

Feeding HOPE to the Multitudes

By Karl Van Cura, Executive Director

Jesus gave them an impossible command—feed them. What? How? All they had was a boy's lunch—five hamburger buns and two sardines. Regardless, Jesus said, Bring what you have to Me. He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the buns (loaves) and gave it to His disciples. They in turn gave it to the crowds, and everyone ate until they were full.

Amazing things happen when we willingly release what we have and let God use it.

This youthful generation of today is hungry. In fact, they're famished. Will we feed them spiritually, emotionally, socially? Jesus can. However, we must bring to Him what we have, and the God of the Universe will multiply and feed them all until they are full.

Young people need to be heard, helped, and loved. We believe Jesus is their only hope in this dark, hurting, and despairing world, so we share our hope through love. Unfortunately, they may not want to lay claim to our Jesus, our Heavenly Father. Reluctance to believe is really a form of rejection. This unbelief is sin. Jesus is worthy to be believed; the problem is within us. Sin has separated us from God.

Generously God has graced us through Jesus, who gave up His rights in Heaven to come to earth, willingly laid down his life to die for us, and was resurrected to our Father in Heaven, overcoming sin and death for each and every one of us.

We will not stop until every young person in Siouxland has an opportunity to know Jesus and make an informed decision to follow Him. Join us by bringing your fish and loaves, and together we can watch how God multiplies them.

WELCOME GRACE

Our new Community Engagement Coordinator

By Hailey Rice, Communications Coordinator

Amongst all the new and exciting things happening at Siouxland YFC, you can expect to see a new face around the office and throughout the community

After a lot of work looking, we are excited to announce Grace Nordquist has joined our staff as the Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC). Grace is from Panora, Iowa and is a 2020 graduate of Morningside College. Grace is also an Assistant Coach for the Morningside University Men and Women's Swim Team and President of Siouxland Growth Organization.

I wasn't really looking for a new job, but after a few people had mentioned the CEC position to me, and seeing the impact the organization had, I felt that God was calling me to apply.

Grace first found out about YFC her Junior year of college in 2019 while researching organizations she could intern at for school. While she accepted an internship elsewhere, it all came full circle when a couple of years later Grace got involved volunteering at YFC Camp in 2021 with friends who are also involved at YFC. Shortly after volunteering, those same friends encouraged her to apply for the CEC position.

And apply she did, and we are thankful that God has called her to YFC. "We feel that Grace is the perfect candidate for our CEC position based on her skill set, experience, and heart for God", adds Karl Van Cura, our Executive Director.



So, what exactly is a CEC and why do we need one at YFC?

The Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC) exists to build a network of God's people. Grace's goal as CEC is to grow Siouxland Youth For Christ's network of church partners, volunteers, and financial partners through different outlets like events, communication strategies, prayer, networking, and more.

While this is a new position to Siouxland YFC, it is not a new concept for other Youth For Christ chapters throughout the country. The CEC position was developed in 2019 through new processes created by YFC USA and there are currently around 8-10 CEC positions throughout the country. This position has led to tremendous ministry growth and success when implemented correctly in other chapters.

Finally, thank you to those who have been praying for Siouxland YFC and that this position would be filled with just the right person. We look forward to all God has in store for Grace and the impact she will have on the Siouxland community as our new CEC.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT HELPS PLYMOUTH COUNTY EXPAND

By Jim Rahn, Plymouth County Area Director

I would consider 2021 a year of great reward in Plymouth County. God honored our hard work in the ministry with outstanding progress in our youth seeing on average 100 young people weekly and a record number of kids surrendering their lives to Christ. Our financial partners, staff, and volunteers stepped up this year to do the work of the ministry and we have so much to be thankful for.

One of our greatest ministry opportunities this new year is serving our kids who have gender and identity struggles. The youth are bombarded from media, social media platforms and influencers, school curriculum and peers to redefine how God made them: male and female. They struggle with wanting to fit in and be accepted, but at what cost?

We get the amazing opportunity to love them right where they are, in the struggle, in the confusion, and point them to their Creator who designed them with a purpose and for good.

In 2022, our goal is to increase our ministry influence in Plymouth County. We're seeking additional volunteers to walk alongside our kids, to do life with them, and share the Gospel. We're increasing our Campus Life staff from part-time to full-time. This will build our

high school campus ministry and give capacity to launch Campus Life in other communities in Plymouth County. We are excited about these new opportunities to reach more kids with the Gospel.

Something new coming this year is a part-time City Life position. This position will take on some of the day to day management operations of our City Life Teen Center ministry, allowing more time for Roxie, our City Life Director, to focus on Chapter and National responsibilities.

As we begin 2022, would you pray for us? Pray for at least 10 more volunteers, staff positions to increase, and for the kids' lives to be impacted as we continue the work of the ministry. Thank you for your continued support and we can't wait to share more updates later this year.



PURSUING EVERY KID, EVERYWHERE

By Jim Cole, Tri-City Area Director

Siouxland YFC has taken steps in the past three years to position ourselves to gain access to every student in Siouxland. This year will set the pace as we engage with the communities in what we call Tri-City, which includes the larger communities of Sioux City, Sergeant Bluff, North Sioux City and South Sioux City.

When it comes to our ministry, our first priority is to relentlessly pursue God. The second priority comes from 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 in which we are called to be reconciled and become a "new creature in Christ." We want to pursue lost youth and encourage them to engage in this reconciliation process. In order to achieve this, our goal in 2022 for the Tri-City Area is to raise the financial resources and volunteers to fully fund and implement ministry in two to three schools and one neighborhood outreach.

The Sioux City Community School District recently invited YFC to apply for a grant partnership to walk alongside struggling students in our local high schools, which we graciously applied for and were accepted. As we continue to work with and serve our school district, we'll learn what this will look like for us. We recognize this could seriously accelerate our pace to enter into other schools in Siouxland. It is our goal that through this partnership, we will establish YFC as the organization that the Sioux City School District goes to for intervention for students inside and outside the classroom.

We are excited for this new opportunity to reach more students in the Sioux City School District and can't wait to share with you more updates as this evolves. It will take one school at a time and one kid at a time for us to reach every kid in Siouxland.

It's our desire to give them an opportunity to make an informed decision to follow Jesus Christ and to be disciplined into the local church. Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our ministry programs to continue to grow.

Did you know?

75%

of Siouxland youth have no connection with a church

SMALL GROUP SETTINGS ALLOW FOR DISCIPLESHIP

By Tom Cook, Sioux County Area Director

When my sons were younger and couldn't feed themselves, it was vital for me to spend time with them feeding and teaching them that valuable skill. At the Teen Center, we see the same need for the students we minister to - but they need spiritual food. They need to be taught how to feed themselves spiritually through the Word of God.

In a large crowd setting during our Thursday night programming, it is difficult to truly get to know someone's hurts, struggles, and accomplishments in their lives. The Teen Center is an excellent tool for meeting new students and hitting the surface topics in their lives. But in order for us to reach deeper spiritual and emotional moments, it's crucial to form small groups to dig into the scriptures.

We need six additional leaders to spend at least two hours each week with their small group

In order for us to embark on this new journey with the students, we need faith-filled leaders walking alongside them on a weekly basis, sharing in their lives, and teaching them about God's Word. To start this new endeavor, we need an additional six leaders to spend at least two hours each week with their small group. We would love to start up separate girls and boys small groups if there is interest from the students.

We already have one Teen Center leader, Cherdian, who is ready to serve and lead a girls small group.

I have been a small group leader in the past for another organization and absolutely loved it! It is so beneficial for the kids to spend quality time with God in smaller groups. It helps them feel more comfortable asking questions, telling their stories, and I'd love to share the word of God within smaller groups in our community.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus shares that part of our role as believers is to make disciples. What better way to do that than studying God's word weekly with our students, and raising up the next generation of disciples.



Scan to learn more about volunteering with YFC

MEET PHYLLIS REHDER DECADES OF LOVING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH YFC

Interview by Grace Nordquist, Community Engagement Coordinator

Since Siouxland YFC started in 1978, there's been a lot evolving over the years. One person who has had a front row seat in witnessing the growth of YFC is Phyllis Rehder. Phyllis is a retired school teacher who currently lives in Hawarden and has been involved in YFC since the 1980s. I sat down with Phyllis to see what YFC was like over the years and why she is passionate about supporting our mission.

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Humboldt, Iowa. I moved to Hawarden to teach at West Sioux High School in 1966.

When did you first get involved in YFC?

1989 while I was still a substitute teacher. I was first known as the "cookie lady."

What did the program look like when you were first involved?

Students met in homes with an ice breaker, games, and then a bible study about twice a month. There were around 20-25 kids, all high school aged.

How have you seen YFC evolve throughout the years?

The kids used to just come to us and usually had a basic knowledge of Jesus, today we're reaching a more diverse audience, some of which don't know Jesus at all. It seems the students have bigger problems than they used to, so having leaders who are reaching out and becoming more involved, working full time to be available even during the school day makes a big difference. So many of the kids need that one-on-one connection and someone to believe in them.

How does it make you feel to see what YFC looks like today?

To see past students now involved years later in the organization, some even in full-time ministry- it's really impactful. At the time you wonder, but you do make a difference in their lives. It's a part of the reason I still am a part of the organization today by giving financial support. I'm thankful that YFC is available.



How has being involved with YFC given life to your story?

I received way more than I felt I put into it. I was able to relate to the bible stories that I was teaching to the kids and realized that adults can gain strength from those stories as well. It's a wonderful opportunity to share God's love, and from that I grew.

What is your hope for YFC's future?

My hope is that there would be more individuals who would be willing to sacrifice their time to get involved with YFC.

What would you say to someone considering getting involved?

Simply, just try it. I think you'll find that it is worth it.

PARTNERS TURN DREAM INTO A REALITY

By Karl Van Cura, Executive Director

For several years, a red-tagged, neglected old house next door to our Sioux City ministry office and teen center has been an eye sore and safety concern for our staff, kids, and neighborhood. Garbage frequently piled up, homeless attempted to move in, and questionable evening activities were a danger.

About 6 months ago, I shared a vision with a YFC partner in an unexpected conversation that went something like this...

What's a wild dream you have for YFC?

Well, we have this house next door that I'd love to do the neighborhood a favor and tear it down to create a safe, recreational outdoor space for our YFC kids. They could just step out the teen center door and play soccer or basketball, and just hangout..

Several months later, I received a phone call late one Friday afternoon. It was the same YFC partner whom I shared the vision with. It went something like this..."My wife and I talked it over, and we would like to present YFC \$100,000 to buy the house next door, tear it down and create an opportunity towards your dream."

After I picked my jaw off the floor and cried, we had a great conversation about the vision for a small recreational park the space could become.

God sweetened the deal by bringing Jeff and Rachel Carlson of RE/MAX Preferred - Carlson Real Estate Group. alongside this dream. They immediately got involved to make an offer on our behalf, which led to the owner's acceptance and a quick closing on the home. The Carlsons personally waived their broker fees and gifted the closing costs back to YFC. I am humbled and grateful for their excellent work and generous hearts.

We purchased the property in November and demolition began right after Christmas. By mid-January, the house was gone and the property had been roughly graded by Triple D Contracting. We are set for a spring final grading and seeding, which will allow us to extend fencing around the property.

It's amazing to see how God sends people to YFC to offer not only their financial resources, but their occupations and talents as a resource to our mission. Don't think for a moment that because you don't have time to volunteer with YFC that you can't contribute. God can use you by multiplying your time, talents, and occupation to bless others and organizations like YFC.

Stay tuned for more details as this vision continues to unfold. My prayer is that God provides the details and resources to make this dream a reality for young people in their neighborhood to have a safe recreational space to enjoy.



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