



YFC

VICTORIA

Youth Unlimited™



Year End 2023

Merry Christmas to all!

Remarkably, it is that time of year again! We have been through another year that has been filled with changes. Change within our staff, change within our family (my kid got married - yikes!), and most importantly, change in the lives of the youth we are journeying with towards Jesus! God's plan for us is to always change and become more like Him in our actions, thoughts and relationships with others. This Gospel of Hope is one that is all about the change Jesus offers us, and it is this message that we bring to youth that both know Him and those that do not know Him yet.

Many days, there is often a group of these youth that hang out on the path by my driveway. They're doing drugs before school, during school and occasionally after school as well. They are wonderful young people actually – last week, they immediately rallied to me when I asked for help moving a couple sheets of drywall! However, neither God nor I want them to continue in their current life choices. He has life for them and I am privileged with the responsibility to let them know that His change is good for them.

We have had a wonderful season of seeing change in our youth. This year has been filled with more young people coming to Christ and more baptisms than we have experienced before. God is moving on the Island and we are so thankful for you that have partnered with us through your prayers and gifts to make these lives possible. Enjoy the stories of change in this letter!

Lindsay Hodges, Executive Director



Missing: Chessa Dykstra, Jayden Worth

GLOBAL OUTREACH - DAVE PEACOCK

In June I had the privilege of spending a week in each of Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi. As I spent the week in Burundi, the word that kept coming to mind was transformation. Every year YFC is giving hundreds of young people hope through their schools and orphanages, transforming their lives forever. Let me share one story. At age 3 Amani's parents divorced, and since neither one wanted to take care of him he ended up bouncing around between relatives. At age 9 he ended up being on the street, begging for anything to sustain him, rummaging through garbage for something to eat, or eating scraps from what was fed to pigs. He would sleep under a bridge, or in a hole made for curing bricks during the day. One day YFC was showing the Jesus film, and he felt led to go. He got tired and went to sleep under a car, which ended up being the car of YFC leader Freddie. Over the next few years, Freddie would help Amani however he could, and they plugged him to a YFC school at age 12, where he started in Primary 1 with 6 year olds. He graduated last year, and has a great love for God that he wants to share with others! His story is just one of many examples of a transformed life because of those who reach out and care for kids such as him, taking them from a place of having nothing, to a place of hope and faith. What a privilege I have to partner with these ministries through practical support that transforms lives now and for eternity!



MOBILE OUTREACH - RICK WISMER



One night we had a group of youth who found a metal pipe. One of them, M., picked up a pipe that was about 2 meters long, walked onto the road, and started swinging the pipe over her head. I was obviously concerned, but when I pointed out the danger and tried to reason, she walked away from me and continued to swing the pipe. When Blue Bus ended I called her Mom to explain what happened and that M. would not be allowed to come back until we had a chance talk about the incident. I emphasized to her that we wanted M. at Blue Bus but she was expected to listen to staff and volunteers just like the other youth. After I had shared what occurred she said,

"Well, I will talk with her." I encouraged her to remain strong as a parent and maintain boundaries with her youth. Three weeks later, they came to Blue Bus to talk with me. M. said that she was sorry about what had happened and that it would not happen again. I told her that I forgave her and I would welcome her back to Blue Bus. When things like this happen, I am reminded of those who faithfully pray for our ministry. Without prayer this conversation could have gone in a completely different direction! While we are visitors to Indigenous communities, parents know we are Christians and have come to trust us, but more than that, they understand that as we demonstrate Christ's love we are on the same side and want the best for their youth. Thank you for praying!

CAMPUS LIFE - CLAUDIO ARANCIBIA & VICTORIA BLENKIN

I believe that in order to have space to speak into a youth's life there has to be consistency. We need to grow our relational equity with young people, which means being present in their lives. This is the story of "John". I met him through one of my school programs when he was in grade six and eventually had the opportunity to invite him out to our outreach youth group. He showed up one day for the free pizza and he never stopped coming! He was (and still is) full of questions about God and what a relationship with Jesus looks like for his life. I have been intentional with my time spent with "John", letting him know that he is seen and heard and loved. This past spring "John" gave his life to Jesus, and this fall I had the honour of baptizing him at my home church! We've been walking life with him for five years and now he's the one inviting friends to youth group so they can hear the message of hope found in Jesus. Please pray for him and others we are walking alongside.



THE COMMUNITY YOUTH - JENN LABIUK

The Community Youth has gone through some significant changes over the last year, and while a whole lot has remained the same, some things have changed significantly. The most noticeable difference has been in the Breakfast Program at Esquimalt High School. Last year we had the opportunity to serve on average about 30 kids every day. This year we started at around 35 teens the first week of school, then bumped up to around 40, then 50, then 60, then 70 and now we serve about 75-80 youth every morning! This is a BIG deal! So many relationships are being built, amazing conversations are taking place and wisdom from the Lord is being shared with the students we serve. The BEST part though is that we get to tangibly show the love and care of Jesus to each youth we encounter in the school, whether it is by remembering a name or a certain detail, or as simple as a smile and saying good morning. I have seen some youth go from being despondent, to it seeming like there has been fresh life breathed into them. I know the Lord is on the move and is looking to breathe fresh life into the youth we serve in Esquimalt and beyond - exciting times ahead and things to come!



OPEN ARMS - JESSICA NELSON



I love my job! I have loved walking alongside a young woman named Sarah, and have witnessed a lot of growth and transformation in her life. God has taken her situation from bad to better, as she was headed down a destructive path and had no one that really cared to stop her. She had a difficult childhood, developed a drug addiction and at age 16 she had a baby. But with a lot of support, coffees, and walks around the block, Sarah is now doing amazing. She is housed and back at school, will graduate this year, and her baby has a full-time spot in a fantastic daycare. Sarah really stepped up as she wants to be the mother to her baby that she never had, understanding she needs to provide love and security. In Sarah's words, "I am going to protect my daughter from as much trauma as possible." I look forward to seeing where Sarah and her little one will be a year from now. Praise Jesus.

YFC NANAIMO

PAUL MACMURCHY, JANIQUE CAMPBELL, RYAN SCHMAND, DAVID MCKNIGHT, CHESSA DYKSTRA, JAYDEN WORTH

I give thanks to God today for His faithfulness. Nanaimo Youth for Christ has faced many challenges but Weirsbe's title "Bumps are What You Climb On" has marked how this world, scarred by evil, still produces gold. It was around three years ago that some of our regulars brought their friend. Highly energetic, foul mouthed and angry, this girl could not focus, was in trouble at school and with the authorities. Shortly after meeting her, she got in trouble for abusing an older man who was unable to protect himself. Some church folk even got wind of this and felt that it was inappropriate for her to be at youth.

I didn't have to make the decision though, because she was put on house arrest for a couple months by the authorities. We thought we lost her, as her mom wasn't letting her come to youth in order to punish her. But a few weeks later I spoke with her mom and she told me our youth group was the only place she was approved to go to. So when she finally returned to youth and then to Adventure Camp, we kept loving her with Jesus' love and now she's a different girl. We baptized her last spring and now she is sharing Jesus love to all her friends! She is helping me lead my youth group and is always there enthusiastically! Amazingly, she's only 16, but commands an audience for Jesus. This miracle girl will evidently change many lives as she grows in her faith. Thank you for praying for and supporting this work!



THANK YOU TO OUR GOLF SPONSORS

We are so thankful for our most successful golf tournament fundraiser ever! We had a number of faithful businesses and people who supported us through hole sponsorship, and have listed them below to honour their generosity and support for Youth for Christ Victoria.

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THANKFULNESS & LOOKING AHEAD



For all those that have supported our staff through prayer, financial support and friendship: THANK YOU! We are so grateful for all that you have sacrificed throughout this year to see the work of YFC Victoria and Nanaimo move forward. I'm confident that the number of stories we hear of God's hand in young people's lives will increase as we move forward in 2024.

Earlier this year, a few of our key staff moved onto other ministry opportunities and it left a significant hole for us in many ways. However, God is faithful and He is slowly moving others back into those spaces and we are expectant that the scope of the ministry of YFC Victoria and Nanaimo will expand once again. If you are not currently a monthly financial partner with YFC, would you prayerfully consider coming on board with us as we move forward? You can visit our website to join up (www.yfcvictoria.com/donate) or give us a call at the office (250-383-3182) to get any questions answered that you might have.

If you'd rather meet in person, I would love to buy you a coffee and share more of our "good stories" with you as you consider partnering with this much needed ministry to the youth of the South Island. Thank you for prayerfully considering this request!



From the Board & Staff of Youth for Christ Victoria, we wish you a wonderful Christmas Season & many blessings for the New Year