

FINDING IDENTITY IN THE MIDST OF **COMMUNITY, SERVING, AND PRAYER**

Youthfront is providing safe environments for students to experience what it means to be in relationship with Christ

YOUTHFRONT NEWS
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"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8

WHY YOUTHFRONT?

Do you remember what it was like to be 8? Or 12? Or 15?

There is a lot running through kids' heads every day... *"Where do I fit in? Who can I trust with my secrets? Is God real? Who are my friends?"*

It starts early. Even at 8 they wonder things like... *"How will I get my homework done? What if they don't like me? Who will I sit next to? How did I get here? How did the world form? Is God real?"*

And then there's high school. It continues, but the questions feel bigger. Sometimes it feels like a vice crushing down... *"What am I supposed to do with my life? Who loves me? Does anyone? Do I look right? Does faith have anything to do with the world's biggest problems? Is this life of faith worth living? Is God real?"*

Today, kids are struggling with these questions and more. Bullying and violence are rampant. They don't know how to help. *"I'm 13 years old, and I see a lot of people being bullied. When I see that, I feel very bad, but I don't stand up for them. Maybe it's because I'm not brave enough to do such a thing...What can I do?"*

Questions like these are not coming from only one or two children. They are being asked all the time by kids all around us. They wonder where they belong, how to belong, and if adults see them,

respect them, or believe that they can make a difference. We know because we ask. We ask kids all summer. We ask them throughout the school year. We are always asking, because if we don't ask, we don't know. And if we don't know, we can't provide programs and places that can make a difference. We can't offer trainings and programs for our churches. We can't offer parents guidance. Youthfront works tirelessly to provide safe environments with people who care. We aren't just a summer camp program. We are investing year-round in today's youth.

It's about: Camp. Missional Journeys. Something to Eat.

It's about: packing meals together, praying together, playing together, questioning, creating space.

It's Youthfront. It's YOU.

And we need you! We need volunteers. We need your resources. We need connections. In the pages that follow, you will see our programs and our needs. They are big, but we know that God provides, and we give thanks to our faithful supporters. This year, we are entering into a major milestone: 75 years in ministry. You are going to see a lot of great things in the next year, we promise. And, as you continue to think about your year-end gifts, we hope and pray that you consider making Youthfront one of your beneficiaries.

LOOKING BACK

MOVING FORWARD

We are just days away from 2018, which will be a very significant year for Youthfront because it is our 75th year of ministry. With this edition of Youthfront News, we reveal our 75th logo. You will be seeing a lot of it, as we will use it all year! We plan on celebrating in a variety of ways and hope that you will come along with us for the joyous ride.

During milestones such as this, it's important we REMEMBER. We remember the beginning...the different ways Kansas City Youth for Christ touched each of us. We remember the young people whose lives were impacted. We remember the adults who are still serving Jesus Christ as a result of the ministry.

We must REMEMBER well. I say remember well because in remembering, it is important not only to celebrate the past but also to be honest about it. That can even mean forgetting some of the past—the parts of our past that keep us from seeing the future. Memories powerfully shape our identity. Theologian Miroslav Volf believes there are some things we must properly forget. He talks about forgetting how we let past memories shape our identity when they don't serve to make us more like Jesus.

Anytime we approach a major milestone, reflection is natural and important. We have done a lot of reflection on what has brought us joy and what has caused us pain over the years. When you pour your heart and soul into anything, pain and joy are intertwined. The mistakes feel heavy. The relationships, weighty. But the joy, the joy overflows in your heart in a way that provides a glimpse of what it means to be fully alive in Christ. The work is hard, but the outcome is joyous.

There are some things Youthfront (Kansas City Youth for Christ) did in the past that we'd like to forget. But overall, we are so proud of our heritage. Some of the things we did in the past fit the culture of the day

but seem irrelevant today. That's okay. Times change, and what seems silly now doesn't change the fact that those who served in this ministry, including many of our staff that have been with us for decades, had a heart for ministering to young people and lifting up Jesus Christ.

Having served as a staff member at Youthfront for 43 of the 75 years, I can say that I'm so grateful for the staff we have today. Our staff are professional, educated, competent and passionate Christians who are committed to Youthfront's mission to bring youth into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. We have been preparing for our 75th anniversary for a couple years by telling stories, remembering the good, the bad and the ugly; by examining ourselves and our programs; by planning for this year and the years to come.

As we enter the 75th Anniversary year, we are so grateful for the generosity of our supporters and the blessings of God which have allowed us to build new facilities at Youthfront Camp West and make huge improvements at Youthfront Camp LaCygne. We are thankful for the many wonderful new programs and initiatives launched over the last several years—programs like Something to Eat, the expansion of our Teen Staff Program, the launch of our Teen Social Entrepreneurship Program, which has led to the opening of the Snack Shack, and much more. And we couldn't be more excited about the Grand Opening of our new ministry headquarters during this year. Our new headquarters is wonderfully designed and will be equipped to enable us to do effective youth ministry in the year 2018 and beyond.

LOOKING BACK has ignited our passion for MOVING FORWARD. Most of our focus over the next year will be the bright future ahead for Youthfront. Youthfront is alive and flourishing. Recently, our staff spent time dreaming and thinking about this future.

Here are some of the dreams and plans we see on Youthfront's horizon.

- Greatly expand our new day camp program for more kids and more locations
- Greatly expand our Teen Staff Program to encompass more students working in leadership around the city
- Youthfront's social entrepreneurship program to be the leader for KC businesses when looking for young talent and interns
- Develop creative ways to reach students on both high school and middle school campuses, including those who are marginalized
- Begin making plans for a third camp because the demand for retreats and summer programs is so high
- Be a key leader in solving the issue of high school students dropping out of their faith journey and church involvement
- To better minister to all age groups and families
- Expand our efforts of working with students in the urban core
- Greater and expanded partnership with churches and youth workers through programs, training and resources

2018, we are ready for you. We are ready to Remember. We are ready to Celebrate. We are ready to express our Gratitude. We are ready to move into God's Future. Author Frederick Buechner, in his book, *A Room Called Remember*, stated, "The time is ripe for looking back over the day, the week, the year, and trying to figure out where we have come from and where we are going to, for sifting through the things we have done and the things we have left undone for a clue to who we are and who, for better or worse, we are becoming."

Together, we can continue to make a huge difference. If you are reading this right now, you have contributed to the unfolding story of Youthfront. This 75-year-old journey is leading to new realms of hope and possibilities, so let's continue to move forward into God's future. Glory be to God!



Mike King

75 years. That's a long time. We are proud to say we have over seven decades of legacy here in Kansas City. This next year, we are going to celebrate big, but we are also aiming big! You will see this logo hanging around a lot this upcoming year. The idea behind this concept is to imagine Youthfront 75 years from now. We have a lot of history, but more importantly, we want you to imagine a future with Youthfront. We plan on being around another 75 years...Imagine!



TEEN STAFF

Teen Staff is one of the programs Youthfront offers both during the summer and throughout the school year. If you have a high schooler, or even middle schooler, who attends one of the camp programs at Youthfront, chances are you've heard of Teen Staff!

Teen Staff is a formational experience where students can be in community with one another, serving each other and those around them. Teen Staff helps give meaning and purpose to a confusing time in a teenager's life. Youthfront sees teens as leaders and wants to provide opportunities for them to lead.

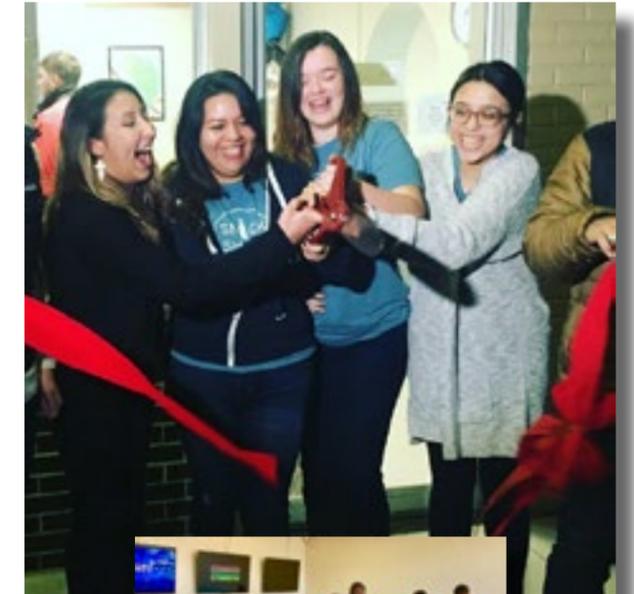
"I've seen myself go from a middle schooler who didn't know a good way to let God into her life, to now seeing the Lord in new ways each day, while continuing to grow in my faith and know what it means to give up your wants and needs to serve others."
Maya, Teen Staff



SNACK SHACK KC

Youthfront's Missional Journeys and Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program provide opportunities to offer hope and restoration to the neighborhood of Argentine. Recently, four teenagers created a space for other kids to come and hang out after school.

Snack Shack KC is showing love and acceptance to kids while demonstrating that no one is too young to make an impact. This place is changing lives. Open for less than a month, the Snack Shack KC is already seeing amazing transformation. Kids who never had jobs before are working, and they are amazed that they are getting paid. Teens who felt alone now experience community. The city feels united. And it's all because some youth had an idea, and someone believed in them.



CONSIDER

Sponsor a Teen Staff!

The Teen Staff program is a rare opportunity to connect your dollars directly with a student. When you donate to this program, know that you are literally sponsoring a position for the summer. Plus, you get student updates throughout the summer and can pray specifically over your Teen Staff!

- \$75 sponsors one Teen Staff for one week
- \$750 sponsors one Teen Staff for the entire summer.

Give at youthfront.com/donate or use the enclosed envelope.



Get Involved

TIME | We need adult volunteers during the week to supervise the kids and help out behind the counter. Volunteer for two-hour or four-hour shifts. Fill out the form at youthfront.com/snack-shack-kc-adult-volunteer if interested in volunteering.

RESOURCES | Even though the building is up and running, we are still in need of monetary donations to keep things going. If you would like to donate to Snack Shack KC, visit youthfront.com/snack-shack-kc and fill out the form.

GIFTS | We are in need of new or gently used board games, nonviolent Wii or Playstation 3 video games, a sound system, a foosball table, and another gaming console. Email Amber Booth at aboorth@youthfront.com to donate any of these items.

SPONSOR | Sponsor this program so we can hire more teenagers and continue to provide a cool place for Argentine youth to hang out after school with their friends, with cheap snacks, within walking distance, at a place parents and guardians can trust. Email Sara Kline at skline@youthfront.com if interested in sponsorship.

CONSIDER

YOUTHFRONT CAMP

We had a lot of amazing changes and a tremendous summer of growth! In case you haven't heard, here is what you missed last summer:

- Youthfront Day Camp opened!
- Camp LaCygne got brand new Tempur-Pedic mattresses in 9 cabins!
- Kids enjoyed the brand new interactive climbing wall at Camp LaCygne!
- Zip line at both locations!
- And we can't forget the SPLASH PARK at both camp locations!

Plus, our staff worked tirelessly all year to bring your kids the best programming and spiritual development possible. We are already planning our content for Summer 2018 and recruiting hard to fill all our Summer Staff positions!



CONSIDER

We get financial aid requests all summer long! We use every penny. This is one way your dollars can impact a student:

- \$75 donation to our scholarship fund allows us to help those in financial need attend camp
- \$750 sends two kids to camp

Did you know that Youthfront Camp West is in dire need of a new pool? This is a huge project! If you or someone you know can provide a gift in kind or financial resources to a project of this magnitude, we need you!

Give at youthfront.com/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

SOMETHING TO EAT

People often ask us, "Why does Youthfront do Something to Eat?" For us, the answer is simple. Our youth want to serve. Not only that, when they serve, something happens—a transformation from observing to contributing. Something to Eat allows us to educate our youth on systemic problems surrounding hunger while allowing them to physically do something about it. They begin to see, bag by bag, how they can be the change—make an impact.

"I really like Something to Eat because it's impactful. You can't do better without being fed. This program addresses a basic need that a lot of people don't have to worry about. It's also really fun to do. The whole family can come and everyone can do it." Caleb, Student Volunteer from Blue Springs South High School



CONSIDER

Something to Eat is growing rapidly this year! We are seeing a rise in events and we can use your help!

- A \$75 donation provides one box of 288 meals to those in need.
- We need 20 givers at \$750 to allow us to purchase a much-needed new box truck!

Give at youthfront.com/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

GIVING STOCKS

Stocks are at all-time highs! Have you been blessed with significant increases in your portfolio?

Did you know you can donate stock from your brokerage account directly to Youthfront and get an immediate tax write off for 2017 at these elevated values? And, you do not have to pay capital gains tax on that stock's appreciation, AND you will get a tax deduction for the full value of the stock on the day you transfer it!



"Recently, I was considering what I might do with year-end giving to the organizations that my wife and I were close to. Because all of my children had been blessed to have participated as campers and as student workers with Youthfront, the organization was high on my list. In talking to my financial planner about creating cash for my giving, he advised me to give stock instead of cash. It made all the sense in the world. I selected the amount the organization was to receive, and my planner put together groups of stocks that came close to the amount. Working with Youthfront, we were easily able to transfer the stock directly to Youthfront! I received the gift value of the stock on the day of transfer (not when it was sold) and paid no tax on the appreciated value of the stock. It was a big win-win!"

Lou & Kathy, Youthfront Donors

It can't get much better than that—getting a significant 2017 income tax write off and not having to pay capital gains taxation at the same time, all while supporting our ministry to young people, which is positively impacting families in the Kansas City area!

If you want to discuss the advantages of this kind of planning in more detail, just call Sara Kline, Director of Development or Ed Garlich, Creative Giving Advisor, at 913-262-3900.

"I have never felt so loved by a group of people before. It really showed me what a community centered around Christ looks like...We live with each other, walk with Christ with each other, and love each other. We're not friends, we are a family growing through our journey of life together."

Nate Gillilan

Cabin Leader at Youthfront Camp West



"I would definitely say that this is an experience you need to have just to be shown that there's another side of life. You can't always just think it's all about you, because other people are going through a lot harder things."

London Porter

Volunteer at a Missional Journey Experience in Kansas City

#storiesofyouthfront

"We're just constantly refining each other and reading the Bible together and living in community...You're always with people who will benefit your character instead of ruin it."

Elizabeth Stublen

Teen Staff



"I really just like sitting down with my cabin and getting to know them, just talking to them. A lot of them have different opinions about things that I might not agree on, but it's still nice to just get to sit down and talk to them...I don't really care what people say about me; I'm still going to be the same person at the end of the day, and I feel like every single person is unique in their own way. You can be popular just by being you—it doesn't matter how many friends you have. Say you have a hundred-thousand followers on Instagram or something—does that really prove something? You can't even have a conversation with them; it's not the same. It's not real."

Matthew Watson

Camper at Youthfront Camp LaCygne

>>> To read more Stories of Youthfront, check out our blog at www.youthfront.com/blog

Or, follow us on social media:  /youthfront  @youthfront  @youthfront



'TIS THE SEASON **TO BE GENEROUS**

We can't do this ministry without you and we are so grateful for your support. We hope you'll consider Youthfront for your year-end giving.

Look inside for more information!