

MOMENTUM

WINTER
2026

UPDATE

Ben Peltz

Interim Executive Director

There's an old saying that the only constant in life is change. As Christians, part of our hope is that that's not actually true. God's loving presence, demonstrated through Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension, is the constant that moors us through the ups and downs of life. Despite this, it's true that our earthly existence is largely characterized by change. We're temporal creatures. Yesterday was different than today, and today will be different than tomorrow. My understanding is that this will be true even in the next life. After all, the biblical vision of eternity is not the stereotypical scenario where we sit on clouds eating Philadelphia cream cheese, but one in which we inhabit a renewed cosmos, free from sin and able to carry out our original mandate to fill the world with beauty as God's image-bearers. While our life itself will be eternal, that sounds to me like we will still be temporal creatures, changing what we are doing over time to fulfill our mandate and enjoy the myriad of blessings that brings!

One of the corollaries of that constant change is what Dr. Henry Cloud calls "Necessary Endings." We all reach moments in life when what was once working is no longer what's best for us, and we need to stop doing it. Sometimes this is because a crisis has badly damaged people and forced change on them. Sometimes it's because dysfunction has slowly crept in and needs to be addressed. Sometimes it's because the good things we're doing could get in the way of even better things. We have reached a point at Kawartha Youth For Christ where this last kind of change is necessary. It's been more than two years since I was first asked to serve as the Interim Executive Director. Those two years have been good, for me and the organization. We worked hard to ensure that our staff feel connected and cared for all across this region. We brought on many new staff and volunteers, which has enabled us to start and enhance a number of programs. We've developed new partnerships with individuals, churches, and community organizations. And, most importantly, we and our ministry participants have grown closer to one another and to Christ. As I wrote about in the summer

newsletter, there have been growing pains along the way, but things have gone well enough that people have frequently asked whether I would consider staying on as the long-term ED. And things have gone well enough that a part of me wishes this were possible!

Sadly, it's not. I have known from the start that I only had so long before my other ministry commitments became demanding enough that it was impossible for me to effectively fulfill my responsibilities as the ED. And, I knew that when this happened, it would be detrimental for KYFC for me to hold onto the position. It became clear early this year that that was beginning to unfold, which led to me informing the Board in February that I needed to wrap up my time with KYFC by the end of 2025. I hoped this would give us ample time to find the next ED and equip them for success. Ten months later, we have interviewed a number of candidates, but none of them have proven to be the right fit. This isn't anyone's fault. The Board and Leadership Team have been searching hard for a leader of leaders that is experienced and confident enough to guide the large, diverse, and gifted team of people we are blessed to have at KYFC. We just haven't found that person as of yet!

Unfortunately, we have now reached one of those necessary endings. I need to direct my time and energy elsewhere. I'm sad to leave this team, although I'm happy to say that things are ending on good terms and look forward to supporting my KYFC friends and co-labourers in a different way moving forward. And I'm even happier to say that the team is well prepared to navigate this transition together. The Board and Leadership Team have come up with a shared approach to managing the ED's responsibilities as they continue to search for the right long-term person. It's a solid plan, and some have even expressed excitement about the way that it will deepen their relationship to work together on this. Alongside this, God continues to put people in our path who may eventually prove to be the right person for this job. Please keep everyone in your prayers as we navigate this change. After all, change isn't the only constant in this life—God's loving presence is something we can count on, especially in seasons like this!

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PETERBOROUGH

UPDATES

Justin Dracup

Elementary Coordinator

I'm excited to share with you what God is doing through our Peterborough and Omemee elementary programs. Since September we have seen so much growth between these two programs. At the beginning of September we started "Surge Youth" after months of prayer and prep time. In partnership with the Omemee Baptist Church, every Monday we open the church's basement to elementary aged youth for snacks, games and to hear about Jesus. This has been a great opportunity for



the youth in Omemee to gather and have fun in a new environment and meet new friends. The title "Surge Youth" comes from the word resurgence, and our desire to see the love of Jesus return in a fresh way to the youth of Omemee. We continue to meet new teens, build relationships and share the love of Jesus with them and their families.

As for the Hub Youth Centre, we have seen immense growth in the number of kids coming weekly. Over the past few months we have broken our youth attendance record 4 times. We have gone from having 12 youth in attendance, to having 22 on average, with the possibility of all 27 registered youth showing up. Our focus this last year has been on growth and the relationships they have with one another, their community, and the city of Peterborough. The youth continue to grow in their personal lives, strengthening and developing relationships with the team, each other, and with God.

Their desire to learn more about God, the Bible and their faith has grown and continues to grow.

It is with sadness that I must announce the retirement of Dave, one of our loyal volunteers. Dave Moon has been a volunteer with the Hub Youth Centre since it started back in 2023. He has been committed to the Hub, the youth and the community of Talwood for the last 3 years. Dave has helped me and the rest of our team grow and learn how to best serve the youth in our community. Dave's knowledge, experience, and love of volunteering has been invaluable to our ministry, and he will be greatly missed. I would like to thank Dave for the love he poured into us all over these last 3 years.

We wish him all the best.

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YFC PETERBOROUGH

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EMBRACING A NEW SEASON AT THE SWITCH YARD

Ben & Kelsey Watts

Satellite Director & Former Bancroft Managing Director

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

- ISAIAH 43:19

much prayer and careful consideration, that I felt God confirming a different path for me. I am incredibly grateful to Youth for Christ for the opportunity this amazing organization gave me to grow in my faith and serve in His kingdom. The Switch Yard and the youth of Bancroft will always have a special place in my heart. Thank you for your support during my time here.

This is a time of significant change and new beginnings at The Switch Yard, and we're excited to share these updates with our community. We are both focused on following God's leading, trusting Him to guide the ministry through this season of transition.

A Note from Kelsey: Stepping Down as Managing Director

I decided to step down as Managing Director as of early November. My sabbatical over the summer and early fall was a crucial time for me to rest, reflect, and seek guidance from God. It was with this new clarity, and after



A Note from Ben: Stepping Up to Satellite Director

As Kelsey heard God leading her in a new direction, I felt Him confirming His desire for me to step into the Satellite Director role. I've been privileged to volunteer at The Switch Yard for years—alongside Kelsey and even before her time. This means I have a good understanding of how things work and have already established good relationships with our volunteers and youth.

Volunteer Dedication and Program Shifts

We are so incredibly thankful for the amazing volunteers God has raised up. Their commitment

has been key to maintaining program stability throughout Kelsey's sabbatical and now during this leadership transition. These leaders share our mission—to see every young person living fully in Christ—and they have zealously applied themselves to this task.

We've also seen a normal, yet notable, change in the youth demographic. Several older youth have moved on (*some have graduated!*), and some younger ones have started attending. The slightly lower attendance has actually made it easier for our volunteers to engage in more meaningful one-on-one time with the youth who come, and we are already seeing the value in that focused relational ministry. Please join us in praying that God will continue to draw the next generation of youth to The Switch Yard so they can encounter Him.

Facility Improvement

Finally, we're thrilled that the building itself has also experienced another positive change! Some of our volunteers renovated the kitchen in September. This was a project we planned together for a while, and we're so grateful for all the hard work they put into the planning, fundraising, and physical labor of this much-needed renovation.

We are both looking forward to the future God has planned for The Switch Yard. If you are wondering how you can help support Ben as he prepares to take on this new Director role, or if you want to hear more about how God is leading him into this new calling, please reach out directly at ben@kawyu.ca.



KAWARTHA LAKES



GOD'S INCREDIBLE TIMING

Andrew Atkinson-Clements

Outreach Worker

This is my story of how God used many things to bring my friend, and now believer in Christ, to being a believer and working on following the path that Jesus has laid before him.

I met Camden while working at the City of Kawartha Lakes. During the times when our paths crossed, discussions would come up, and it turns out we both had trained in the martial arts. It was at this time I would invite Camden to come check out my martial arts club (*I found out later he was not really that interested*). This happened for a couple of years and then I left the City of Kawartha Lakes, to work with YFC part time. At this time, our paths crossed again, and again I said he should come check it out. I believe this time was set

up by God, as Camden was ready and accepted the invitation to come check it out.

Camden came out to our registration night and joined the martial arts program. I must admit that I did feel when he found out that we have memory verses, Biblical devotions and prayer, that he would not come, but I am glad I was wrong. Over the next year our conversations grew. It seemed that Camden would be the last one to leave after every martial arts class, and he would have multiple questions for Martin and I. We would stay late and chat, while doing our best to encourage and help him with his questions. Camden, in my opinion, was a very nice guy, but there was a deep darkness about him; to the point that one night he came to me and said he was in a very dark place and was scared of what he might be capable of doing. I feel Camden had a lot of fear in him.

Martin and I continued to chat after class and at other times when we met up. During this time, I invited Camden to church and he started coming to the church that my wife Ruth-Anne and I attend. I personally was very encouraged by this action.

Let's move ahead a couple of months just after Easter. It was during martial arts class that Martin shared during the devotion time a video of Barabbas, and how we all in some ways are Barabbas. Martin at that time prayed and guided a sinner's prayer. Camden, as well as others that night, raised their hand and accepted Jesus. My spiritual walk changed that night, as for the first time I saw a physical transformation in a person. The darkness under his eyes, the physical heaviness on his shoulders, the expression of Camden's face changed instantly! There was a light, "burden releasing" look on all aspects of Camden, and this was evident to anyone who paid attention.

Since that time, I have watched Camden learn more, pursue more questions, and continue to grow in Jesus. He has helped his wife Natasha understand and accept Jesus, and they have become

active in our local church (*Kids ministry, coffee time on Sunday, etc.*). He is now an integral part of the martial arts ministry. This is not just by his varied skills in the martial arts, but he now leads some of the martial arts classes, including devotions to the other students.

To bring us to current times, this summer Camden and Natasha were baptized and I selfishly want to say I was part of a baptism for the first time! I think I was as nervous and excited as they were! Camden and Natasha continue to attend our church, and are becoming active members of that church family. Camden and I meet regularly and this has been something that is newer to us, but something we both value.

To conclude, I would say that this is the Great Commission in action. Martial arts is a program and a tool that God is using to change lives for Him. I am truly blessed to not only run the program, but be present when lives change. This is the true miracle of what God is doing in all of our programs.

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HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

MOMENTUM

Leanne Young

Community Director

This newsletter is called Momentum, and that is truly the kind of year it has been for the Haliburton Highlands satellite.

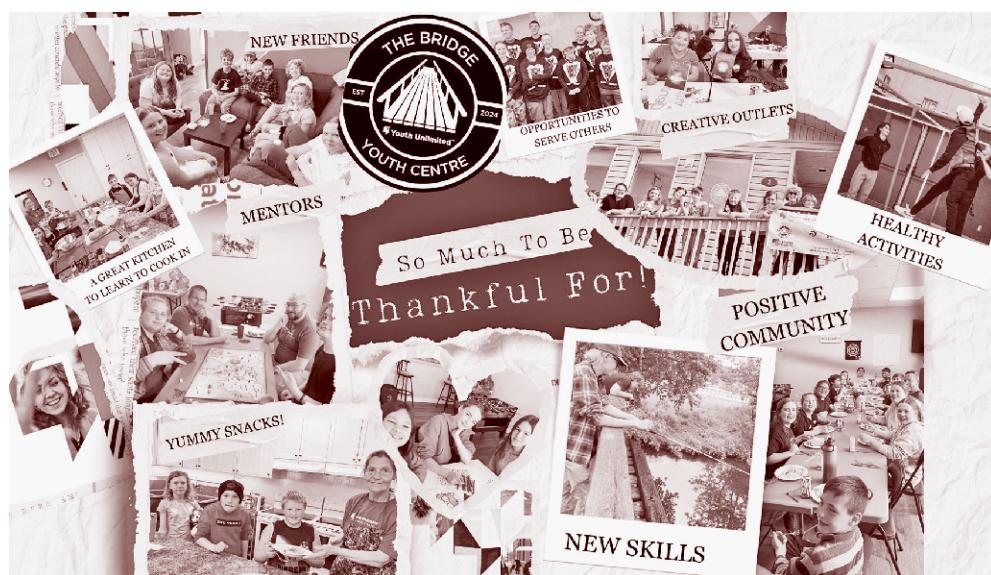
Haliburton had been without a building for 7 years until last fall when God opened the door to start leasing 2 Victoria St. Now 1 year since this new chapter of Haliburton Youth Unlimited started, it has been incredible to look back and thank God for all the ways He has been going before us and opening up new opportunities.

We kept the name the Bridge Youth Centre because it is our desire to bridge youth to hope, belonging, purpose and community. We have seen God use our volunteers and staff in incredible ways this

year in doing just that. Whether it is by providing students one on one tutors, a safe place to find belonging and explore their faith, the opportunity to attend camp for the first time, learn new skills like cooking, art and fishing or facilitating the space for real authentic friendships to be formed. **Since January our staff and 25 volunteers have supported and encouraged over 150 local youth through 4 programs and partnerships at the local schools and Lakeside Church!** We, the co-directors, Kyle and Leanne Young, are so thankful for the way the Lord has been moving in our midst.

If you would like to receive our monthly updates please email haliburton@kawy.ca or follow us on social media.

leanne@youthunlimitedkaw.com



STONE ON THE SILL

Chris Jones

Lakefield Satellite Director

I have a homeless friend, who besides having the everyday problem of needing housing, has been having a rough time fighting cancer, fighting the elements, and keeping his mental health struggles at bay. It is, however, always an entertaining conversation with him.

As he left my office a few weeks ago after talking then praying for God's provision and peace for the day that lay ahead, he pulled out of his pant pocket this well worn round stone and placed it on the window sill next to my desk and said "Please pray for me when you look at the stone amongst the busyness of your day."

That got me thinking, God must have a really, really large window sill. Wouldn't he?

Prayer is the act of communicating with God. We know that prayer was a big part of Jesus' life while He was on earth, as seen in Luke 6:12. We also know that Jesus is our "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). An advocate is one who pleads a case for another. Advocates stand in the place of those who cannot speak for themselves. Jesus, as our Advocate, stands in our place before the Father and pleads on our behalf.

Despite what we may face in this life, we can live with the confident assurance that He is always praying for us. What kind of advocate am I with Jesus and to my friend? I wish that I was as intentional as Jesus is with praying for others. I know that my friend intended on the stone to benefit him, but it has also been a good reminder for me to look back at all of the answered prayers in my life. These answered prayers have sustained and carried me through the ups and downs of life and continue to give me purpose and hope everyday.

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Our annual **Fundraising Dinner** raised **\$29,000** thanks to the amazing support of our community. Thank you to everyone who gave, attended, and continues to stand with LYU and local youth.



Our new **Monday night Carpentry Program** is off to a great start! The goal is to help youth learn practical woodworking skills while having faith conversations, and building teamwork, confidence, and creativity along the way.



Volunteer and Board Member Evan Grieger sharing the 'God Talk' at our **Gym Night** program. We are very thankful for the 94 youth who have joined us so far!

Lakefield Partners 25/26

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