



# IMPACTING OUR CITY AND BEYOND

building entrepreneurs in argentine | celebrate our 75th  
ffa in the cone zone | what we learned at camp

YOUTHFRONT NEWS  
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"...We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands."

**Psalm 78: 4, 6, 7**



Join us in celebrating these milestones in our 75th year!

**10%**  
 growth in camp attendance



**8%**  
 increase in overnight camp enrollment



**40%**  
 increase in day camp enrollment



**100**  
 people experienced a Missional Journey

**25%**  
 growth in our Teen Staff program



**111**  
 windows installed at the new Youthfront Headquarters



**910,281**  
 meals packed through Something to Eat in FY 2018



Mike King, President/CEO  
 Topher Philgreen, COO  
 Lisen Tammeus Mann, Director of Development and Marketing

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# FLOURISHING AT SEVENTY-FIVE

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”

– Maria Robinson, author

Back in 1943, the year Youthfront (formerly Kansas City Youth for Christ) was founded, Franklin D. Roosevelt became the first U.S. president to travel by airplane while in office. World War II was raging, and food was being rationed. The Glenn Miller Orchestra was turning out hit after hit. Frank Sinatra made his radio debut. The Great Depression was officially over, and what would become the first generation of computers was being developed.

1943

Average cost of a new house: \$3,600  
Average annual income: \$2,000  
Cost of a gallon of gas: 15¢  
Bottle of Coca Cola: 5¢  
Average cost of a new car: \$900

A lot has changed in our world during the 75 years Youthfront has engaged in youth ministry. In 1943, many homes still did not have a rotary telephone. Today, almost every young person we work with has a personal smart phone. And those smart phones have more computing power than mainframe computers did in the 1960s.

Although Youthfront programs and methods have adapted to the changing youth culture over the 75 years, one thing remains the same: our mission to bring youth into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Over the decades, hundreds of thousands of young people have been transformed by Jesus

Christ through the ministry of Youthfront. Today, alumni are all over the world serving the Lord in their communities. After 75 years, our ministry continues to expand, reaching thousands more young people with the Great Good News.

At the age of 75, Youthfront is having one of its best years ever, which is truly rare and extraordinary. Much has been written about Organizational Life Cycles, which track the movement of organizations as they evolve through natural stages of existence.

Stage 1 is the start-up and establishment phase of an organization. New ideas, innovation and entrepreneurial passion are elements that give birth to new organizations. Often this phase is difficult to survive. Youthfront was blessed to have co-founders, Al and Vidy Metsker, who dreamed big about youth ministry and were willing to pay the price to see their dreams become reality.

If an organization survives stage 1, it moves into stage 2 where it focuses on achieving stability and viability through beginning growth.

The third stage of an organization is about growth and expansion. As the organization implements proven programs, methodologies, products and operations, the focus shifts from survival mode to expansion. One danger that often surfaces in this stage is “mission creep.” During the ‘70s and ‘80s, Youth-

front expanded so much we almost didn’t resemble a youth ministry. It took years to correct and return to the original mission of youth ministry.

Stage 4, called the maturity stage, is when the organization has become stable enough to survive most challenging circumstances. However, this stage is prone to settling into a static posture of maintenance. “We’ve never done it that way” or “We’ve always done it this way” can lead to the beginning stage of paralysis and decline. Often this happens when the founders retire. This stage was a very challenging part of Youthfront’s history. This stage requires a lot of change and courageous leadership to prevent stagnation from setting in.

Stage 5 is decline. If an organization keeps doing the things that worked before even when those are no longer effective, the organization falls quickly in decline.



However, some organizations either avoid the stage of decline or dramatically climb out of it by reinventing themselves. The latter is the story of Youthfront. The chart above illustrates the difference of an organization like Youthfront, which takes a different trajectory - one of rebirth.

Josh Linkner, author of *The Road to Reinvention*, says it’s your job to make what you’re doing today obsolete. Linkner cites the Polaroid Corporation, a half-century leader in instant photography that’s now bankrupt. “People told senior leaders, ‘We’ve

got to change. We’ve got to go digital. We’ve got to adapt,’ but they were consistently met with the response, ‘We don’t want to cannibalize our core business,’” says Linkner.

No one reading this article has taken a Polaroid picture in a long, long time. You can either evolve or decline. To experience flourishing growth over the last decade, we have spent a lot of time evaluating our identity, our purpose and our goals. And, thanks be to God, the current reality of Youthfront is one of growth, transformation, expansion and national leadership.

Based on years of research, Richard Brewster of Non-profit Leadership, has written about four key conditions of sustainability in organizations.

1. Sustainability is not just about the dollars. A nonprofit’s programs need to be relevant.
2. Programs have to have real impact.
3. A nonprofit has to be adaptable. You need people with the time and skill to plan ahead, build new relationships and innovate programs.
4. A nonprofit will be adaptable and achieve real impact and relevance if it has strong, strategic leadership.

Youthfront has been blessed with generations of faithful donors and friends. Youthfront has stayed focused on Jesus Christ. And Youthfront has courageous staff and leaders who possess the courage and imagination to revitalize our ministry to young people.

Great times are ahead for Youthfront. Together we can continue to make history as we passionately lean into and flourish in God’s future!



Josh Linkner

# Lessons from

# CAMP

This summer, we asked young people involved in camp to answer some tough questions. *Here is what we learned.*

...It's not just camp. It's not just Something to Eat. It's not just Imagina. It's a community of encouragement."

**MaryJane, Summer Staff**

**"My biggest struggle is my fear and my biggest fear is being alone. Youthfront gives me a community that loves greatly and allows me to be myself."**

**Nate, Summer Staff**

"Being in a loving Christ-centered community provides a reminder that I am loved, even if (when) I do fail. I don't have to be perfect."

**TJ, Teen Staff**

"Peer pressure is a big problem in today's society. More and more kids are pressured into doing drugs and alcohol every day... and it has become a very real problem."

**Robert, Teen Staff**

**"If Youthfront didn't exist, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I wouldn't have learned how to love others and myself. I wouldn't know about the importance of true community..."**

**Makenzie, Teen Staff**

"Sometimes I would wonder if God was really listening to me, but now I know he is for sure."

**Breanna, 2018 Camper**

"The greatest lesson I've learned from Youthfront is that a healthy relationship should involve two people who make each other happy. It consists of one person who uses themselves to make the other person happy, not one person who uses the other to make themselves happy."

**Regan, 2018 Camper**

Don't miss all our videos from this year's camps... Check us out on Facebook and live (or relive) the memories. Support camp scholarships and more at [www.youthfront.org/donate](http://www.youthfront.org/donate).

Want to give your opinion? You can take the survey at:  
**Youth:** [youthfront.com/21-questions/](http://youthfront.com/21-questions/)  
**Alumni:** [youthfront.com/21-questions-for-alumni/](http://youthfront.com/21-questions-for-alumni/)



## 21

## Questions

We asked 21 questions of campers, teen staff and summer staff about the challenges young people are facing today. Their candid responses about peer pressure, loneliness, and fear were stark reminders of the role Youthfront camps and programs can play in their lives.

**1 in 3**  
**said their biggest fear is being left out or alone**

**76%**  
**said the biggest lie they fight against is "being unlovable" or "not good enough"**

**77%**  
**said their favorite thing about Youthfront is the people and the community**

**38%**  
**said the biggest change in their lives because of Youthfront has been stronger faith**



## BUILDING ENTREPRENEURS, STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS

*Young innovators develop new 'boredom buster' program in second year of Imagine Argentine summer experience*

Imagine you're a middle schooler at home alone in the summer. You use your "Boredom Buster" app and before long, you're headed to take part in a dance class, a video game tournament, an art project, or just hang out and play board games with friends.

This summer, young entrepreneurs in Youthfront's Imagine Argentine program proposed a program that would do just that: help young people in the Argentine neighborhood of Kansas City, Kan. during the summer who were looking for a good, positive outlet for their time. The program is a part of Youthfront's mission to help youth discover their gifts and who God calls them to be.

"Imagine Argentine got started just as we began to think about, 'what are different ways that youth in Argentine can get involved in seeing God's kingdom come here in their own neighborhood?'" said Kurt Rietema, director of Youthfront's justice initiatives.

The goal is to get youth passionate about being a change-maker and positive influence. The first year's inaugural group established The Snack Shack KC, run by youth and volunteers, where young people in Argentine can gather.

"They don't have to wait for adults to be able to do it, but they can be the very ones who are the answers to their own problems," said Rietema.

The four-week program allowed the youth participating a chance to talk about community challenges and creatively look for solutions. As the program progressed, the adult leaders and volunteers noticed a significant shift in attitude and drive in the youth participants, who went from being shy and hesitant to confident leaders with newly acquired skills ready to put their ideas to the test.

At the close of the entrepreneurship program, the Boredom Busters gave a group presentation to their families as well as potential investors about their plans to create fun, safe activities for youth around the community including video game tournaments, dance classes and art projects. They raised enough support to purchase some supplies and pilot the program.

"I envision this group of students – the Boredom Busters – really being the programmers of activities for students to do at the Snack Shack," said Amber Booth, director of community programming. Without fun activities in the neighborhood, participants said their peers often spent their days at home playing video games or getting into activities that aren't safe.

Plans for a third Imagine Argentine social entrepreneurship program are already underway for next summer.

"We just need to continue to believe in the youth and the possibilities of things that they can do," said Booth.



Check out the Imagine Argentine highlight video featuring the Boredom Busters and interviews with the youth, program leaders, and even volunteers from Madrid, Spain.

Impressed? Show your support for the Imagine Argentine projects through an online gift.

 [youthfront.com/  
imagineargentine](https://youthfront.com/imagineargentine)

*Imagine Argentine  
2018 Inspiration Verse:*

*"Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings." Isaiah 58:12*

# Serving Kansans in Need

**FFA commemorates 90th anniversary by packaging 90,000 meals through Youthfront's Something to Eat**



When the National FFA (Future Farmers of America) celebrated its 90th anniversary this past spring, members wanted to do something to honor the milestone and make an impact.

During the Kansas state convention in Manhattan, Kan., the FFA partnered with Youthfront's Something to Eat initiative, which packages low-cost, highly nutritious meals for distribution. Over two days during the convention, Kansas FFA members helped package 60,000 meals for communities throughout Kansas. FFA members hosted a second service opportunity on July 2 with Something to Eat and packaged the remaining 30,000 meals.

"We're so appreciative of the Kansas FFA's dedication to helping us confront food insecurity," said Mike King, CEO of Youthfront. "Something to Eat service projects are a highly tangible way for people to make a difference in their own communities.

Being able to harness the power of the Kansas FFA convention volunteers really made an impact. It's an astounding number of people and families who are touched when we can package 90,000 meals."

The FFA-packaged meals were distributed to food pantries throughout Kansas, including Wichita, Salina, Pittsburg, Topeka, Junction City, Manhattan and other FFA-member communities throughout the state. Some meals were also distributed in Kansas City.

Youthfront's Something to Eat program is available to groups large and small that want to help fight hunger in a hands-on way. Since 2009, Something to Eat has packaged more than 4.3 million meals for those facing food insecurity.

**Learn more about the program, donate or volunteer and schedule your Something to Eat "Cone Zone" packing party at [www.somethingtoeat.org](http://www.somethingtoeat.org).**

# YOUTHFRONT Midday Prayer APP

Since the very beginning, prayer has been a central practice in the ministry of Youthfront. In our 75th year, Youthfront is excited to announce the release of our first ever app, "Youthfront Midday Prayer." For 15 years, Youthfront staff, youth and volunteers have been participating in a customized liturgical Midday Prayer at the various Youthfront ministry sites. The new Youthfront Midday Prayer app allows participants to join the larger Youthfront community each day at midday or pray anywhere at anytime. The app includes beautiful prayers that have been prayed for centuries, some for two thousand years, along with daily scripture reflection, silence, prayer for others and meaningful original music written by Youthfront staff. The app is recommended for middle school and up reading levels, and is available right now for free in the Apple App Store. And for you Android users, stay tuned.



# IMAGINE 75TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

## Thank you!

*We're grateful to our Oct. 13 gala sponsors!*

Proceeds from the 75th Anniversary Gala support "Fund Their Future," providing the resources to expand Youthfront's key programs, innovative initiatives and growth for the next generations. Imagine: Your support writes their future stories of faith, hope and promise.

**You can still participate. Lend your support at [youthfront.com/imagine75galafundraiser](http://youthfront.com/imagine75galafundraiser)**

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“This year as we celebrate 75 years of ministry as an organization, I personally got to celebrate my 75th week of being on staff at camp during Session 10... Youthfront has been a significant part of my life because it has continually been a safe place to grow in my faith, watch young people learn about Christ and find their identity in Him. I’m blessed to be a part of this ministry 75 years after its origin, and I’m hopeful about the impact it will continue to have in the future.”

**Mac Maser**

Teen Staff Director at Youthfront Camp West

Read the rest of Mac’s story at [www.youthfront.com/blog](http://www.youthfront.com/blog)

**#storiesofyouthfront**