

MOMENTUM

SUMMER
2025

UPDATE

Ben Peltz
Interim Executive Director

Hello again from Kawartha Youth For Christ/Youth Unlimited! It's always a pleasure to be able to share how things are going across the region with all of our faithful supporters. As I write this particular update late in May, the sky outside is grey and rain is slowly trickling down. Although you won't receive this newsletter until we are well into June, the weather has me thinking that spring in Ontario is always an interesting time of year. When we teach kids about spring, we often use pictures of green trees, budding flowers, and baby animals. We use these images to teach them that spring is a time of new beginnings. This dovetails nicely with the Easter celebration that accompanies spring. The renewal of the world in springtime is a poignant reminder of the new life we have available to us through Jesus' death and resurrection!

And yet, if we're honest with ourselves, this idealistic portrait of spring really doesn't do justice to the season itself. It's certainly true that by the end of spring the trees are green, the flowers have bloomed, and there are lots of young animals running around. But before this comes about we have to go through quite the messy process. As the snow melts, we drive on slushy, salty roads. We avoid muddy lawns and flooded park paths. We groan when snow squalls or ice storms set us back a few weeks. We plant gardens and then realize we need to cover them up because of an unexpected frost. And, even once the snow and ice are truly gone, we get weeks like the one we're in at present, which feel indistinguishable from November besides the fact that there are tree leaves huddled together to fight off the cold, instead of lying dead on the ground. Spring is a season of renewal, but it's also a reminder that renewal is a slow and messy process, and especially here in Ontario we know that it often takes far longer than we would like.

This isn't just true of ecological renewal, it's true of personal and organizational renewal as well. When someone begins to turn away from a life of sin and renew their walk with the Lord, it's often a process of taking two steps forward and one step back. This is something we see a lot in our ministries. Our staff and volunteers plant and water seeds of faith only to watch in trepidation as the storms of life threaten to destroy them before they even have a chance to bloom. It's also something I have seen a lot as KYFC's interim ED. Our leadership team has worked hard to ensure that

KYFC is as healthy as possible. We've had new people join our team, we've strengthened our relationships with one another, we've clarified our organizational structure, and we've implemented many suggestions to ensure that our staff are trained and cared for effectively. We've also seen God's hand at work, bringing about transformation in and through us. At the same time, we've had staff burn out, go through personal crises, struggle to meet their fundraising goals, and, in a couple of cases, end their time with KYFC. And, even those who are doing well overall feel a little fatigue as we continue to wait on God to provide a new ED. The first half of 2025, in particular, has felt a lot like an Ontario spring. We can see the new life on the horizon, but the process of renewal is messier than we would like.

It can be difficult to acknowledge the difficulties that come with change when you work in ministry. Christians are people of hope, and Christian leaders want to model that hope for those around them. But the hope of Christianity isn't found in denying hardship, but faithfully persevering through it. Jesus himself experienced this in his suffering, death, and resurrection. And, he told his followers over and over again that this is what they should expect in life. The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4 serves as a reminder of how faith works. God's abundant life doesn't come because every seed we plant bears fruit. Just the opposite: far more seeds get destroyed in the parable than those that survive. But those that do survive are so abundantly fruitful that the yield far outweighs what's lost in the planting process. This is the hope that we hold to as Christians: that even if most of our acts of love and conversations about faith do nothing to effect change, the ones that do will bring about even greater renewal than we can ask or imagine!

Thank you for continuing to journey with us through this season of renewal. It can be messy business, and I'm sure that you've glimpsed that from time to time. But the journey is also filled with hope, not least because of the generosity and encouragement we receive from people like you. I hope you enjoy the stories on the pages that follow, which provide little glimpses of how God is working in and through our ministry, even in the midst of these topsy-turvy times!

ed@youthunlimitedkaw.com

MOMENTUM NEWSLETTER Feedback Requested

It's been some time since we requested your feedback on our [Momentum Newsletter](#).

Please take a minute to fill in this quick survey and send it back to us in the postage reply envelope *Thank you!*

- ☐ I would only like to receive it online
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UPDATES

Katie Gibbs

Satellite Director

Our Peterborough team just finished our annual GALA! We want to thank everyone who donated time, items for the silent auction, or financially, in support of Peterborough Youth Unlimited (PYU). We could not do this work without you! Thank you.

I had shared at the Gala that in the Fall the word **Alignment** kept coming up in my quiet time with the Lord. As time passed and the prayer became more refined, I realized the prayer was for me, for us, for the Church and communities, to be brought into alignment with the Lord and with the cry of His heart for this generation.

Since January 1 of this year, the Lord has been working and moving so quickly at PYU. At times, it feels like we are playing catch up, quickly being brought to where the Lord wants us to be into alignment with Him.

Our team started a gratitude list that we call “*God Sightings*” to document everything we saw the Lord doing since Jan 1, 2025.



Just to share a few; the Sports court is coming together, construction prep has begun and will be underway shortly. PYU has officially partnered with Omemee Baptist Church and will be running programs in Omemee this fall. We have new and old volunteers being drawn to the Lord and seeking to serve alongside our team this summer.

The most powerful thing to watch has been our current volunteer team, being renewed with an unbelievable excitement for what they anticipate the Lord doing in this ministry. Standing back and watching this unfold is incredible. It’s like the Lord has revealed His vision and direction for PYU to each of us individually, causing this unbreakable, undeniable unity and passion for the youth in our city.

We feel humbled to be a part of what the Lord is doing here in Peterborough and honoured to be in a position to train up and equip this generation of youth. I invite you to join our Peterborough team

in praying for individual hearts to be brought into alignment with God!

The Lord is doing a mighty work in the city of Peterborough!

peterborough@youthunlimitedkaw.com.

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HOPE IN THE HALLWAYS

Chris Jones

Lakefield Satellite Director

I first met Chante Alleyne-Chagoya when she was a teenager attending Lakefield District Secondary and Intermediate School. One Thursday night, she came to Gym Night in its early days with her brothers and dad. They were looking for a safe, welcoming space—somewhere they could be accepted and respected, where their morals and faith would be honoured.

Years passed, and Chante’s journey took her far from Lakefield. She pursued her education, travelled the world as an educator and ESL instructor, and eventually returned to Canada to work in education. Along the way, she found love in Mexico, got married, and had three children and then returned to Lakefield to be near her family. That’s when our paths crossed again—and it became clear that the Outreach Worker position was a perfect fit for her. With her rich

life experience, passion for mentoring, and heart for helping youth discover their God-given hope and potential, Chante stepped into the role naturally.

Today, Chante serves the community in many ways. She is currently supporting the Lakefield Community Children’s Choir that meets at the Barn during the fall to spring months, assists Caleb Posthumus (the other Outreach Worker) at weekly Gym Nights, supports and builds relationships with students during recess, and focuses on literacy needs in primary classrooms at Lakefield District Public School and St. Paul’s Catholic School.

Chante told me a story of a student that she met. The teacher recognized a primary student who had recently come from a war torn country and saw Chante as a perfect fit with this child to spend one-on-one time focusing solely on learning how to read. During one visit to the classroom, Chante learned that the student had to leave their home with their parents due to their grandparents

being lost to conflict. When Chante heard the student’s story and all they had been through, it changed her approach—from focusing on learning outcomes to simply being present with love and compassion to develop the relationship. She did this by asking how they were, playing word games, interactively reading in fun ways, and focusing on being together, but most of all this student now has a new understanding friend and confidant in a time of transition and healing from a crisis.

Hope. That is why we are in the community and schools. When looking at my favourite book and seeing how Jesus loved and served people, He didn’t create a massive event inviting everyone around to attend, or drive a donkey around the neighbourhood blaring parables thru a sound system attached to its back. Yes, He had something to say, but He also said it through time, showing up, and being present. The focus right now is to take Chante’s artistic expressions and gifts and develop them into an after school program. She has already experimented with student leaders during last March break and is looking toward



this summer’s “Art Drop” program on Thursday’s to prototype it for Winter 2025/2026. This program will provide a new way to mentor students, instill confidence, develop skill and offer hope through creativity, presence, and love; the very things Jesus modeled for us all.

We’re committed to making Chante’s position stable and sustainable for the long term. Over the past eight months, Chante has taken the initiative to organize fundraising dinners, which have successfully covered her salary two to three months at a time. While this has been a great start, ongoing support is needed to continue building on the momentum we’ve seen. The need now is to find 10 people at

\$50.00 per month to help with sustaining her and for us to continue and keep developing what we have started. Is this an opportunity that you can help us with? If you would like to partner with Chante then please donate via our website <https://yfc.ca/lakefield/donate/> or contact lakefield@youthunlimitedkaw.com for more information.

chrisj@youthunlimitedkaw.com



The LYU Improv Group in their new sweaters. Our last improv session of the season just wrapped up at the Barn, lots of laughs and learning was had by all!



Lakefield Youth Unlimited in partnership with the Lakefield Ministerial served 100 burgers and warm coffee to the community during the ice storm power outage in March.

Lakefield Partners 25/26

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Outreach Partners 25/26

BANCROFT

COMMUNITY

Kelsey Watts
Bancroft Managing Director

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

- JOHN 13:35

The theme of this ministry season has been community. As we are all aware, the concept of a healthy, Godly family is disappearing in our society. So many families are broken for a variety of reasons, and that leaves young people feeling hurt and alone. We are so grateful that at The Switch Yard, we have the privilege of creating a space where youth can be a family. As youth attend our

programs, they enter a physical space that is comfortable and warm (or cool, as the case will be over the summer!) They are invited to take off their shoes at the door, just like at a home. They are offered food and drink, and a time to fellowship while we eat together. Our amazing team of volunteers mingle with the youth; inviting them to share how they are doing and providing a caring, listening ear. At our Bible Study program, we also take it a step further and provide opportunities for praying for one another. It’s such a beautiful way for our team to serve the youth, and for the youth to serve each other. Another



highlight of our Bible Study program was the whole day event we hosted in April where we spent lots of time reflecting on John 15, equipping the 14 youth who attended with tools to help them grow in their faith, and enjoying getting to know them even better. Our hope and prayer is that as we model prayer, Bible study and serving others that the youth will learn to know Jesus for themselves and share Him effectively with those around them.

Another example of providing an opportunity for the youth to serve others was our annual Ladies Spa Night in February. A number of girls from both Drop-in and Bible Study offered to provide services for the guests. The event was a big success! A team of 19 volunteers had the opportunity to pamper approximately 53 guests! It was special to see these young ladies step up and help bless others.

In addition to investing in the primarily high school aged youth who participate in Drop-in and Bible Study, we've also been intentional

about investing in the up and coming members of our little Switch Yard community. This winter we hosted an Alpha Youth program for Grade 7 & 8s. Around a dozen kids attended and it was so good for our team to build relationships with these younger ones and start laying the foundations as they prepare to join us at our Bible Study program in a year or two.

We are so excited for what God is doing in our community of youth. We praise God that The Switch Yard is a place where the youth feel safe enough to be themselves, to open up about how they're really doing and to try new things. Just like a family is designed to walk with each other through the highs and lows of life, we are creating a community where we can do the same thing. We are so grateful to have the opportunity to come alongside these precious young people!

kelsey@youthunlimitedkaw.com

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS



SEASON OF NEW BEGINNNINGS

Leanne Young
Communications Director & Jr. High Outreach Worker

Youth Unlimited has been serving the youth in Haliburton County for the past 17 years. The last seven years we haven't had a home base, but thanks to our incredible community, just last fall we were able to re-establish The Bridge Youth Centre at 2 Victoria St. in Haliburton.

Kyle's been consistent in building relationships and connections in the high school over the past three years and has been patiently waiting and hoping for a place to invite the students to. A place where he can support students beyond school work, and be able to offer the hope of Jesus in their personal lives.

In January that hope became a reality when we opened the doors of The Bridge Youth Centre. Youth who Kyle had connected with at the high school were the first to join us for lunch during exam week. The students initiated conversations about God's existence and faith. It's been encouraging to see that they felt this would be a safe place to have these conversations. Now students have the opportunity to meet Kyle outside of the school and see him not just as a support worker in their classroom but as someone who genuinely cares for them.

After March Break the door opened for Leanne to support students in a grade 4 class room at the middle school. Being a consistent presence among the students and teachers continues to be positively received in our community.

Since the new year we have successfully launched three after school programs. Monday grades 4-5, Wednesday Jr youth grades 6-8, and Thursday Sr Youth.

Thanks to our amazing team of dedicated and compassionate volunteers, over 40 students have participated in our after school programs to date. In just a few short months we have already witnessed the impact of having a safe place to develop a positive community is having on these youth.

One mom wrote us a message saying, the Monday after school program has been a game changer for her 9 year old son. She said that her son has struggled at school in expressing himself and making new friends. This program has not only helped him make new friends but has also provided him happiness and a huge smile every time he returns from TAP. He is always so excited to tell his family all about what they did in the program that day. Mom says he looks forward to every Monday afternoon. She is so grateful for the staff and volunteers at the Bridge.

Messages like this are why we are so appreciative to have a place to invite youth to come after school. Many of the students have told us that Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are now their favourite part of the week and they can't wait to come back next week!

We believe that coming alongside youth and providing them equal opportunities to excel in their potential and feeling they belong to a caring and safe community will transform their lives.

Statistics indicate that consistent caring adults in a youth's life help improve their mental health, success in academics and self confidence. Therefore, we are committed to holistically invest in every youth and believe they deserve a positive community space and caring adults in their lives to support them in reaching their full

potential. We are grateful that through the Bridge Youth Centre and our In School Student Support we are able to offer this opportunity to the youth in our community and shine the light of Christ.

Investing in youth is like a drop of sap in a bucket. It takes consistency and community support to see the fruit of the labour. We can't do this alone. It's a lot of work and resources to provide

the support youth need in our small rural community. **But the end product of changed lives and seeing youth reaching their full potential is sweet and worth the effort and sacrifice to investing in the next generation.**

leanne@youthunlimitedkaw.com



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KAWARTHA LAKES

TIME IS PRECIOUS

Martin Chipp-Smith
Kawartha Lakes Satellite Director

As I get older, I've noticed just how quickly time seems to slip through my fingers. It feels like we were just gathering around the Christmas tree with our loved ones—and now, in the blink of an eye, summer is already knocking on the door.

If you were anything like me as a kid (*especially before smartphones and tablets took over*), you'll remember sitting in class, eyes glued to the clock, willing the hands to move faster, desperately waiting for recess, gym class, or my favourite time of day...Home time! Those were the golden moments. Back then, time felt like it crawled. Today, it vanishes in a heartbeat.

These past six months? Gone in a flash. But in that time, even through personal challenges—like surgeries for both myself and a fellow staff member—we've seen God's faithfulness over and over again. Together, our team has worked hard to bring new programs to life in fresh communities, while continuing to serve where we're already planted. Let me share a few highlights.

In January, we welcomed Laura Murtagh to our staff to launch the Come Cook With Us (CCWU) program in partnership with Knox Presbyterian in Bobcaygeon—a dream I've had since Covid began. We started small on March 6 with just a couple of kids, but we're now in our second session with 9-10 enthusiastic young chefs joining us each week, learning cooking skills, hearing the Gospel, and building real connections.

Archery has once again been a big hit, running at full capacity in two locations. Since 2013, this program has helped plant seeds of the Gospel in hundreds of young hearts—and we're committed to continuing that work as long as God enables us.

I began an in-depth study of Galatians with a few eager students who wanted to continue to expand their knowledge of scripture,

while growing closer to God, which happens Thursday nights at Immanuel Baptist Church in Fenelon.

Meanwhile, Andrew Chartren and Jesse Graham are faithfully building relationships with students at Queen Victoria Public School through their Literacy program. Andrew Atkinson-Clements has also taken on a new challenge: coaching both the Junior Girls and Boys basketball teams! He's now working toward becoming a certified coach—something that will add to the credibility of the great work he's already doing. On top of that, he continues to provide academic support at Fenelon High School, deepening ties with both staff and students.

We've got even more exciting things on the horizon. Our summer camping trip is expanding to two trips this year. We're partnering with the Adult Ed Centre in Lindsay to provide hot Thursday breakfasts. We're also exploring new opportunities to grow our cooking program, preparing for Blast Camp with Trentside and the Association of Churches, and gearing up to support Soccer Camp. And let's not forget Martial Arts!

Our Martial Arts program has grown to include a fourth class, launched in Lindsay this February. We welcomed Alan Lewis to the team to help with this rapid growth, and now we're seeing around 56 students across all classes each week. One of Andrew's dreams—to host our annual grading day at the Fenelon Falls Community Centre—will become reality this May 31. Partnering with the Coboconk club, we expect around 100 students on the floor that day. Incredible!

As time seems to slip through our hands, let's hold on to this truth: there are no limits to what God can do. His timing is always perfect, and in just a moment, He can achieve what might take us a hundred lifetimes. He fuels us with passion, fills us with creativity, and opens doors to share the life-changing message of Jesus Christ with this generation. To our amazing supporters—thank you. Your prayers, generosity, and love make it possible for this ministry to keep growing and flourishing. All glory to Him!

martin@youthunlimitedkaw.com

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Lisa Youells, *Administration and Finance*
Martin Chipp-Smith, *Satellite Director*

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