

MOMENTUM



SUMMER
2024

NEW LIFE IS SPRINGING UP



Ben Peltz
Interim Executive Director

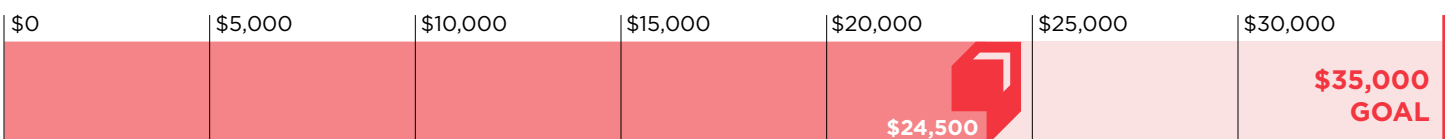
Hello again from Kawartha Youth Unlimited! It's hard to believe that half a year has already passed since our winter newsletter came out. And, at the same time, it's not surprising at all, because a lot has happened since then. In February we welcomed **Sherry Salminen**, our new Administrative and Financial Assistant, to the Kawartha team and **Kevin Elson**, to Peterborough as our Operations Coordinator. In April we welcomed **Rani Ibrahim**, our new New Canadians Outreach Worker, to the Peterborough team. **Alan Lewis**, **Andrew Chartren**, and **Chanté Alleyne-Chagoya** are all developing relationships with ministry partners as they seek to join the teams in Kawartha Lakes and Lakefield, respectively. And we are currently interviewing someone as a permanent Peterborough Satellite Director. We have gone through a month-long prayer and discernment process to better understand the ways in which KYU is healthy and unhealthy. The Board and Leadership Team have come up with an action plan based on what we heard throughout that process. And, we hosted our annual fundraiser dinner at Calvary Church, which was a wonderful opportunity for over 200 staff, volunteers, and ministry supporters to connect with one another and celebrate the ways that God is carrying us through this transition season. There's a lot of work to do yet, but it feels like new life is springing up all around us, which is fitting, given the time of year!

As I shared at the fundraiser dinner, the thing that encourages me the most is that, even as we go through so many structural changes, the staff and volunteers continue to find meaning and purpose in the work they do with KYU. At that event, everyone got to hear from Yvonne and Justin about the drop-ins and after school programs they're running at the Bridge and Hub, from

Caleb about the improv and gym nights he's running in Lakefield, from Rani about his work with New Canadians in Peterborough, from Andrew about the karate program and high school ministry in the City of Kawartha Lakes, and from Kelsey about the meals and discussions she's hosting in Bancroft. Afterwards, I heard over and over again from people that they loved what they heard, but wished there had been time to highlight other ministries as well, such as Dave's work with the Peterborough Petes, the mentoring ministry Kyle is developing in Haliburton, or the youth rallies, prayer meetings, and leadership development that Jenn is leading. And I haven't even touched on the amazing events coming soon, such as Summer Discipleship School, which you should keep an eye out for. There's so much good stuff going on in each of the Satellites that we would have had to double the length of the program to fit it all in! The same thing is true of this newsletter. In it, you'll get a glimpse at what God has been doing in and through us over the past few months, but it's only a glimpse. It's an honour to be able to serve and lead a team that's so passionate and dedicated to the work God has called them to!

If you're moved by the stories you heard at the dinner or read about in this newsletter, please consider how you can support this team. We need people to pray for us regularly, to share words of encouragement, to serve as staff and volunteers, and to support us financially. This is especially true during this kind of transition because of the extra costs that arise and the natural changeover in donors and volunteers that occurs at a time like this. At the dinner we announced that our goal was to raise \$35,000. We've received over \$20,000 so far. We appreciate you prayerfully considering whether you can help meet that goal or support us in some other way. And thank you for all the support you've already given... this ministry wouldn't be possible without you!

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TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Josh Lott

Interim Satellite Director

Navigating the challenges of COVID forced us to abruptly leave the schools, leaving behind relationships with youth and teachers at a standstill. Reengaging became even more difficult as those connections faded over time. However, a turning point emerged a couple of months ago when a local teacher reached out, expressing interest in bringing his social justice class to our youth center. Little did he know, we are a faith-based organization deeply rooted in the gospel.

During the presentation to his class, we not only shared our youth engagement programs and community advocacy but boldly proclaimed the Gospel. We had the privilege to pray for the students and the teacher, sparking inspiration and encouragement. The teacher, moved by what he witnessed, encouraged us to connect with their school chaplain.

Following this recommendation, we connected with the school chaplain, who shared his struggles in engaging students in faith-based practices during school hours. Feeling compelled, he asked for our support in facilitating spiritual retreats. Fast forward a month, and two of our staff led sessions at the first retreat, where forty grade nine students listened to God’s voice and meditated on His Word.

Reflecting on this journey, it’s a testament to God’s goodness and His plans beyond our comprehension. If someone had told us that local high schools would green-light us to facilitate spiritual retreats with their students, it might have seemed ridiculous, but here we are!

As we approach the end of the school year, we have more retreats on the horizon. Please join us in prayer for our team as we guide these students to the feet of Jesus.

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THE ROOF IS RED AND I CAN READ

Caleb Posthumus

Outreach Worker

“And can any of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your span of life?” MATTHEW 6:27

“The roof is red”. I’ve heard my supervisor Chris Jones say this sentence dozens of times. For him it’s a reminder of God’s presence and promise for good things. Before Lakefield Youth Unlimited (LYU) owned The Barn, Chris was working through many challenges within LYU and his personal life. Then the impossible happened. LYU was able to purchase, through an anonymous gift, a large retail store and turned it into affordable offices for non-profits with program space. In a LYU Steering Team prayer meeting that happened over 15 years ago, a vision was given from God regarding our current property. When the retail store went up for sale it was part of the vision, including a red roof! That’s when Chris knew that LYU was going to own the building. So whenever things are rough and whenever things are good, I hear Chris say, “the roof is red” as a reminder of everything Jesus has done and is going to do.

One day after work I sat in my car and thought to myself “what’s my red roof?” Then I realized - I can read! Early into my childhood I knew something wasn’t right. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t remember things the same way my peers did. As years went by I severely struggled to do simple math, write, and read. By age 16 I was hopeless. I had next to no education and I was entering a period of life where it was expected that I’d have the rest of my life planned out. I remember sitting in bed almost every night asking God to make me able to read. I believed in God but didn’t believe that he really cared about me.

Then out of nowhere an old friend approached my mum about a program she was running for kids who struggle with Dyslexia. I had no interest in trying it but then I did and it changed my life. Within 30 minutes I read a whole page and I really read it. I enjoyed it and remembered what I read. After that my life started to turn around in some pretty significant ways.

I did school online, moved across the country, and did a year of college. I’ve read at least 10 books I actually remember reading, got a job that pays more than minimum wage and has a flexible schedule and benefits. And the cherry on top is that I’m engaged to be married in less than two months to the most wonderful woman I know.

A year after I was born, Chris Jones stepped into Lakefield and started LYU. While he was working through major life changes and starting a new ministry, I was learning and growing and failing and trying again. Within the same year that LYU bought the Barn, I learned to read. And while the Barn renovations were happening, I was at Lifeteams (Youth Unlimited’s School of Youth Outreach) learning and loving, growing and thriving.

The first 16 years of my life are proof that God was there, holding my hand the whole time. But also proof that life can really suck. I never believed God had a plan for me however now I look back and it’s all I see - a beautifully designed plan, carved out by the maker of the universe.

So why worry my friends? The roof is red, and I can read! I’m writing right now. I’m spelling the words correctly. So that’s my red roof. What’s yours?

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LYU has a Student Leader Program which is providing four students with practical tools on how to lead and build relationships with youth. In March several of them attended the Today Teens Conference in Toronto where they learned and grew spiritually with hundreds of other youth from over Southern Ontario. This coming summer they will be helping with LYU Summer events.



Patrick Adderley is a TASSS Co-op student who divides his time between school support at Lakefield District Public School and helping LYU with program preparation and administrative tasks. Patrick will be serving our community until the end of the school year.



During the school year Caleb (LYU’s Jr. High Outreach Worker) has led three Improv sessions (improvisational theater). Through this fun activity students are building self-esteem and confidence.

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IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

Kyle Young

Haliburton Satellite Director

Jesus calls us to be the salt of the earth and the light in the world (*Matthew 5:13,14*). It doesn't take much salt to adjust the flavor of a dish. It also does not take much light to brighten a dark room.

As I walk in the High School I sometimes wonder if

I am making a difference in the lives of

the youth that I am interacting

with. It's when I'm not there

and return and I am asked,

"Where have you been?"

Or as I walk the halls

and hear the question,

"Is that Kyle?" that

there is a subtle

acknowledgment

that God is using

me to impact the

students.

It's been just over a

year that I have been

helping in the high school

mentoring youth and helping them

focus on their assignments. I have had the

opportunity to connect with many of the same students and am

getting recognized by many others that I have yet to get to know.

As I become known in the school I am also seeing my connections flowing into the community and youth group that I partner with.

Last spring, the principal let me know a mom had called and asked if I could meet with her son during lunch to help give him some positive mentorship. Her son had been struggling with behavior

issues in school and was getting suspended a lot. I met with him a couple of times over lunch and we talked about life and how we interact with others. Towards the end of the year he asked when the youth group would resume, as he used to attend. I

told him we were meeting Wednesdays after school.

He started attending

the youth group

again and this year

there were noticeable

improvements in his

school attendance and

his attitude at school. He

has been coming to the

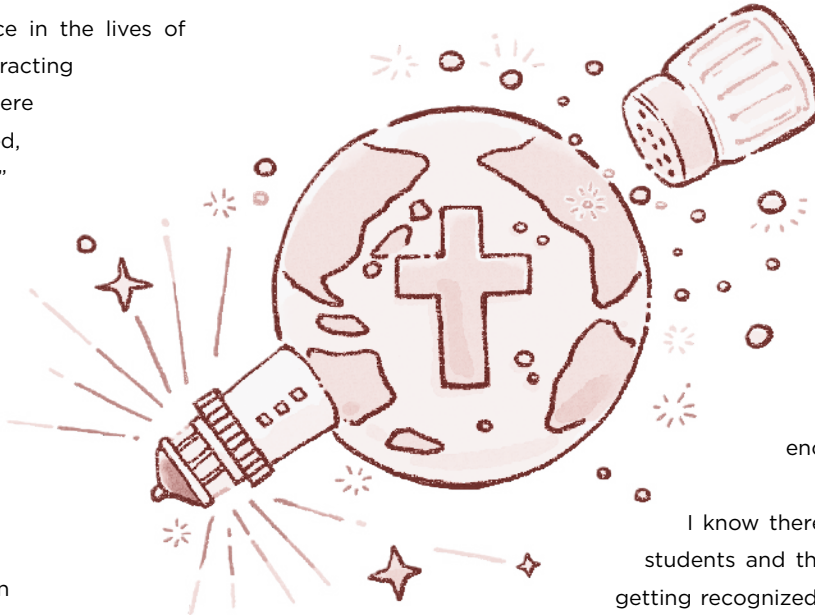
youth group weekly and

has joined us on a couple

retreats. We continue to

talk about life and faith and I

encourage him to know Jesus more.



I know there is value in getting to know the students and them getting to know me as I am getting recognized in the community by them. God is allowing me to be a light in their lives by speaking encouraging words and being a positive adult for them.

I am looking forward to this summer, helping again at various day camps and making connections with youth in the area and will invite them to new programs in the fall. I am looking to begin some youth programming in Minden, allowing me to build connections with Jr. Youth before they enter high school and establish mentoring relationships as they grow.

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KAWARTHA LAKES

OPPORTUNITIES

Martin Chipp-Smith

Kawartha Lakes Satellite Director

Opportunities! In everything that we do, archery, martial arts, in the high school or in the public school, breakfast program, whatever it is, we as a Satellite are looking for opportunities. We are looking for how we can meet the holistic needs of youth wherever it is that we find ourselves. Through the everyday life situations we encounter, we look to connect with youth with a holistic approach.

This may come as a surprise, but it's not everyday that we have the chance to share the Gospel, although it is in our heart to do so. We work to present Christ not just with our words, but with our lifestyle. How do you do this Martin? I am so glad you asked. We do this by how we conduct ourselves, how we treat others, how we communicate, in how we deal with difficult circumstances and even in how we have fun. Here in KLYU we want all people to see how crazy in love Jesus is with them. Regardless of their past, where they are at in life currently, Jesus is FOR individuals that we work with and we have the absolute privilege to live this out with them.

I know that I have stated this before, and I'm sure I will say this one hundred more times moving forward. The Apostle Paul in the book

of 1 Corinthians chapter 3 has just stated to the Corinthian church about how worldly their thinking was, how they were quarreling with one another about who was following who.

Paul follows up by stating '5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. 6 I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.

I have been involved in youth ministry for twenty three years, fifteen of which it took for me to realize that I am a seed planter. I, like most people in ministry, want to see a mighty move of God (which we are seeing and witnessing in tangible ways). We want to see youth saved and come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. These things that we desire however don't happen overnight, it takes time, being consistently involved in those lives we work with, it's about prayer and intercession, it's about allowing the Holy Spirit to be at work in us and us being present in the moment.

Andrew, Lisa, Jesse and I work to cultivate the ground in the places we serve so that we have good soil to plant the seeds of the Gospel.

It's in these intangible areas that we are seeking the heart of God for Him to cause growth and hopefully, potentially draw closer to Him if they so choose.

There are stories that we hold dear to our hearts, that don't involve sharing the Gospel, but they are important because we are living out our faith through action. For example, I approached a local public school just before Christmas to see if there was some way that Jesse and I could serve the student body. We were anticipating something to do with food, but when we asked what the greatest need in the school was, it was literacy. Teaching kindergarten and primary students letter sounds, the correlation of how letters work together as well as reading age level books to enhance their literacy skills. While doing this over the past several months, I met this student who has many different challenges. He speaks, but only a little, he has outbursts, and can be distracting, but God has

allowed me to connect with him in a unique way. This child wants me to sit with him at lunch, he wants me to play lego and building blocks and playdough. He asks me very simply to push him on the swings at recess every week and giggles in his own unique way. I can't tell you the impact that I will have on this young boy, but I do know that he lights up every time I walk in the room, or when I call him by name. When I engage him as I would any other child, it helps him to feel like he is just another kid in the room. I believe that although I can't share Jesus inside the school, this young child has seen Jesus who loves him unconditionally. These are the opportunities, whether tangible or intangible, that we look forward to seeing each and every day while we are seeking to live fully. My prayer is that Jesus will get ahold of the hearts of every student we come in contact with. It's for His Glory, and His alone!!!

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BANCROFT

ON TRACK



Kelsey Watts

Bancroft Managing Director

Since The Switch Yard opened its doors in October 1994, the desire has been to create a space for youth to call their own and where they can hang out with their friends. Thirty years later, our mission has not really changed. We still create a space where youth want to be with their friends. All with the ultimate goal to engage and equip these young people to know and follow Jesus.



To celebrate 30 years of serving youth in Bancroft, the Switch Yard now has a new look! In order to stay with the railway theme, the new icon is inspired by a railroad switch stand, which is a device enabling trains to be guided from one track to another. The signal (the top part of the stand) indicates, to the engineer, which track the train will travel down while in its current position. A signal conveys information and gives us direction. Using railway language as metaphor a train can be directed to travel on the desired track keeping both trains and passengers from harm and heading in the right direction. The signal is an indication or verification of which way the train is travelling. The downward facing signal suggests a direction of God reaching down towards us, helping us in our time of need and the cross indicates the sacrificial love that Christ gives to us. At the Switch Yard our desire is to be a signal for local youth, directing them to the 'track' of a lifelong commitment to Christ as they begin to comprehend that He is reaching down for them out of sacrificial love.

This is not something we do alone. Last year, we put out the call "All aboard!" and so many answered that call. Thank you! We now have a large team of caring volunteers who are giving of their time to be faithfully present to show youth that they are loved, adored and pursued by the Creator of the Universe - and that He wants to have a personal relationship with them! That is our job, that is our passion, that is our purpose. Many community members have also given of their finances to give the building a much needed face lift. It has been so honouring to our youth to have their space be so beautifully maintained. It makes them wonder who funds all these projects and why. This gives us the opportunity to share that many people believe in them and want the ultimate best for them.

All of this is having an impact. Youth have responded to the call, "all aboard, the future is exciting and full of promise, join us as we show you the amazing future God has in store for you." We now offer a weekly Bible Study which is attended by almost 20 youth. The best part is that it was their idea! They asked for a space where they could meet after school to read the Bible together and grow in their relationship with God. It is very encouraging to hear them reading Scripture and discussing it together.

We thank God for all He has done and faithfully continues to do through The Switch Yard.

The Lord says in Psalm 32:8, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." As we seek to follow His guidance, we feel that we are "On Track." We have not arrived yet, but we are heading in the right direction. Youth are being impacted and growing in their faith. They are being reminded of their hope and potential.

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