

MOMENTUM

SUMMER
2026

ED INTRODUCTIONS

Chris Weir

Incoming Executive Director

The first words that come to mind as I write this first entry into Momentum is gratitude and trust.

My gratitude starts first and always with God who made it clear to me through a variety of means that this was the direction He was leading me into. As the new Executive Director I have tremendous gratitude for the trust that the Kawartha Board has given me as I start this process and for my wife, Melissa, who never waivers in her support and encouragement of me as I take on these incredible new challenges.

For the past number of years, I have wondered if God was leading me into a new ministry role. Becoming the Executive Director at Kawartha YFC became an undeniable fit that God was clearly shining a light on for me. My involvement in YFC started in 2018 in Haliburton where I was the Youth Pastor at a local church. I began partnering with Haliburton's YFC Satellite doing youth ministry together, including a combined lunchtime drop in within the local High School. This involvement expanded into joining Haliburton's YFC Steering Team in 2020, offering insight and support to the ministry there.

For the past 6 years I have held a Director role at Medeba, a Christian Summer Camp and Leadership Centre. My ministry there centered around the hiring, building, and supporting of a staff team of 65+ young adults serving in camp ministry every summer. This role combined my desire to see young people experience a lasting commitment to Christ while also equipping me in administrative, human resources, and interpersonal skills that are crucial in this new ministry role. I have tremendous gratitude for all of these learning experiences that have led me to where I am today.

The second word that comes to mind is trust, and with that, faith. God has called me to step out of the boat and follow Jesus, even though the future is foggy. My faith and my trust has already grown exceptionally in the few short months that I have started this journey, and I can't wait to see what else God will do in the coming years.

Ultimately, my number one desire is to serve God and love Him. In the process, I hope that God can use me to come alongside,

serve, equip, and build up ministry leaders and teams. The ministry of YFC is an incredible illustration of the way God desires His people to follow Him. Every YFC Satellite is a little different in how it serves its community, but the root and heart of each is to see Every Young Person Living Fully in Christ. What each Satellite does is engage and equip youth where they are so that they can jump into a life with Christ and never look back. My prayer is that I can come alongside each leader and support them while building and equipping the Kawartha YFC team so that we can accomplish our Kingdom mission together, with God at the forefront.



My heart for God is the lifeblood of who I am. I know that without God I am nothing and so He is the guide in every decision of my life. Colossians 1:21-23 has become the verses I base my life on. Let me mix up the order of these three verses by starting with an emphasis at the end of verse 23, "not wavering from the Hope of the Gospel." My hope is in Jesus and as I trust and place my hope in Him, everything else flows from that, including accepting this new ministry role.

In the middle of these three verses, Colossians 1:22 "[God] has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless

and above reproach before him." No matter who we are and what we have done, God gives us the opportunity to be reconciled to Him. What I love and am excited to share as I take on this new role is what the heart of YFC is, to help every young person know that no matter who they are, what they have done, God has a burning desire to be reconciled with us. God desires to present us holy and blameless, we just have to accept this gift. I pray that together, piece by piece, Kawartha YFC can help young people experience this by meeting each person where they are and guiding them into desiring to join the Kingdom of God.

I trust that we can all continue in the faith as the Apostle Paul says in the very next verse, Colossians 1:23 and remain stable and steadfast together, and hold fast to the Hope of the Gospel of Jesus of which we all minister together, for His Glory.

I have tremendous gratitude and an increasing amount of trust in our amazing God who is the only true source of our hope. I can't wait to get started!

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SPRING UPDATE: NEW LIFE, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Katie Gibbs

Director / Peterborough Youth Unlimited

As the snow melts and signs of new life begin to appear all around us, spring reminds us that growth and renewal is coming. At **Peterborough Youth Unlimited**, this season has already been full of energy, connection, and exciting new opportunities for the young people in our community.

Over the past few months, our programs continue to be a safe and welcoming place where youth can belong, build friendships, and explore their potential. From after-school drop-ins to school leadership retreats we've seen students show up, open up, and take meaningful steps forward in their lives. It's been incredible to witness the resilience and courage of the youth we serve.

This spring also brings fresh momentum with the addition of two new spring/summer outreach staff members, James Chandra and Dylan Schubert. Their enthusiasm and desire for youth to know Christ are already making an impact, and we're excited to see how they will help expand our reach in the months ahead. With their support, we're preparing for a summer full of connection, fun, and intentional outreach.

We are excited to announce the upcoming **"Grand Opening"** of our new sports court! This space will provide a place for youth to stay active, build community, and simply have fun in a positive environment. We're planning a Fun Fair celebration on **June 20th** to mark this milestone, and we can't wait to gather together with supporters, families, and youth to celebrate what this represents for our community.

None of this would be possible without the continued support of people like you. Whether you give financially, volunteer your time, or pray for our ministry, you are a vital part of what God is doing through Peterborough Youth Unlimited. Your support helps create spaces where youth are known, valued, and encouraged to grow. As we step into this new season, we remain committed to walking alongside young people, offering hope, and helping them discover their purpose.

Thank you for being part of the story.

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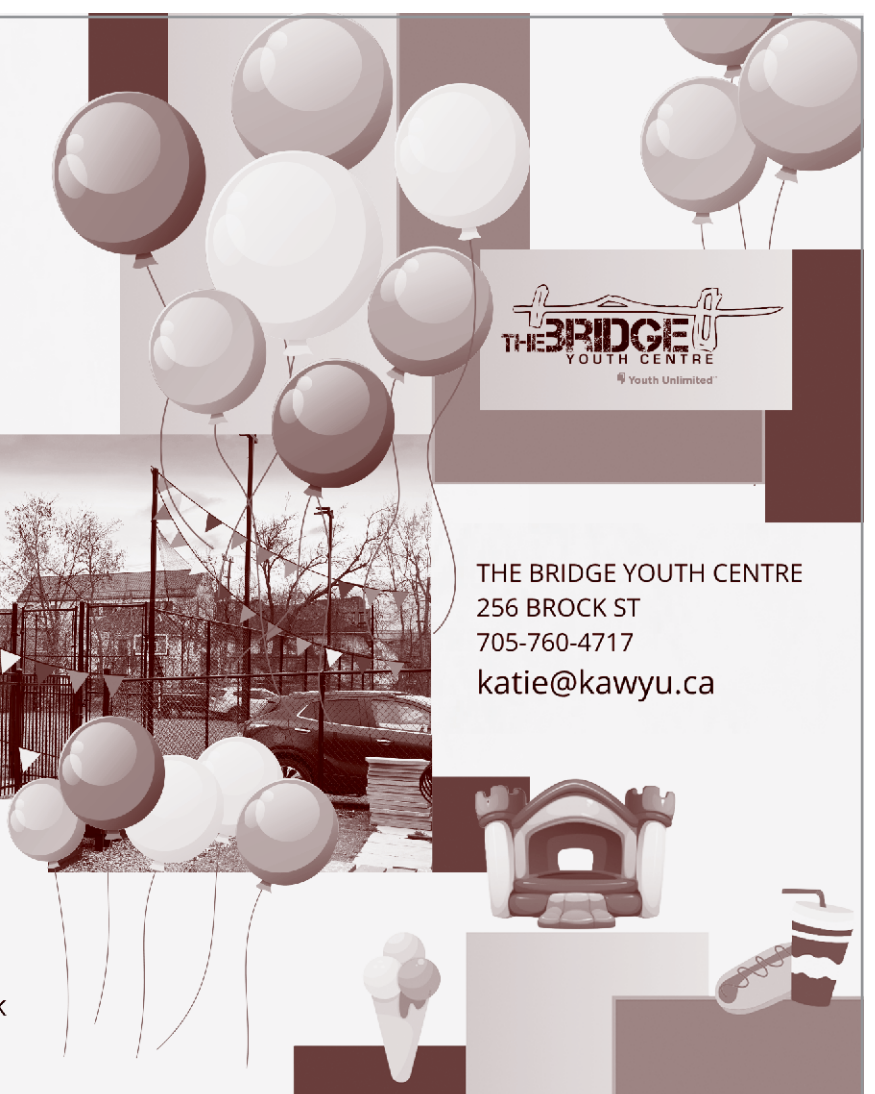
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THE BRIDGE YOUTH CENTRE
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705-760-4717
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LET'S CELEBRATE

Join us for a time of fun community and food. We'll have games, music, and more as we kick off this exciting new space.



MISSIONS

“COUNT THE COST” A PARTNERSHIP WITH KOSOVO YFC



Josh Lott
Staff Trainer

“...those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”

- LUKE 14:33b

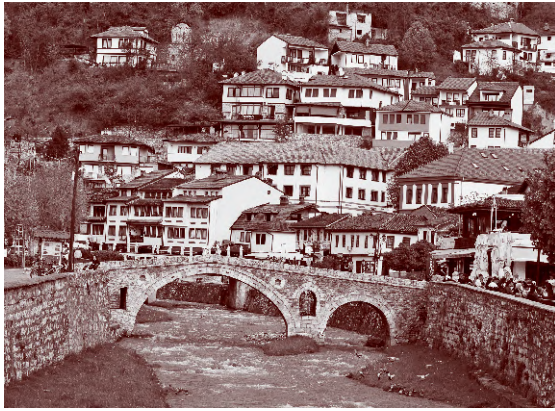
Some trips are meant to teach. Others are meant to open your eyes. In early April, Sherry Salminen (*Operations*), Matt Rachar (*Lakefield*), and I boarded a plane not knowing exactly what to expect — only that it would be different from any mission trip I had been on before.

Usually, my travels come with a clear agenda: lead a training, sit through a series of meetings, or engage in a conference. This time, however, the agenda was something quieter with far less expectations other than we went to listen. To immerse ourselves in the people and culture of Kosovo. To understand the heartbeat of **Alban Krasniqi**, the National Director of **YFC Kosovo**, and his team. And to discern how we might come alongside the mighty work God is already doing in this nation.

What we found exceeded everything we could have imagined and here are some thoughts from along the way.

Behind every conversation with Alban, Arta, Drita, and the rest of the team was one phrase that kept surfacing: counting the cost. It was not used as a slogan or a sloganized spiritual cliché. It was spoken with a weight that only comes from real sacrifice — the kind that is borne in the quiet, daily moments of choosing faithfulness over comfort.

Kosovo is a nation shaped by a history most in the West only glimpse through headlines. War, displacement, the fragmentation of families, and a deep cultural rupture have left scars that do not simply fade. A generation of young people has grown up in the aftermath of trauma, many of them harbouring pain they have never been invited to process. In a country where nearly half of the two million residents are under thirty-five, there is both urgency and opportunity in extraordinary measure.



Alban Krasniqi accepted Jesus at a youth camp when he was sixteen. That encounter set the trajectory of his life. Today, as the National Director of YFC Kosovo, he has built a ministry that operates on very little — very few resources, very small churches, and a team of faithful believers who pour themselves out for a generation that desperately needs to be seen and heard.

In Luke 14, Jesus tells the crowds following him to sit down and count the cost before they commit. He is not discouraging them — He is inviting them into an honest reckoning. Discipleship, He says, cannot be entered casually. It demands everything.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from the context of Nazi Germany, captured this with devastating clarity. *“What has cost God much cannot be cheap for us,”* in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*. *“Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son — ‘we were bought at a price,’ and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.”*

This is what Alban and his team understand in their core. To follow Jesus in Kosovo — where the majority of the population is Muslim and evangelical Christians are a small and often misunderstood minority — is not a passive faith. It is a deliberate one. Workers like Drita, who now leads a Superwoman Club for young girls in Gjakova, did not arrive at faith easily. She once divided her life into two chapters: before the war that tore her world apart, and everything that came after. Her home burned to the ground. She lost her father for five years. When faith was first presented to her, she resisted it with everything she had. And yet, grace found its way in.

Now she drives young girls to her club week after week. She picks them up herself. They come from Muslim families. They come from broken homes. And Drita keeps going because she knows what they need — because she once needed it herself. That is what counting the cost looks like. It is not a dramatic gesture. It is faithful, unglamorous, beautiful obedience to God’s Kingdom work.

Over a year ago, YFC Canada invited Kwartha YFC into partnership with YFC Kosovo — to connect, support, and strengthen another YFC nation halfway around the world. What began as a distant connection has become a genuine relationship rooted in shared purpose.

This partnership is not merely administrative. It is relational — the kind that says: your faithfulness matters to us. We see you, and we stand with you. For Alban’s team, labouring in conditions most of us can barely imagine, that solidarity is not a small thing.

Through this partnership, youth camps, discipleship clubs, and the Superwoman programme — a safe and empowering space for teenage girls in a deeply patriarchal society — are being strengthened. Seeds are being sown, and some are already taking root. Young people in Kosovo are encountering the Gospel. Families are being moved. Hearts considered unreachable are drawing near to God.

We went to Kosovo to understand. We came home changed.

We have an exciting announcement: Alban and his family will be visiting Canada this October, and we would love for you to meet him.

If you have been encouraged or moved by what you have read here, we invite you to connect with us. If you would like to sit down with Alban personally — to hear firsthand about Kosovo YFC, and explore how you might engage or support this work — please reach out. We will gladly arrange a time to connect.

Alban and his team are counting the cost every single day. The question for us — for Kwartha YFC and our partners — is whether we are willing to count ours alongside them.

We believe the answer is yes. And we hope you do too.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Matt Fretz

Associate Director

Hello! I want to introduce myself as a newer member of the Kawartha Chapter. I started working as Associate Director in the Kawartha Lakes Satellite in November 2025. I am blessed with my beautiful wife Karen, two married daughters and their husbands and one granddaughter. I've made my home in Lindsay for the last two years and I've been in the area for the last eleven years. I'm a licensed pastor with Ministers Network Canada and prior to working with Youth Unlimited, I served full time as the Associate Pastor with Bethel EMC in Lindsay for 3 years.

While working full time, I spent many years volunteering with youth while living in Brooklin. My wife and I hosted many youth events that featured local youth bands. Some were a showcase of local talent, and with others, we took the opportunity to share the gospel and challenge youth in their faith and commitment to Christ.

In 2021, God moved miraculously to take me from a career in Print Finishing into the Associate Pastor role in Bethel Church in Lindsay in 2022. Overseeing ministries and leaders was the perfect set up to prepare me for my new role. I'm so grateful to God for that opportunity. I never would have imagined that I would go back to youth ministry but have found that youth are my people and I appreciate the opportunity to encourage, care for and challenge them to a meaningful life in Christ. I enjoy the energy, fun and honesty.

I recently was part of a mission team to Glasgow Scotland. Myself, my brother Dave Fretz, Andrew Atkinson-Clements and Cam McGregor went from March 29 to April 4 to connect with two

groups of people. The first was a bare knuckle boxer and his coach, both muslims. My brother Dave is a photographer and Photoshop artist that has done extensive work worldwide in the fight world including UFC. When he introduced them to me, I told him I believed God was calling us to minister to them face to face. Their lifestyle made it a challenge but they were very open and agreed to the trip and they asked me to bring a Bible. When Andrew heard about the trip, he wanted in! As the leader of our KLYU Martial Arts program, he wanted to bring his student Cam who found Jesus as a

result of the program. We all shared our testimonies and the love of Jesus and we are still talking with them and following up on the seeds we planted.

The second group was our YFC family working in Glasgow. We spoke with Scotland YFC lead Sandra Blair and arranged an afternoon to connect and share. At the end of the meeting Andrew said that he was open to helping start a martial arts program there in Scotland using the material he had developed for use in Kawartha Lakes. Sandra confirmed that a leader for YFC Inverclyde was very interested in starting a martial arts program and offered to connect them. Andrew has been in touch, shared his

material and things are underway for that to happen including a return trip in the fall of this year to visit the program and encourage them!

Great things are happening and there's more to come locally and globally! Please pray!

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A YEAR OF GROWTH

Leanne Young

Community Director

Haliburton Highland's **The Bridge Youth Centre** has been going full speed for the past year and a half. We have over 100 youth in grades 4-12 attending our 3 weekly after school programs and monthly gym nights.

It has been evident that the hearts of the youth in Haliburton County are hungry for community, belonging and purpose. In the past year 10 youth have made decisions to follow Jesus and are growing in their faith. Parents and teachers are reporting they can see a change in the youth who attend our programs and it's making a difference in the classrooms and their homes. Praise God!

It is also exciting to see the youth who were already believers growing in their faith and being disciplined in being a light in their schools. During Easter time the tweens and jr youth heard the Easter Story and for some it was their very first time hearing the Gospel. The next day one of the girls was trying to tell her friends

about the true meaning of Easter but couldn't remember the whole story. She went to a boy in her class who also attends the tween program and asked him to tell her friends the story. This boy who is a Christian was excited to tell us how he got to share with his peers The Good News during recess!

Please pray that these young believers will continue to grow in their faith and God would use them to impact their families and schools with the hope of the Gospel.

Thanks to a grant we were able to hire Timber Wooldridge as a part time junior youth outreach worker for the winter. She has done a fantastic job in encouraging and mentoring the youth. Her grant funding is running out in June and we would like for her to continue as the outreach worker for the upcoming school year.

Please pray the funding will come in for her to continue. The harvest is indeed growing and more workers for the harvest are needed.

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BANCROFT

APOLOGETICS, A RAINSTORM AND COME TO OUR BBQ

Ben Watts

Satellite Director

God is working in Bancroft!

We are currently going through some great apologetics discussions with our Bible study group. Questions like, is it reasonable to believe in a creator? What about evolution? And did Jesus really rise from the dead? It has been really cool to engage in conversation with the youth about these topics and equip them with answers to build their faith in Jesus and encourage them to share their faith with others.

Our drop-in program, due to generous volunteers, has been able to serve meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This has been a great way to show the love of God to the youth in a practical way. Last

Tuesday I was gathered with youth in the park under the picnic shelter in a rainstorm, frankly wondering why I was there! They had music blasting and were up to some teenage antics. I wish I could say I said something profound but I didn't. I just hung out with the youth in their midst, in a rainstorm praying that God's presence would shine out of me. Please pray for myself and the other volunteers at the Switch Yard that we would be bold in our faith and that the youth would come to know Jesus.

Our community BBQ and fundraiser is coming up soon! It's on June 5th at 5:30. Cost is \$10 a person or \$35 per family. Come out for a great time of celebrating God's work in Bancroft and to financially support another year of Switch Yard ministry.

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“CALEB! I HAVE JESUS QUESTIONS!”

Caleb Posthumus,
Jr. High Outreach Worker

Recently at our Gym Night program, I was playing basketball with some of the youth. One wrong turn and I rolled my right ankle (*which in previous years I had nearly fractured*). I heard a familiar “crack” and hobbled over to the stage in the gym, sat down, and took my shoe off. Thankfully it was just a small sprain.

While I was sitting there in moderate pain one of our grade 11 volunteers (*who has been a participant in our programs since grade 8*) came up to me with a friend. They threw up their arms and yelled “Caleb! I have Jesus questions!” across the gym. They jumped up on the stage with me and started rapidly firing deep questions about God, existence, and purpose. After about a half hour some more friends joined. At one point we had six youth and another volunteer all sitting in a circle asking and answering questions as a group. A question that was asked at our Bible Study group came up, but before I could answer, one of the youth who goes to our Bible Study answered the question. It was such a neat experience to be a part of! In just over an hour we talked about everything under the sun. I referred to the moment as Bible Study 2.0!

As exciting and fun as these conversations were, the youth who asked the initial questions is really searching. At one point they said “*When I went to church I was told that if I sinned God would smite me. So I lived in fear and tried to be a perfect little kid all the time.*” Judging by the tone in which they asked some questions I can sense that there’s been some “church hurt”.

Our Bible Study 2.0 continued during the following Gym Nights.

Moments like these remind me that taking the time to build trust and rapport with the youth is truly paying off. Sometimes it takes years, but once there is trust, they’ll talk to you about almost anything.

I definitely don’t like spraining my ankle - it really threw a wrench into the following weeks — but maybe it happened for a reason.

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Student Leaders attending Today’s Teen Conference in Toronto.



Having fun at Improv!



Weekly Gym Night program at the local Elementary School



Carpentry Class learning to wood carve



Weekly Bible Study study hosted at the LYU Barn

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