



YOUTH  
FOR SIOUXLAND  
CHRIST

# THE MESSAGE

SUMMER 2022

## Uncovering God's Hope in Youth

By Karl Van Cura, Executive Director

Since 2019, national news has been reported that 3 in 5 teens are experiencing increased physical, mental, and relational issues, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. Youth are more at risk than ever before.

"The tragedies kids face in this post-pandemic landscape are astronomical," states YFC President Jacob Bland. "But God can overcome this. There is a significant opportunity to reverse the trend by bringing hope in a broken world."

In Matthew 9:36, Jesus looked at the crowds having compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. In Luke 19:10, we read why - for He came to seek and to save the lost. Jesus knew his mission and purpose was to come into our world, seek the marginalized, love them and speak the Father's message of hope. He commissioned us to bring hope to this broken world.

Our focus is coming alongside young people who are experiencing pivotal moments and tragedies happening in their world. Young people who feel hopeless and overwhelmed. Especially right now, our YFC leaders are being equipped to step into this brokenness.

As you continue reading, you'll notice a theme of physical, relational, and social needs of young people being met, and more importantly, eternal impacts spiritually. As we uncover God's hope in youth with the compassion of Jesus, we are grateful for your partnership. Please pray for staff and ministry and for doors to open to reach more youth, with volunteers and financial supporters joining us.

## BACK TO SCHOOL CONVERSATIONS WITH YFC STAFF

By Hailey Rice, Communications Coordinator

Reaching and engaging students on our school campuses is a large part of YFC's ministry. Currently, YFC is serving Sioux City North, East, and West High Schools, Le Mars Community Middle and High Schools, and West Sioux Middle and High Schools. I spoke with Calee Ewing (Sioux City Campus Life), Tony Dunnick (Sioux City East High), Abraham Curiel (Le Mars Campus Life), and Tom Cook (Hawarden Ministry Director) to gain a better understanding of what students are experiencing in local schools.

### Q: What issues are you seeing within schools and how are students responding?

**Tom:** At West Sioux, we deal with students trying to find their own identity, whether that is sexual identity, what social group they belong to, or dealing with the differences in ethnicity. Students are always trying to find the latest fad or thing to help them get included in a group.

**Tony:** Music and social media usage during class has also contributed to students' failing grades and being kicked out of class. Some students are taking to social media for bullying. A number of fights in the cafeteria, hallways, and locker rooms have been filmed and posted. Vandalism, encouraged by social media, has closed down bathrooms or increased staff monitoring.

### Q: How does Campus Life fill the gap or serve students?

**Abraham & Calee:** A lot of time Campus Life is an escape from the troubles of a student's individual lives. Our goal is to give kids from every background a community to connect with, a chance to

feel safe, cared about, and fully loved while ultimately sharing the truth and hope of the Gospel!

**Tom:** We hold monthly Snack Giveaways, handing out hundreds of homemade treats at West Sioux Middle and High School. This allows us to connect with students that we haven't seen in a while, or ever, at the City Life Teen Center and shows that we care.

### Q: What can the community do to help support campus-based YFC programming?

**Abe:** We always need more volunteers. In order for us to build Christ-sharing relationships, we need the hands and feet of people ready to connect with students.

**Tom:** For our Snack Giveaway we would love to see more people in the community providing baked goods for us on a consistent basis. Bakers play an important role in connecting YFC staff with students in the schools. We also desire more volunteers to mentor and disciple kids in small group settings.

**Calee:** We need volunteers specifically from the Sioux City Northside for a Community Support Team. We are looking for people with a heart for the Youth, connections in the community, and/or the ability to fundraise, and are willing to meet monthly.

**Tony:** The Student support staff at East High School will need volunteers once small groups begin this school year.

As you can see, volunteers are highly needed and appreciated to help support our campus ministry. If you'd like to get involved, you can contact Grace at [grace@siouxlandyfc.org](mailto:grace@siouxlandyfc.org).

# WHERE EVERYTHING CHANGES

By Drew Curiel, Tri-City City Life Director

For middle schoolers, it's hard to imagine having fun for five days without your phone, surrounded by people you don't really know, and in a place you've never been. Lots of our middle schoolers had their doubts about camp and they questioned why as leaders we would tell them, "Camp is where everything changes." However, after being there and experiencing it, they got to truly see that when Jesus comes into your life—everything does change!

These kids got to experience things they might have never been able to! Lots of the campers went ziplining for the first

time, met new friends, played in sports tournaments, rock climbed, and for many, got to be a part of a team. Some, for the first time, finally felt like they belonged. One student said, "I never felt so fit in with others...I wasn't the black sheep like I was at home." All of our kids got opportunities every day to share more of their stories and see how others are going through similar situations. Another student said, "I learned a lot about God and also that a lot of people are going through the same thing I am and that I am not alone."

While camp was beautiful and kids were accepting Jesus into their lives, there were

still others struggling to believe that a God they didn't know could know everything about them and still love them. As the days went on, and more questions were being asked, one student who struggled throughout the week responded, "God showed me who He really is at camp, and He showed me that He is, truly, real."

Camp will always be my favorite place because even though we go as a big group, Jesus meets each and every one of us individually. To hear another story of how camp changed one young man's life, and many others, check out the story below.



By Abraham Curiel, Plymouth Co. Campus Life Director

As High School Camp approached, Colossians 3:23 was on my mind, and my goal was to reflect Jesus's love towards these kids. I prayed for strength and patience for the leaders and myself, and when you pray for patience, God will give you opportunities to learn to be patient.

In comes Thomas, an 18 year-old camper. Prior to camp, I knew very little about Thomas or his story. From day one of camp, he was troubled with a lot going on behind the scenes that I didn't know about. He was acting out, and at one point I believed it would actually be best for him to go home early. After a discussion with the camp head leaders, he was given one final chance.

Later that week, we were given the opportunity to go on a banana boat ride on the lake. Since we arrived Thomas had wanted to go on a boat ride. As the boys had fun on the ride, after falling off a couple times, suddenly Thomas was not well. He needed assistance getting to shore and couldn't communicate clearly so I carried him off the dock fearing the worst. A local medical team was called in

and I was able to be by his side, praying and talking to him until they arrived and transported him to the hospital.

By the time I got to the hospital room, his appearance was back to normal after receiving care. I was grateful he was okay, and figured there was no better time to ask if we could have an appointment.

Appointments at camp are intentional times to invite a student to dive deeper into who they are.

As I started to ask questions, I learned that he recently lost his father and the day we left for camp was Father's Day. It was a soft spot for him and he didn't know how to handle his emotions. I had compassion for Thomas and grew to love him right where he was.

As we returned to camp from the hospital, something big happened while we were gone. Our Siouxland students who saw what happened to Thomas, were faced with the reality of death. Knowing that tomorrow isn't promised and seeing Thomas come back a changed man, five young men said yes to Jesus for the first time, and six rededicated their lives to Him. Praise God! What the devil meant for harm, God used for good. I'm thankful for YFC Camp, my new relationship with Thomas, and these new and recommitted relationships with Jesus. While Thomas may still struggle with the pain of losing his earthly father, he now knows the Father who will never leave him.

Thank you for your support of Siouxland YFC. Because of your support, young people's lives were changed at YFC Camp. We had a total of 54 students attend camp this summer, 27 saying yes to Jesus for the first time and 8 recommitting their lives to Him. If you'd like to be involved in the life change that happens at YFC Camp, you can visit our website or email Tom at [tom@siouxlandyfc.org](mailto:tom@siouxlandyfc.org).



# THIS IS HOW I FIGHT MY BATTLES

By Grace Nordquist, Community Engagement Coordinator

Rachelle "Shelli" Rawson serves as the Juvenile Justice Ministry Director at Siouxland YFC. If you've been fortunate enough to meet Shelli, you'll know that she is one of a kind. Despite being a busy mom of seven, Shelli exhibits energy and joy that is out of this world, and she'll let you know it's all for "Team Jesus!" Shelli has a huge heart for all of her "babies," as she calls the 11-19 year olds in her JJM ministry. Outside of being a mom and an employee at YFC, Shelli is a mentor, gives back to the community through volunteering, and has plans to open a faith-based treatment center to help those in the community suffering from addiction. However, Shelli has had to hit pause recently.

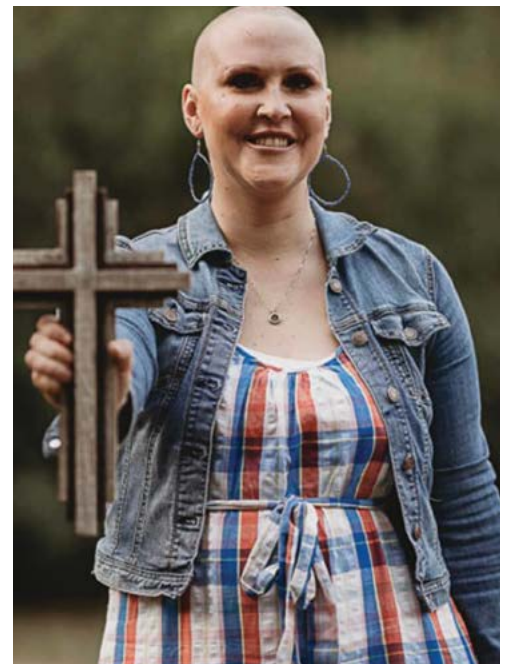
In October of 2021, Shelli was diagnosed with Her2 positive grade 3 breast cancer. This didn't change her attitude or joy for life, but it did change what the next several months of her life would look like. After giving birth to baby Bravelyn, Shelli started treatment on June 27th and will continue throughout the year. However, she is still connecting with students in JJM and finding matches within the advocacy program as time allows.

Although she admits this is a difficult

season, it's just that - a season. She went on to say, "Life is hard for everyone and Jesus is still good. Tomorrow isn't promised for anyone. This is just another piece of life and Jesus is bigger."

A song that Shelli has been jamming to during this season is *This is How I Fight My Battles* (Upper Room). After her hair started falling out from chemo she decided it was time to go. In an emotional photoshoot of the haircut with her family and close friends, Shelli notes that she wasn't holding boxing gloves or a pink ribbon but a cross... "boxing gloves are great, but the power of Christ is so much more powerful." Not only is Jesus in her corner, but many others who are praying and fighting with her. Shelli says that seeing the community rally around her and her family during this time has been beautiful.

This may not have been the season Shelli envisioned for herself or her family, but now she's using it for the glory and kingdom of God. While at the Mayo Clinic for treatment, Shelli has the opportunity to bless those she's come in contact with. She's prayed for others who are undergoing treatment along with doctors,



nurses, and staff.

To support Shelli as she continues her battle, please pray for her and the Rawson family, join the Meal Train, or scan below to contribute to her donation page (not connected to Siouxland YFC) which goes directly to the Rawson family to help with expenses during this time.

If you'd like to send Shelli words of encouragement, you can email her at [rachelle@siouxlandyfc.org](mailto:rachelle@siouxlandyfc.org).



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# KEEPING KIDS WARM IN THE COMING COLDER WEATHER

By Roxie Rahn, Plymouth Co. City Life Director

As students return to school and fall begins, cooler weather is just around the corner. When the weather gets cold, most of us don't think much about not having necessities. We go to our closet overflowing with coats or jackets and baskets full of hats, gloves, and scarves to **choose** from. However, there are young people in our community who do not have that luxury. When cold weather arrives, they put on an extra sweatshirt, if they have one, or simply brave the cold in the warmest gear they can find.

Each Fall, the Le Mars City Life Teen Center gives away coats, hats, gloves, and boots to kids in need. What first began

as a grant from the Le Mars Educational Agency, has now bloomed into a fully donation-funded program. We are so thankful for those who give generously in many ways and for the grant funds to help keep the youth in our community warm during the cold months.

The relief in a young person's eyes and body language when they know they have a coat and gloves tugs on my heart - every time. The shame they used to wear when having to ask for these items is now replaced by security and joy in knowing they have access to them each year through our Closet. Our Clothes Closet is fully stocked thanks to many of you and

the kids are blessed beyond measure because of it.

If you have gently used clothing (jeans, shirts, coats, boots, shorts, shoes, etc) please consider donating them to our Clothes Closet by contacting [roxie@siouxlandyfc.org](mailto:roxie@siouxlandyfc.org). If you want to make a financial donation towards the Coat Project, scan the QR to give and note "clothes closet." Thank you for making a difference in the lives of youth in our community.



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# TEERING OFF FOR TEENS

*By Grace Nordquist, Community Engagement Coordinator*

The Youth For Christ Golf Classic has been an annual charity event for over 20 years and this year we added another successful year to the books! Thank you to those who supported either by golfing with us, with your financial sponsorship, in-kind gifts, inviting others to join, and more. We couldn't have done it without all of you. Our goal this year was to raise \$25,000 after expenses, and we exceeded that by raising \$34,000 after expenses.

This year's Golf Classic was held at Whispering Creek Golf Course on Monday, July 11th. What started off as a downpour prior to the shotgun start, ended up being a beautiful afternoon of golf and fellowship. We had 17 teams join us with Blackhawk Masonry Team 1, Karl Van Cura's team, and Heartland Baptist Church team all winning their flights. In addition to overall team prizes, we had 12 flag prizes valued at \$6,500 thanks to our golf committee members: Dale Erwin, Kent Claus, Mark Stuck, and Dick Salem.

Not only was there golfing and prizes on the course, but we had staff members sharing the ministry of YFC. At four holes staff members represented our ministry models: Campus Life, City Life, Juvenile Justice Ministry, and YFC Camp. The staff members shared a little about the ministry and shared a story of young people who were involved in the ministry. In just a couple of minutes, we were able to share the vision for YFC out on the golf course.

The overall goal of the YFC Golf Classic is to raise camp scholarships for students. YFC Camp can cost upwards of \$500/camper to transport, feed, house, and experience camp. Many of the young people who attend camp are unable to afford the cost and require full scholarship assistance. Thanks to generous support, this year's YFC Golf Classic fully funded camp.

If you would like to become more involved with the YFC Golf Classic next year, reach out to Grace at [grace@siouxlandyfc.org](mailto:grace@siouxlandyfc.org) to join the golf planning committee. You can be used to help make an impact in the lives of young people!



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