

MOMENTUM

WINTER
2025



Most of the KYFC staff gathered to learn together and celebrate **Jenn Knight** as she prepared to move onto new ministry avenues with Rising Above Ministries and Youth for Christ Canada.

UPDATE

Ben Peltz

Interim Executive Director

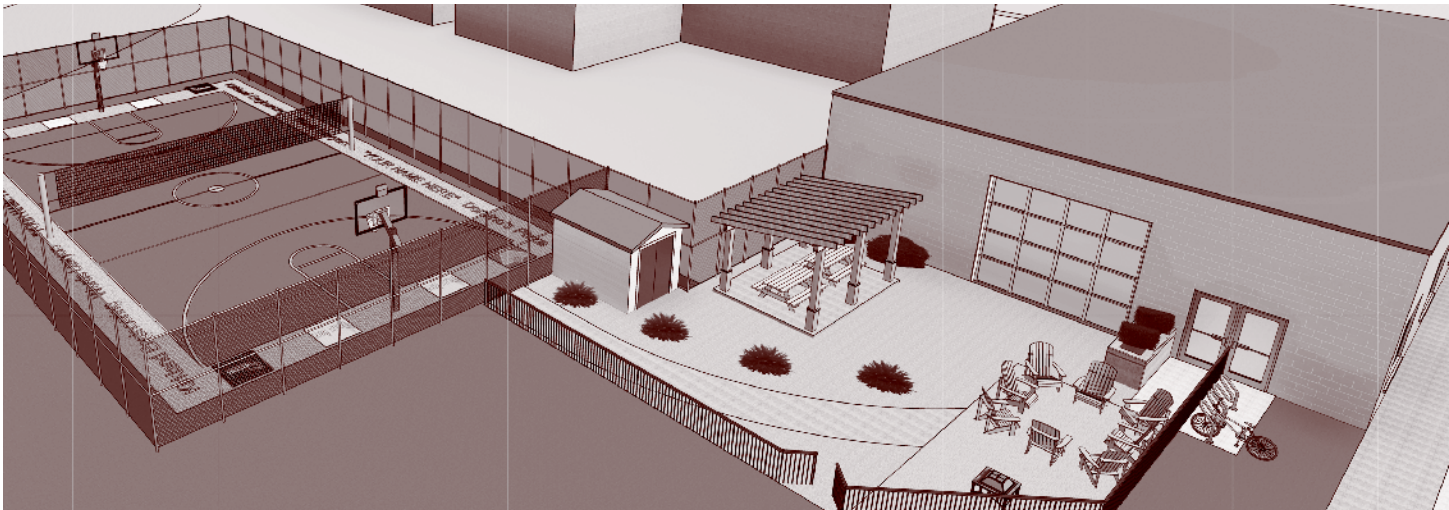
Hello, and season's greetings from Kawartha Youth for Christ/ Youth Unlimited! As is so often the case, the arrival of Christmas and the New Year has me reflecting on the year that has been. This is even more true in 2024 because it has been just over a year since I began serving as the Interim Executive Director. There's been a lot of change over that year! We've worked hard to improve the health of the organization. We've had some staff end their time with us and many more begin serving with us. We've celebrated milestones, traveled to other cities, tackled projects, and enjoyed fun and games together. But, in the midst of all those changes, one thing remains the same: our mission. One of the things that struck me immediately upon becoming the Interim ED and has continued to impress me since is how clear and unified KYU's staff, volunteers, and partners are about their mandate to see every young person living fully in Christ. We believe that God has entrusted us with this task and everything we do is intended to fulfill it. That was true before I arrived, continues to be true during this transition, and will continue to be true once we find a new permanent director. It excites me to contribute to a team that's so committed to tackling one of the greatest challenges that churches are facing across our land today.

Fulfilling that commitment requires creativity, but by the grace of God Kawartha YFC has an abundance of that on hand! Each of our Satellite ministries tackle the unique challenges they face

by prayerfully discerning what God wants them to do to meet the needs of their context. This has led to a lot of growth in the ministry over the past year. The Peterborough team welcomed Rani as the New Canadian Ministry Coordinator, planned and raised the necessary funds for a Sport Court at the Bridge Youth Centre, and rallied around their new Administrator, Kevin, and their new Director, Katie. Lakefield grew its gym night to greater than 60 students and welcomed Kara as their new Administrator and Chanté as an Elementary Outreach Worker. Bancroft completed multiple upgrades to the Switch Yard Youth Centre and is in the process of bringing on a new Outreach Worker. Haliburton brought Leanne on as a co-Director and re-launched the Bridge Youth Centre there. Kawartha Lakes integrated not one, not two, but three new staff members in Andrew, Alan, and Laura. On top of this, we all benefited from Sherry becoming the Kawartha Administrator early in the year to keep us on track in the midst of these changes. All of these new team members and growth initiatives complement the existing programs and leaders serving youth in these regions using their unique gifts and abilities. 2024 has been an exciting year for all of us, and 2025 shows no signs of slowing down!

All of this is only possible because of you—our ministry partners. Thank you for faithfully praying for, volunteering with, and financially supporting us as we strive to see every young person living fully in Christ. May God bless you as richly as you have blessed us this Christmas and throughout the year ahead!

ed@youthunlimitedkaw.com



UPDATES

Kevin Elson
Operations Coordinator

Over the past year Peterborough Youth Unlimited has been in a season of transition. Typically transition is disruptive to the ways that we had once been accustomed to. It is indeed meant to be. By the same nature, transition is almost never an easy process.

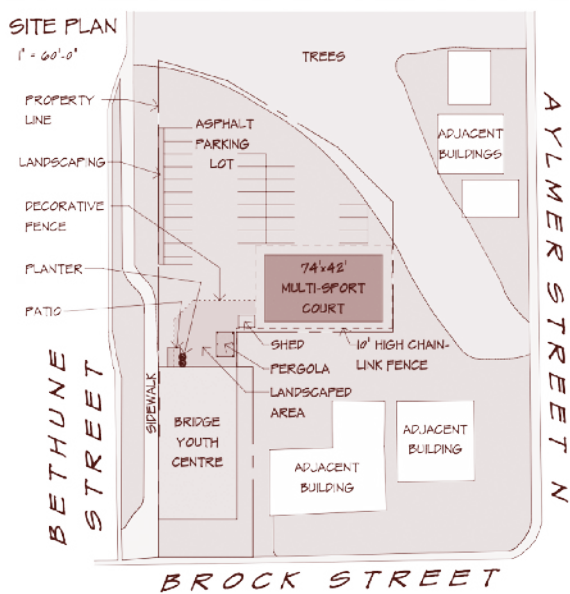
Discerning the overall direction, managing the lingering list of items that need to be addressed, maintaining the standard of quality, growing through it all and the unexpected emotions that tend to come up. It can become overwhelmingly difficult at times.

How transition is handled will determine the long-term stability of the incoming season. How beautiful is it, that in these often difficult seasons, we don't have to do it alone? God does not take any breaks.

We have certainly seen God moving throughout the ministry in such profound ways. Whether it has been the growth in the number of youth attending The Hub Youth Centre, or the numerous youth who have been giving their life to Christ, choosing to pursue Him over all else, at The Bridge Youth Centre, God is moving.

He has called more workers to the harvest, from new volunteers, to our incoming Satellite Director, **Katie Gibbs**. He has been stirring the hearts of the youth in our community. There is a hunger out there for God, so many who are lost and searching.

Recently, PYU was blessed by a large donation towards the



proposed multi-use sport court. With this donation and the support of a number of other community sponsors, the project is now set to move ahead.

The sport court project has been the culmination of years of prayer and discernment, planning and budgeting. It will not only shape but define the ministry of PYU in Peterborough's downtown core for years to come. We are so incredibly excited about how God is going to use this space moving forward.

Despite the difficulties of transition, when you rely on God to lead the way, His provision alone will be enough for the journey.

In Matthew 6:33-34, the promise of God's provision is offered; *"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

It is a good reminder that we cannot do anything on our own, without God or without you. That this ministry is not ours but His and His alone. We are so incredibly blessed and privileged to bear witness to it all. To see God at work.

As we navigate this new season of ministry we look forward with anticipation all that the Lord has in store for us in 2025. We know it'll bring so much more than we can hope or imagine. Thank you to all those who have joined us on this walk with Him. Exciting things are yet to come!

peterborough@youthunlimitedkaw.com.

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HEARING LOVE

Caleb Posthumus
Jr. High Outreach Worker

Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable. - DAVID AUGSBURGERS

Every Wednesday and Friday, I show up at 9:00am, help with the snack bin program, do yard duty during recess, and for the remainder of the day, I support a grade 7-8 classroom of 30 students at Lakefield District Public School (LDPS).

My journey of working with students didn't start in Lakefield. From September 2021 - May 2022, I did a Youth Outreach program called Lifeteams in Abbotsford, British Columbia where my placement was to work with vulnerable youth in a highschool. I was homeschooled, so at first the two of these did not mix very well; I got to the point where I didn't look forward to going to placement. The days were long and I didn't feel very connected to the youth. But then something changed. Rob, the director of Lifeteams, challenged us to pray a simple prayer "Lord, break my heart for the things that break yours." I remember praying that prayer and my heart starting to break for those youth. Shortly after, my placement partner and I walked with some youth through some really hard things; questions of belonging, harmful family dynamics, broken homes, anxiety, depression, and at one point an attempt at suicide. Those were hard and heavy placement days. But despite how hard those things were, being present in their lives and getting to care for them was so worth it. I remember standing on a mountain in B.C. after we had said goodbye to the youth and in that moment, I realized that if I was going to do full time youth ministry, I wanted my outreach to be in a school, which led to meeting Chris at Lakefield Youth Unlimited.

Every Wednesday and Friday I get to practice what it looks like to be a healthy adult friend in a young person's life by being present in the school. I've had several good conversations with EA's and teachers about why I'm there and several of them have thanked me for it. A couple months ago, I was walking and talking with a grade 7 student and they turned to me and said "I like it when you visit the school- it's nice to talk to someone." Another day when I was walking in, I turned the corner and one of the kids from my class saw me, threw their arms in the air and said "Yes, Caleb is here! The days when you're here are good."

Knowing that Jesus is walking the halls with me is a constant reminder that I am never alone in this journey. Jesus changed my life and I want the youth I work with to come to know the same Jesus, but I don't want that to be the only reason I am in their life. I want to love and care for them, just because I can - not because I have to or because there is an 'end goal'. Healthy relationships don't have an end goal.

I am going to continue to pray that the Jesus I love and know, would be the Jesus the youth would also grow to love and know, and I will continue to be intentional in everything I say and do. I am prepared and willing to show up, to love them, listen to them, create a safe space, and provide a healthy community.

caleb@youthunlimitedkaw.com



LYU is thrilled to announce the resounding success of our 21st annual fundraising dinner, held on October 17th. With a full house and incredible community support, the event exceeded expectations, raising an outstanding \$28,000. Thank you so much for your generosity and partnership. Photo above of Mayor of Selwyn Township Sherry Senis presenting a 21st anniversary certificate to LYU Director Chris Jones.



We are thankful for our crew of amazing volunteers and student leaders who make our weekly Gym Night possible. Gym Night runs on Thursday evenings from 7:00- 8:30pm for students grades 6-9 at Lakefield District Public School. Gym night has served over 200 students since September 2023.



The season of the LYU house has ended as the owner has decided to sell. This property has provided safe and affordable housing for 60 individuals since 2011. Thank you to everyone who has supported and helped manage this house over the years

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SEASON OF NEW BEGINNNINGS

Leanne Young
Communications Director & Jr. High Outreach Worker

Just as seasons change from one to the next, sometimes overnight, it has felt this way with the direction of Youth Unlimited in Haliburton Highlands the past 6 months.

Six months ago the Lord led **Leanne Young** (*wife to the satellite director, Kyle Young*) to step onto the staff team as co-director in order to bring leadership to communication and Jr Youth Outreach.

Over the past 3 years Kyle and Leanne have identified that two of Haliburton’s most felt needs among young people are in school support and after school support.

Kyle continues to be in the High School weekly bringing support to students and teachers. He is well known in the school community and more opportunities to speak into student’s lives are happening each week. Leanne is hoping to start up similar support in the local elementary school starting January.



Leanne and a volunteer teaching some youth how to make apple crisp. They whipped up enough to feed the 150 who came out to their fundraising concert on November 9th.

Knowing that after school programming is needed for the youth God provided a building for them to lease that is walking distance from the schools and right on the edge of the park and the downtown core. The new building is called the Bridge as it is their desire to build relationships with Haliburton youth in order to bridge them towards healthy communities, positive mentors, and opportunities for leadership that help them grow in having life giving purpose.

They are going to be offering cooking classes, recreational sports opportunities and a warm and safe space for youth to hang out after school.

In the last three months the community has rallied alongside the Young’s and raised over \$25,000 to support the cost of the building and operations.

Volunteers are stepping up and are excited to start offering consistent programs come the New Year. This is the first time in 7 years that Haliburton Youth Unlimited has had their own building and programs for volunteers to be a part of. It truly does feel like a new season full of life and fruit is in the near future.

God has used Isaiah 43:18-20 to be an encouragement that this satellite is entering a new season where He is doing a new thing and is drawing young people to Himself for His glory.

leanne@youthunlimitedkaw.com

Kyle and Leanne are still in need of raising their own personal salary. Please be praying for partners to join them in supporting them and their family as they start up this next season of ministry. Pray also for God to draw the right youth out who are in need of hope, belonging and purpose.

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LOVE IN ACTION

Martin Chipp-Smith
Kawartha Lakes Satellite Director

Has God ever interrupted your plans? Have you ever come to a place where you were about to do one thing, then God shows up, leads you in a different direction, and you are left wondering “what just happened”? This is actually the case with this “Momentum” article. I am actually on my family vacation, sitting in a hotel room writing to you about something God did during my travels to Calgary.

I had planned to give you all an update on this past year for Kawartha Lakes Youth Unlimited (KLYU). I was going to share how God met us and allowed us to grow from four staff members to seven! My plan was to tell you about the ‘Immeasurable’ ways in which God has been interacting with us, opening doors for us to continue sharing Christ everywhere we go, and so on.

Then yesterday (November 7th), a former youth who gave their life to Christ when I was in High School Ministry back in 2008-2012, reached out to me and wanted to connect. I am always

intrigued when these things happen, because I know that God is up to something. This young man opened up and started sharing about his life story, his failed relationship, being a single father, doing ok physically, but mentally and spiritually really struggling. He has walked away from the things of God and is trying to do his own thing.

What usually strikes me in moments like this, is the fact that Christ has given us the ability to extend His grace and ignite it into the lives of others. I have often prayed, “Jesus, increase my capacity to love others as you do”. I don’t need to know the depth of sinful behaviour to form some kind of judgement. We as followers of



Summer 2024 Camping Trip - Building Relationships in God’s Creation

Christ are called to love one another. In John 13:34-35, Christ tells us : *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* This is my deepest desire, that the church, my KLYU staff, and of course beyond, would simply love people for who they are, even in the midst of their sinful, non Christ-like behaviour. Why? Because that is what Jesus would do. Romans 12:9 (NLT) says *‘Don’t just pretend to love people, really love them.’*

This young man reached out in his time of need. Was it convenient? No. Did I have time? No. However, if Christ’s desire inside of me is to love others, then I need not be offended by inconveniences, but embrace them as divine appointments. God opened up a door for this young man many years ago, and I believe God is drawing him back to Himself. I know the Spirit led me to share with him how much Christ loves him and hasn’t forgotten about him. Jesus sees him and although things have been extremely difficult, He would really love to walk this journey with him!

Oh, what a mighty, powerful and loving God that we serve! He has chosen to partner with His creation, to bring His love and hope to those around us. Love through Christ is the greatest gift that we can extend to another human being. Let His love envelop you today as you walk to extend it to others. That is my desire each and every day for the KLYU team.

martin@youthunlimitedkaw.com

BANCROFT

IT’S AN ADVENTURE

Kelsey Watts
Bancroft Managing Director

This Fall has been very busy at The Switch Yard, but there are so many amazing things to share about what God has done!

A big highlight this fall was the opportunity we had to take 24 youth to Change Conference Ottawa on November 1-2. The other leaders and I got to witness God move in their lives first hand, and it was so encouraging! We laughed, cried, prayed, ate, played and learned together. As a result of going on this adventure, our Bible Study youth drew closer together as a community. I mean, how can you not when you drive over 6 hours together and cram 31 people into two houses! We praise God for keeping everyone safe, and for how He used this weekend to bless so many youth.

Many of the youth who came to the Change Conference with us also participate in our weekly Bible Study on Wednesdays after school. This group is still going strong as we average 20 youth each week who are hungry to read the Bible together and hang out as a community. There are several new youth this year, so we as leaders are still tweaking how we do things so that it works well with our current group of youth. It’s an adventure! It’s encouraging to see how God is working in the lives of these youth.



Drop-in is also still happening twice a week. A number of younger youth have joined this year, so there is often a lot of energy on a drop-in night, but that’s a good thing! Many of these youth are hungry for God too (they just don’t necessarily know it yet!) Some of them are even reading the Bible on their own and trying to make sense of things. We would like to start a program where we explore the Bible and topics of faith with these youth. It would be open to any youth who wish to attend and it would be structured differently than the Wednesday Bible Study to suit the different needs of these youth.

We are so grateful to have the privilege to walk alongside and support youth no matter their background or religious views. We get to just love them right where they are at. Whether they are riding a ‘conference high’ or walking through the dark valley of addiction, it’s an honour that they invite us into their world.

Another highlight this fall was the opportunity we had to celebrate 30 years of The Switch Yard. We had around 50 people attend the party on

October 21st to reminisce and eat cupcakes. It was encouraging to have people from all different ‘seasons’ of the last 30 years together in one room to celebrate. God is good! We look forward to many more years of adventure as we continue to serve local young people.

kelsey@youthunlimitedkaw.com

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Sherry Salminen, *Finance & Administration*

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Leanne Young, *Communications Director*

Kawartha Lakes
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