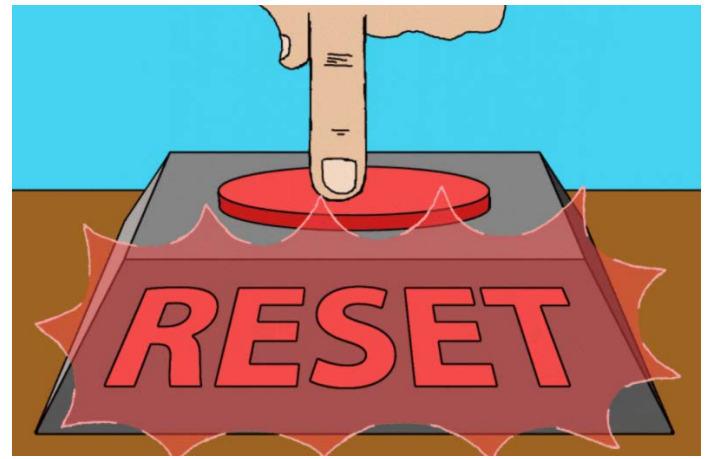
Thankfully, the new Volunteer 101 training course available on Young Life Access allows you to reset your training compass and points all of your volunteers in the same direction when it comes to contact work, club, camp, and Campaigners.

This four-part course ensures that we are passing on the DNA of the mission and excellent training to the next generation of leaders. Today's volunteers desire to feel confident, equipped, and well-prepared the first time they walk into the school, club, or camp. This generation of leaders wants to impact the world and will give their time to the organization that best prepares them to do that.

One Area Director remarked, “After the completing Volunteer 101 training, new leaders became self-starters for campaigners, contact work at the school, and speaking at Club. I believe this is because they fully understood the ministry and its vision and mission along with how they could make it happen for kids in our community. They got excited to serve!”

Each section of the training covers one aspect of Young Life:

- Part 1: We Go After the Unreached
- Part 2: We Go Where Kids Are
- Part 3: We Share the Gospel in Terms Kid's Understand
- Part 4: We Follow-Up; Helping Kids Grow in Their Faith



## THE VALUE OF A RESET! VOLUNTEER 101 TRAINING (CONTINUED)

The idea behind Volunteer 101 is to create a blended approach (both face to face and online) to volunteer training that includes a trackable, standardized training piece that every volunteer can complete before they ever set foot on campus or become a leader. In no way should this course take training out of the hands of the area, but rather it gives the staff person a foundation to build on.

Areas can send the training to each leader individually to complete on their own time, or complete the training as a group at a weekend retreat or over a series of leadership meetings as part of their blended approach to training. The training can be streamed easily to a TV or projector.

The bottom line is that with Volunteer 101, we will be able to ensure that every kid in Young Life has a well-trained leader and that these leaders will have Kingdom impact. Beyond Kingdom impact, easily accessible, quality training helps our recruiting and retention of volunteers and increases their likelihood for immediate effectiveness.

After having every volunteer in his region complete the training, Regional Director Billy Suess said, "The Volunteer 101 course came at a great time for our region as we were looking for ways to inspire our volunteer leaders to reach deeper into their communities and engage students from every walk of life. God has opened so many doors, but we needed better volunteer training so our leaders would take hold of the foundations of relational ministry and feel more confident to step out in faith with students. The Volunteer 101 course hit the mark and has led to more students in our region encountering Christ through a volunteer Young Life leader."

The four-part Volunteer 101 course is available on Young Life Access ([younglifeaccess.com](http://younglifeaccess.com)) and also translated into five different languages. Don't have a Young Life Access free account? Contact your staff person or email [laura@younglifeaccess.com](mailto:laura@younglifeaccess.com). Your account will give you access to great Young Life training along with video Bible studies from Francis Chan, Tony Evans, Jeanie Allen, Jo Saxton, and so much more.

\*A collaboration of staff from around the globe, organized by Brian Summerall and team.



## THE THREE R'S INSPIRED BY A PANDEMIC: RESET, RESTART AND REDEFINE

I heard these three words from the Lord while being forced to be still and know that He is God. As I witnessed a global pandemic erase all 'my' plans off the calendar I had on my wall adjacent to my desk: The words are RESET, RESTART and REDEFINE.

Beyond the C's of Young Life, I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to use this non-rushed space to take assessment and evaluation of where things were in my life spiritually, personally, and professionally. As a track sprinter prepares for a race, it's really important how you correctly position yourself in the blocks. Sometimes a coach will tell the runner to position themselves differently...RESET. How you do this will affect your take off...RESTART. How you start could determine how you finish and your ranking in this event...REDEFINE.

It's no secret we're all a work in progress, so thanks be to God that He's always a motivating coach, wanting the best from and through us.

I put a large dry erase board on my office wall and have three columns vertically and three horizontally. The vertical columns are SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL. The Horizontally ones are RESET, RESTART, REDEFINE. As I'm hearing the Holy Spirit and desiring to be a better 'ME' in all these areas, I'm writing it on my board and frequently looking at it as a reminder to stay on course with God's REBRANDING sanctification process (...hmmm, another R).

See the attached document (Kairos 2020) to start your own journey of self examination. Remember, it's not a matter of quickly filling in the categories but it's making a decision to be still and listen intently to the one who holds the tomorrow and "knows the plans He has for you, for a good future and hope."

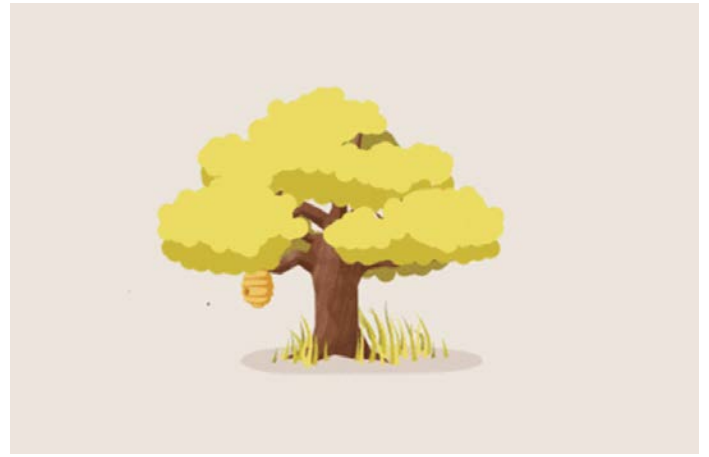
As I've embraced this self assessment, It has resulted in some stronger disciplines in my life. This has helped me in my pursuit to keep the main thing the main thing and to more often be LED than DRIVEN. My hope is to minister out of an overflowing vessel, rather than one with only a sip of water.

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water." John 7:38

### Action Steps

- Print out the attached PDF
- Spend time asking the Lord to shine light on the areas He is calling you to grow and mature.
- Set a goal for yourself to commit the first day of the month to review the R's and evaluate your progress.

Written by: Sam Coleman



## FALL 2021 STARTS THIS SPRING

I believe that now is the time to dream about the Fall. As leaders we are called to lead with hope and belief. We have to be leaders to see into the future and lead to what will be. We can't get stuck in living in what is, but always dreaming and looking ahead. Now is the time to dream about the Fall and dreaming about the Fall starts by leaning into the Spring. If we wait until the Fall to 'restart' we will be too late.

I would like to offer FIVE "S's" for your Spring. Four of them will be external and one will be internal, but all five are key to being ready for the Fall.

**Social Media!** Most of us have become good at virtual this or that, but many of us have been using social media poorly. Consider how you go after new students in the Spring. Students are hungry for connection and they are smart enough to want real connection. Here are three ideas to implement right now for the Spring social media.

- Find and follow all the freshmen you can. Don't wait for them to follow your YL page, you add them! Take the initiative, be proactive.
- Slide into those DM's. That's right, any students who like your post, start a conversation. Conversations turn into real relationships.
- PLEASE stop post infographics and leader bios. It's about them not you so post pictures of people not 'cumurcials' about your next thing.

**Shared Adventure** is the second 'S' plan for the spring. You and a student or two do something together that's fun! The list is endless so be a dreamer and think about what is possible. Obviously follow local guidelines as it relates to Covid but also think about outside the box. Take some time in January and come with a plan or two and give it a try.

**Small groups/Campaigners!** Invest now in the kids who are believers and start talking about the Fall! Give them the idea of Mission Community. We are growing together but we also have a mission to accomplish. Let's go after our school for Christ! Help them to see the future.

This one is a bit of a reach, but our fourth 'S' is **squad**. I believe that when we enter the Fall of 2021 we will have to look around and see who is still around as it relates to our leadership teams. So let's start rebuilding our teams NOW! Plan a new leaders night at the end of the spring. Dream about a 'big event' where you can welcome new leaders into your area or on your team. Then work backwards and start a great leadership training class. Invite everyone and lead them to a place of giving their life away for Jesus. Your investment now will make the Fall of 2021 possible.

This last 'S' is the internal one and the one that will be key to your success in the future. The last S is '**should**.' Should you still be doing this? Are you still called? Make no mistake the Fall of 2021 will be a complete restart of many areas and clubs. There will be little to build on it will be hard to restart. Are you up for it? Don't get me wrong, I am for sure not saying now is the time to quit, but I do want us all to realize that while the future is filled with hope and exciting new opportunities, it will also be difficult. Make sure you are ready for the battle that lies ahead.



## DID YOU KNOW? WYLDLIFE

WyldLife doesn't have an official anniversary date. As early as the 1970s, some leaders started "Younger Life" to teach high school Campaigners kids how to share their faith. In some urban settings, staff saw that younger kids were facing tremendous challenges, so they started clubs just for them. Staff learned that middle school kids can, and do, respond to the gospel, and by the late 1990s, the ministry had a name: WyldLife.

In 2000, mission leadership announced that Young Life would now be equally committed to both middle school and high school ministry. Today, there are 1,706 WyldLife ministries in 739 areas in the United States. WyldLife leaders adapt ministry to meet the unique needs of early adolescents, knowing that younger kids are more open and in need of caring adults who can tell them that God loves them. Areas with WyldLife have the opportunity to disciple kids for seven years, watching God develop them into kingdom-minded young adults.



## ARE YOUR LEADERS READY?

### (CAMP ORIENTATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS)

"Then there are the leaders. We maintain a high standard for our leadership; all of them are carefully trained in our own approach to evangelism... trained, skilled, dedicated people." Jim Rayburn - 1952

As our volunteers' numbers have grown exponentially since Jim Rayburn said the above quote, we all want to do our best to ensure what Rayburn said about our leaders is still true today, especially as we look forward to heading back to camp.

This summer, you have the opportunity to ensure that we are passing on the DNA of Young Life camping and excellent training to the next generation of leaders. Your camp leaders desire to feel confident, equipped, and well prepared from the second they get on the bus all the way to say-so and camp follow-up.

However, with so many plates to spin heading into the camping season (fundraising, communication, health forms, COVID precautions), good camp leader training could be in danger of being the first plate to drop.

That does not have to be true! With the help of the 2021 Camp Leader Orientation on Young Life Access (on the devices they carry every day ... smartphones, tablets, and laptops!), you can help make sure all of your leaders are on the same page heading into the first leader meeting at camp. And you can rest assured that every other leader at camp that week will have done the same.

If your area does not have a free Young Life Access account, email Laura at [laura@younglifeaccess.com](mailto:laura@younglifeaccess.com). For complete instructions as to how your leaders can access the training, click [HERE](#). for a simple overview and faqs.

### **This 2021 Camp Leader Orientation course is divided into eight parts easy to consume parts...**

- 1 Introduction and the Philosophy of Young Life Camping
- 2 Young Life Camping Non-Negotiables
- 3 Understanding Your Role in Leader Centered Camping
- 4 Being a Leader and Keeping Kids Safe
- 5 Cabin Time: Don't Fear the Silence
- 6 Cabin Time: Sample Questions and Helpful Scripture
- 7 Mastering One on One Conversations at Camp
- 8 A Thank You and a Simple Glimpse of the End

The entire course should take under an hour to complete, well worth the time considering the impact of summer camp on our kids. There is also a "Returning Leader Orientation" which is shorter for leaders who have completed the original training in previous summers.

Remember, this training is not meant to replace your pre-camp meetings with your other leaders but rather enhance those face-to-face meetings by allowing you to spend more time in direct application of the material and in prayer for your kids. We know you look forward to getting together with your camp leaders in the coming weeks, praying together for your trip together as a team. If your leaders have completed the training on their own, you have more time to pray and discuss what they have learned before those meeting. In other cases, you may want to do the training together by streaming it to a TV and consuming it as a group. Either way, the kids win.

Every kid deserves a well-trained leader. This summer has the potential to be the Young Life's best, and you can ensure that by making sure all of your leaders are equipped and ready.

Written By Brian Summerall

## THE STOREHOUSE

It was a Monday afternoon in the fall of 2010. I was on Young Life staff in Littleton, CO and prepping for club that night. As usual, I did what most “good” Young Life leaders did three hours before every club - jumped online and Googled “Young Life games” and “Young Life songs.” I had already used everything on Sean McGeever’s YLHelp.com and didn’t find anything new or usable on Google, so I went to the Staff Resources site. Same result. I got frustrated and emailed my YL boss’s boss’s boss and asked if we could figure out a solution to this problem. I drove down to Colorado Springs and we met and I presented an idea. He said, “That sounds awesome. We can’t pay you for that, but if you want to start it as a volunteer, go for it.” A month later, The Young Life Leader Blog was born.

I Googled “How to start a website” and created a blog on Blogger. I started spending an hour or so each night after club or after Campaigners or after doing contact work - just writing up the details of what we’d done and what we’d learned. I shared it with our area, our region and a few YL friends back in NC and GA. It slowly grew. Over the past 10 years, I wrote over 1500 articles and more and more leaders started sharing content. Along the way, a ton of other folks started doing similar things - the WyldLife blog, the Capernaum blog, YL College podcast, etc... And there were all the great training resources and videos being shared on YL Access.

In 2019 we had the idea: “What if we brought all of these great resources into one, easy-to-use resource for staff and leaders?!” At YL2020 we pitched the idea of “The Storehouse” on stage during “The Next Big Thing.” It got funded and we’re moving forward!

We are currently working with the IT department at the Service Center to create a one-stop-shop for all the best resources in Young Life. Stay tuned!

Written By Drew Hill

## COMMITTEE ACADEMY

It all started with a prayer!

The faithful, steady, and bold prayers of women--powerful and significant women in Gainesville, TX--have long been credited with Young Life's inception. Our founder, Jim Rayburn was protected and prompted by prayer warriors as he went courageously to the school. This was the beginning of our mission. This was the beginning of Committees.

It's not a stretch to say that from the start every healthy and growing ministry in Young Life has included a team of adults who own the local ministry as partners with YL Staff and volunteers. Together they lead the mission. At it's best, this partnership tackles vision, funding, administrative tasks, and leadership development in tandem. It's a missional community with the Area Staff and Committee at the helm.

As a way to bring focussed training and resourcing to this significant group, we are thrilled to announce Committee Academy.

Committee Academy is designed by Committee members, for Committee members. Today, a Committee is exceptionally more than a prayer team. It is a team of passionate, called, generous adults who align their skill and abilities with the needs of the Area or Region.

Very soon, you'll have access to our newly designed website that will include a variety of resources and tools built to elevate and strengthen a local Committee. But, this effort is so much more than a website! Our team is available now to teach, consult, coach, direct, and lead any project that your Region or Area is interested in regarding Committees and Boards.

Written by: Blake Raney & Kimberly Silvernale



## WHAT IS YOUNG LIFE'S W.I.G.?

What's our WIG?

Most of us Young Life people are pretty familiar with wigs. We have to be one of the few organizations to wear them regularly. Mullets, rasta dreads, game show hosts, and more. But this is about a different wig. It's the Wildly Important Goal. This term was coined by a book called [The Four Disciplines of Execution](#) (summary [here](#)) and we highly recommend it. It's about how to get the most important things done in the whirlwind of all of our day-to-day job responsibilities. The Wildly Important Goal is what keeps a team focused on staying committed to their truest calling.

**In Young Life what is our WIG?** The job description for a Young Life staffer seems like it's 20 pages long but what's the most important thing we're after? It could be club, or developing leaders, or raising money, or camp trips, or maybe kids standing up at the say so. These are all important but we think it's something else.

**We want to make a case that Young life's WIG is our KKBN.** That's not an old radio station in Cleveland, it's Kids Known By Name. This is our starting point. This is the trailhead of our relational journey with adolescents. Every kid we've seen go from death to life or start to love their classmates or serve on Work Crew or Summer Staff or even become a leader starts with us knowing them by name.

Knowing a kid by name starts our journey of friendship with them. Bob Mitchell, one of our dear YL heroes who went to be with the Lord this past year said "Every kid he met he considered a friend for life." But he had to meet them first.

The more kids we know by name, the greater our chances of getting to introduce them to Jesus and help them grow in their faith.

We might be rusty at this. Most of us haven't gotten the chance to walk up to a group of students with butterflies in our stomachs in a long time. It's been a while since we braved the student section at a football game to introduce ourselves to a teenager longing to be known. Luckily, we're not doing this alone. We are on teams.

Here's a thought. As you begin to think through the coming ministry year, take some time to plan club and campaigners, and be sure to get a strategy of inviting students to camp. But don't forget that the engine, the lead measure, for those three Cs, is knowing kids by name. In that same planning meeting, set aside some time to cast vision, dream and brainstorm about how your team could meet more kids by name than you ever have before. **Our encouragement is for your team to have a WIG of meeting a certain number of kids every day or every week and to talk about this at every team meeting.**

**Can you imagine a better WIG?** To get to know kids by name. That's what Jesus did. Let's follow His lead.

Written by Chris Cockerham and Pete Hardesty, Divisional Coordinators for Young Life College



## DO YOU HAVE VOLUNTEERS OR YOUNG LIFE LEADERS?

We have been a 'leader-centered' ministry since 1941. It is one of the marks of the mission and one of the elements that sets us apart from other organizations. Now, in a culture where identifying faithful volunteer leadership is increasingly more difficult, we are seeing a desire to elevate the role so that we are able to recruit, train, and retain the next Young Life LEADER and not just find another volunteer.

(Peter to Porthos) "This is absurd. It's just a dog."

(J.M. Barrie) "Just a dog, Just? Porthos, don't listen!"

Porthos dreams of being a bear, and you want to shatter those dreams by saying he's JUST a dog? What a horrible candle-snuffing word. That's like saying, "He can't climb that mountain, he's just a man", or "That's not a diamond, it's just a rock." JUST."

(Peter) "Fine then, turn him into a bear, if you can"

(J.M. Barrie) "With those eyes, my bonny lad, I'm afraid you'd never see it".

FINDING NEVERLAND- J.M. Barrie, Creator of Peter Pan

I hear the statement often. "Well, you know, I am JUST a volunteer." Ouch! Nothing hurts quite like that. I sometimes wonder if it reveals the deterioration in status of a critical community of individuals in the mission of Young Life. If the statement is true, we are acknowledging some shifts in volunteerism that will be challenging to reverse.

That volunteer's JUST...

- HELP achieve someone else's vision.
- ATTEND events and that is appreciated but not critical.
- CONTRIBUTE, but feel the mission of YL could be done without them.
- SUPPORT the work, but are expendable.

What a horrible candle-snuffing word 'JUST!' Maybe we have incompletely labeled the thousands of individuals who serve as the owners, backbone, and lifeblood of the Young Life ministry. Some current mislabels are:

YL VOLUNTEER - (noun) A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or help undertake a task.

YL COUNSELOR - (noun) A person trained to give guidance on personal, social, or spiritual problems.

YL CHAPERONE - (noun) A person who accompanies and looks after another person or group of people.

Volunteer, counselor, chaperone are partially true descriptions, but we don't just take part - we lead. We don't just give guidance, we speak truth. We don't just accompany, we share life. These titles identify an element of the role but not the heart. What if we shifted from 'JUST' to 'MORE THAN.' The person in your community that owns the ministry without being compensated is significantly 'more than' a volunteer; they are invested, passionate, and irreplaceable because they are LEADERS! What would happen if we aligned our rhetoric with our actions and gave them the care, development, and voice that they deserve? I believe the result would be more, well-trained leaders than we have had in our 80 year history.



## DO YOU HAVE VOLUNTEERS OR YOUNG LIFE LEADERS? (CONTINUED)

Young Life LEADER - (noun) the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or ministry.

In my experience, here are the two key questions and answers we need to acknowledge regarding volunteer leadership:

### Question 1. WHY DO YL LEADERS LEAD ?

- They have a heart for Christ and adolescents.
- They want to give back because someone was there to lead them to Jesus.
- They have a desire to be stretched and challenged in faith.

### Question 2. WHY DO LEADERS STAY?

- They found a niche where their gifting is being utilized and they are experiencing community.
- They see transformation in themselves and the adolescents they serve.
- They grow in their faith.

It takes a community to reach a community and when that happens, everyone is changed! When done correctly, we all LEAD. We LEAD in relationship, authenticity, guidance, and by example. Ultimately, we LEAD toward an encounter with a living and loving God, and that is not 'just' something we do, it is 'more than' our eyes could ever imagine witnessing.

FINAL THOUGHT: I have noticed when volunteer leaders' sense of ownership grows their description of their role changes as well. They shift from saying phrases like:

- "I HELP run a YL Club." - to -
- "This School is where I choose to MINISTER."

Which phrase describes your team? We will always be grateful for more volunteers, but we really need leaders engaged in ministry!

A CHALLENGE: Take some time with your team to discuss the difference between volunteer and leader. What is the current state of things in your mission community and what could be done to change it this year?

Written by Ken Tankersley (kenbtank@gmail.com)