

MOMENTUM

SPRING
2021

GOOD NEWS

Guy Freeman

Executive Director

If you have been watching the news recently, COVID counts, vaccination delays, and increased mental health challenges constantly make the headlines. Everything seems to be bad news, so our team wants to share with you some **good news** that has come out of our ministry year in spite of the pandemic. Your investment through prayer, volunteering, and financial support continues to make a difference in the lives of young people and their families across the Kawarthas. Our Satellites are spread throughout three different health unit regions and we have been working closely with them to provide critical care during this time. In Bancroft, Peterborough, and Lakefield we have been deemed as an “essential service” offering mental health care to youth through drop-ins, porch visits, and food distribution. This has allowed us to continue to be in contact with youth even in tight lockdown situations. It has also allowed us to through guidance from the health units, adjust our programs to ensure safety as we open our doors with COVID friendly measures in place.

In keeping with what I mentioned above, our theme for our Annual Fundraiser on May 4, 2021 this year is going to be “Good News”. Good news stories of youth and families managing through this crisis with spiritual resilience. A resiliency that comes from a relationship with Jesus. So the good news is not only a result of the work that is happening, but the very thing that changes the lives of young people. In one of our communities a young person struggling was mentored by one of our staff. After a number of visits the youths literally changed their outlook on life. So much so that they asked to be involved in mentoring another youth in crisis. Our mission is to see *every young person to live fully in Christ*. This requires our programming to be geared to reach the whole spectrum of the spiritual journey of a youth life, for which we rely on a strong volunteer base, church partnerships and our extremely dedicated staff. In 2020 we were able to reach over 1100 youth even with the ever changing restrictions. We had the privilege to see nine youth become followers of Jesus and many more begin in discipleship relationships. **Now that is some GOOD NEWS!**

guy@youthunlimitedkaw.com

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

FROM DARK TO LIGHT

Ian McIntosh

Haliburton Highlands Director

Just when he thought hope was fleeting he found it in a teaching from the word of God. I have had the privilege of teaching drums to Billy on a weekly basis through our Online Music Lessons program. The program offers an optional devotional at the beginning of each lesson, but the family decided to opt out of this at the start of the fall session. In our first lesson Billy opened up to me about some videos he had been watching online, the contents of which were filled with evil messages including satanic references. I asked Billy why he would be interested in such dark things and if he would consider watching more positive videos and Billy wrestled with this for the next week. When we met for our next lesson the family shared with me that he was exploring his faith and was now open to the devotional time before each lesson. His mom shared this text with me: “Billy has shown some interest in his beliefs. What are the youth programs about at Lakeside Church?”. All glory goes to God who made way for this to happen. Billy continues to wrestle with his beliefs but has taken a large step towards allowing the light of Jesus Christ to enter his life. Much prayer, discernment and guidance will be needed for Billy to realize his true potential. I thank God that I am able to reflect God’s light in Billy’s life.



Throughout the winter we were also able to connect with youth through hockey nights in Haliburton. This was a way for us to join with youth for a game of pickup hockey at the outdoor rink. During this time we were able to guide youth through difficult situations that they are facing. This was a great space for young people to decompress and get some much needed exercise. As the weather changes we are looking forward to continuing the conversations shared at the skatepark. This year we plan to go deeper with the youth there by implementing the Youth Alpha program between skateboarding. I am really excited to see what God does during this time.

Youth Unlimited Haliburton Highlands needs your prayers as we move forward with programming and events. Please pray that youth would find Jesus and turn away from temptations that only lead them further from their true purpose. Pray that we would have opportunities to share about the life of Jesus. Matthew 18:12 says “*What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?*” It is our hope that we can find the ones that are lost and guide them along the right path.

ian@youthunlimitedkaw.com

THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

Jennifer Kloosterman

Peterborough Director

One of the tragedies we have seen over the last year has been the way that public policy decisions around COVID-19 have impacted the most vulnerable in our communities. In a recent interview with CTV news, our Chief Public Health Officer stated that her biggest takeaway from the last year is that “we have failed the most vulnerable”. We have seen this impact on our youth. While many young people have been able to adjust and access support through families, school, online groups etc., there are many who are increasingly isolated and remain vulnerable as restrictions continue. For this reason, we have committed ourselves to keeping our doors at *The Bridge Youth Centre* open in whatever way possible as we continue to navigate the ongoing shifts and changes of this year.

What can we do in the face of so much change and uncertainty? For us, the only response we’ve known is to pray, commit ourselves to respond to what’s in front of us, and continue to seek God’s face for what is next.



During the most recent lockdown, we were able to stay open as an emergency support centre at *The Bridge* 5 days a week. We met weekly for prayer outdoors in the cold in small groups as well as on Zoom. Over these 6 weeks we distributed over 175 food boxes and other essential items, and were able to be there to talk, be a listening ear and pray with young people who needed it. For the ones that came, we believe this was a life-changing intervention. During this time, we were also able to forge a new partnership with a local agency that serves some of our city’s most vulnerable, and have now opened our doors to a new program that offers a safe space to youth who are experiencing homelessness. The impacts of this program have been so wonderful it is hard to put into words. One youth felt confident enough to find new housing. Another began an informal mentoring relationship with one of our staff. Many others began to feel like they had a safe place to go and feel at home for the first time in a long time. A former mentor of mine used to say; “never underestimate the power of just showing up”. This has been a powerful thing over the last few months indeed!



In Talwood, we started praying in the parking lot and handing out hot chocolate weekly to bless the community. When we opened the doors of the new youth drop-in again after the lockdown, our little youth space began to grow from one youth to many, as more kids learned there was a new space to go.



In the background of all of this, our team has been teaching kids about Christ through online video game nights, Skate Club, the FIT discipleship program and organizing porch visits to connect with families at home. Our hearts are full as we see God is moving in the midst of this difficult year. Let’s continue to pray and seek God for his work in our community.

OTHER UPDATES:

- **Dave and Amanda Jones** welcome a new baby this spring, *congratulations Dave and Amanda!*
- **Josh Lott** became engaged to Kara Beadle and plan to wed in July. Josh will also be transitioning to full time work with YFC this spring, taking on a new role serving with YFC Canada as Discipleship Specialist, while he continues his outreach work in Peterborough. *Congratulations Josh!*

jennifer@youthunlimitedkaw.com

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UPDATES

Chris Jones

LYU Satellite Director



LYU Courageous Kids

LYU's Outreach Workers, Sarah Jones and Rebecca Sage, were invited into the classrooms of St. Paul Catholic Elementary School as they taught an online curriculum based on a book entitled "Am I Safe?", authored by Tim Huff and Iona Snair.

Sarah & Rebecca were very excited about the positive response they received, as they guided students through various steps and exercises to deal with stress and anxiety. With the success that has been experienced, they are communicating with other schools and organizations that would be interested in helping assist their youth in this way.

If interested in this curriculum for your school or church please contact Sarah Jones sarahj@youthunlimitedkaw.com or Rebecca Sage rebecca@youthunlimitedkaw.com.



LYU Barn

We are now completing the drywall stage of our renovations and we hope to move in the summer of 2021.

Our new building, The LYU Barn, located on the Lakefield bridge has amazing potential to be a safe place where students and families can gather to be and become as God has designed them.

The vision for the LYU Barn is for it to be a place where young people will gain life skills taught by community members in order to transform their emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical needs. The 4,400 sq. ft. building will provide a spacious office environment with shared meeting and program rooms for other community non-profits to rent. And with moving to the Barn, the current LYU offices at 10 Hill Street will be able to be transformed into another affordable rental apartment.

If you would like to financially contribute to help complete the final \$10,000 of our \$80,000 renovation goal, please go to lakefieldyouthunlimited.com to make a donation or send a cheque to PO Box 1178, Lakefield ON K0L 2H0. Please make payable to "Youth Unlimited" and memo "LYU Barn". Thank you!

Community Easter Blessing

Our 2021 Community Easter Blessing was a great success! Thank you for the grocery gift cards and cash donations that will help provide Lakefield youth and their families with a delicious Easter meal. To date we have received \$1,716, exceeding our goal of raising \$1,500.



Prayer Walking in the Village of Lakefield

Exciting progress is being made in covering the Lakefield community in prayer.

First we began with two Zoom meetings hosted by Chris Jones from Lakefield Youth Unlimited and led by Adam Shepski and Carol Devey of Disciple A City. In these teaching and discussion sessions it was explained that prayer walking is "praying on-site with insight". We have had approximately 40 people join us online for these meetings.

We will be strategically dividing the village of Lakefield into quadrants and have people pray weekly for the businesses, churches, schools, residences, etc. in Lakefield. If you are interested in joining us please contact Chris Jones (705-761-2903 / chrisj@youthunlimitedkaw.com).

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ARCHERY PROGRAMS & SOUPFEST POSTPONED

All Covers

Outreach Worker, Lindsay

On-Target Archery

We have been enjoying once again being able to run the On-Target Archery program this spring. Though we have had to keep numbers low due to COVID regulations, our Monday evenings have still been a weekly highlight. This program has been a great way of connecting with youth through passion for the sport, skills training and sharing with them the good news of Jesus. Special thanks to the Lindsay Axe Club for hosting us!



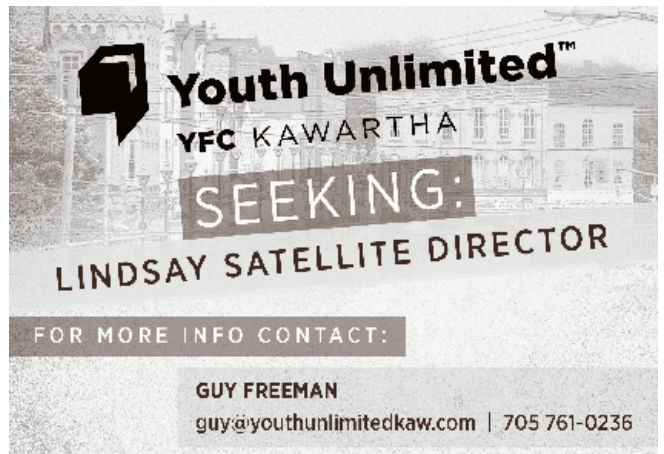
MONDAY EVENING SPRING SESSION OF ON-TARGET ARCHERY UNDERWAY

2021 Soupfest Postponed

This year's Soupfest, usually held in February, has been postponed to (*hopefully*) later this Spring due to COVID-19 restrictions. We are exploring a new model that will allow restaurants and participants to still enjoy the Soupfest event in a COVID-19 safe way. Last year we had over 300 people participate in the day, seventeen restaurants donating soup and multiple sponsorships, all of which helped to raise over ten thousand dollars for the work of the Satellite. Latest event information can be found at www.lindsaysoupfest.com.



al@youthunlimitedkaw.com



KAWARTHA LAKES

RENEWED HOPE

Teresa Ward

Outreach Worker, Kawartha Lakes

As Spring approaches the days get longer, the sun shines brighter, and hope is renewed. We hope for an end to the pandemic, we hope for the well being for people and healing for those who are recovering from COVID. We hope that the fear and uncertainty that people have faced over the past year has drawn them to God. Churches and ministries have grabbed hold of the opportunities online to minister to people, young and old.

For Youth Unlimited and Monarch Bible Camp, one opportunity has been to offer a weekly Kid's Club online. 'On Guard' started in early December and continues to offer games, crafts, baking and Bible teaching every week. It has been a wonderful opportunity to minister to a small group of young people, to share God's love and to challenge them to grow in their faith. We challenged the group to memorize Bible verses and they loved it so much they asked for more than the one a month we were offering! How cool to have young people that hunger for the Word. Our volunteers are being blessed as well. One mother told me her daughter 'beams' when she gets off screen. We even have a young person who is joining us from Spain and gets up at 1:30am so she can join us!

Another exciting opportunity we are working on is to fill the need for programming for children and families in Coboconk, an area

we hope to expand into. The Chamber of Commerce announced that parents were asking for more activities for their children. It's amazing how God opens doors. Our hope is to find people to lead workshops and programs like arts, skills, sports, baking; and we will provide the promotion, administration and support. We hope to have some online workshops as well. Someone from the Chamber asked me what was our agenda in this, us being a religious organization. My reply was, 'We just want to bless the families of Coby.' Please join us in prayer for this opportunity! Pray that goodness will overflow and we will make good connections that will lay a good foundation for further ministry.

In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.

PROVERBS 16:9

teresa@youthunlimitedkaw.com

Monarch Bible Camp and Kawartha Lakes Youth Unlimited are looking for volunteers!

Will you join us in providing programs and activities for children and families in the Coboconk area? Do you have a skill to share with a group of children? We are open to anything from cooking, arts and crafts, drama, music, sewing or woodworking!

For more information:
 Teresa Ward
 705-887-3625
monarch@onehopecanada.ca
OR
 Martin Chipp-Smith
 705-341-8440
martin@youthunlimitedkaw.com



COMMUNITY CARE DURING COVID-19

Kelsey Watts

Bancroft Managing Director

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

MATTHEW 25:40

In the midst of a global pandemic, critical care programs and events have played a large role in how we serve our community. At Youth For Christ, we know that it is during tough situations where an encouraging word, essential supplies or a bowl of chili can have eternal impact. With this in mind we have strived to do what we can to help people through these difficult days.

One way that we have done this is through our Meals Program that started back in April 2020. So far we have blessed a total of 7 families with a free box of meals once a week for as long as they needed the support. The genuine gratitude and joy that they have expressed for this small gesture have warmed our hearts. This program has also built relationships with youth and families that have previously had no connection to The Switch Yard. We are so grateful for our partnership with JOY Bible Camp, where all these meals have been prepared for only a small cost. We are also grateful for everyone that has invested financially in this program. It is making a difference! If you are interested in helping us lighten the load on these families by covering some of these food costs, please send us an email.

Another way that we were able to provide critical care was through our Christmas party. We had the privilege this past Christmas of partnering with local churches and individuals to bless our drop-in youth and some of their families with a lovely Turkey Dinner. We were also able to give the youth generous Christmas presents, which included a gift card for food, personal care items and a handmade toque or headband to keep them warm. The smiles on their faces as they proudly tried on their new toques were priceless! Another way that we were able to offer hope and encouragement was through Spa Care Packages. The Switch Yard has hosted a Ladies Spa Night for many years around Valentine's Day to show the ladies of our community that they are precious and loved; especially those ladies who may not be told very often just how valuable they truly are. Due to Covid-19, we couldn't do the event in person this year, however, because of the toll that the pandemic has had on mental health, we felt it was crucial to still do something. We decided to do up care packages with an encouraging note and personal care items for the ladies to pamper themselves with at home. Many women who have served at the Spa Night in the past came together to provide the expertise, finances and time that were needed to make this possible. We were able to bless over 30 ladies with a package! The feedback from this event was so encouraging. We received several messages, and even a card, expressing deep gratitude for the thoughtfulness.

I believe the impact of all of these critical care efforts is summed up beautifully in this message from one of the dear ladies that received a spa package, *"I want to thank you and all the others who have been working hard to put the spa packages together and for all the other things that you do that make the days go by easier for all the people that you help. It really does make a difference and it is very much appreciated."*

It is such a blessing to "make the days go by easier" and offer hope for tomorrow to those in our community. May God bless all of you who have partnered with us to serve these youth, ladies and families who are all so precious in God's sight!

kelsey@youthunlimitedkaw.com

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