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# *yd* Youth Dynamics

# REFLECTIONS

Winter 2019

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Dear Ministry Partners of Youth Dynamics,

Because of you, Youth Dynamics served over 5,500 youth in 2018. Our mission dates back to the statement made by Paul Evans when he started Youth Dynamics. "Through faith and grace we know that hearts can change, that's why we started Youth Dynamics in 1970."

At Youth Dynamics, we feel this need passionately. Youth today live in a time unlike any other. Things have changed radically. Violence, drugs, access to pornography, video games, suicide, and social media pressure all make it a tough time to be a teenager from any economic or social class. In reality, every kid is "at-risk" today.

Youth are hard-wired from birth for three essential things: relationships, adventure, and finding purpose. Youth Dynamics offers all three and plays a vital role in our culture. We want to change the narrative and hearts of teens. They aren't problems to be solved; instead, they are beautiful young people made in the image of God for a purpose. They need someone like a Youth Dynamics staff member or volunteer to help guide them through life and help them reach their full God-given potential.

As one student said, "Youth Dynamics has done a lot for me. It has helped me create community, build character, draw closer to Jesus and challenged me in many ways. God has used Youth Dynamics to stir up in me a passion for the outdoors and youth ministry."

We are so very grateful for your partnership that is changing lives and helping teens find relationships, adventure, and purpose.

It is a gift of God's grace to be a part of His work together.



*Group photo of the 2019 Hotdoggin' weekend warriors.*



*Tom Davis*

President  
Youth Dynamics

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes..."*

*Romans 1:16 (NIV)*



## A Path Worth Choosing

The fog was thick and damp, and the trees dripped heavily. It was wet! It was cold! And yet, what unfolded that day was one of the warmest of events that could have taken place. On a snowshoe hike one afternoon at Hotdoggin' (Youth Dynamics Annual Winter Retreat) with a group of teens, one of the adult leaders felt prompted to share her story – a story of “two paths.” The group had just arrived at a juncture on the trail where they needed to choose one of two paths.

She began sharing about a time when she had been in a place of choosing which path to take. Should she choose to follow God or continue to choose the things that separated her from God?

Two of the students who were on the hike were taken aback by the leaders' story as they, too, were at a similar places in their lives. They had just been discussing it the night before in a small group. The two girls were completely blown away that this leader, whom they didn't know and had never interacted with, would share things so close to where God was moving in their own hearts.

One of the girls asked us to pray over that holy moment. During that prayer, on the side of that cold, wet, snowy mountain, one of the girls prayed to accept Jesus and choose the God path! Right then and there she chose the path to God!



Submitted by Shane Land

Staffing and River Manager  
YD Adventures at Stonewater Ranch, WA



*Taking students out of their comfort zone and using God's creation as a tool to speak into their lives. It's powerful. It's amazing. It's awesome!*

### Prayer Request:

Please pray for the students who attended this winter retreat, heard the gospel, and are choosing which path to take.

## Hotdoggin' - Youth Dynamics Annual Winter Retreat

Every year over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, 75-100 high school students from all over Washington pack up for a weekend retreat and head to Stonewater Ranch near Leavenworth, WA. The weekend is uniquely designed so that students are exposed to Christian adult leaders who use the activities, small group time, and main programming to build relationships, love on students and share the good news of Jesus.

## Owning Your Own Faith

Lexi started attending Youth Dynamics earlier than most of her peers. Her older sister was attending our weekly drop-ins and some trips. Though Lexi was still in fifth grade, her mom would tell her older sister to get Lexi out of the house and insist that she take Lexi along. After coming to Youth Dynamics for a while, Lexi grew to trust the leadership and decided to continue participating. She began to develop friendships of her own.

As Lexi grew older, she continued to attend youth group meetings and participate on adventure trips. She also grew spiritually – though admits that is still a “work in progress.” Initially, Lexi answered faith questions by relaying what her parents did or believed. However, as she grows in her faith, I can see that she is beginning to answer what she believes is true for herself.

A turning point in her faith journey occurred during a backpacking trip. She felt an emotional connection to God and the group. “Everything felt perfect and right. It was awesome,” said Lexi. That’s when everything changed from being her parent’s religion to her own.

In high school, Lexi was encouraged to consider being a student leader. Lexi really wanted to help the other kids and had ideas she wanted to share with them. She felt like she wasn’t doing enough and wanted to do something more. She became a student leader and enjoyed Youth Dynamics even more. She was helping to plan some of the events, and she was enjoying the personal Bible studies that were part of being a student leader.

Lexi is continuing to grow in her faith. Some days it is more of a struggle than others. As a senior in high school, she has all of the pressures and challenges of being 18. “Being a student leader is a commitment, but you can make it fun,” she says. “It is worth it!”



Submitted by Tim Nieuwsma  
YD Communities Area Director  
Nooksack Valley, WA



*Student leaders are trained up and sent into the mission field.*

### Prayer Request:

Please pray for Lexi and other student leaders as they grow and mature in their faith.

## Student Leadership Program

The objective of Youth Dynamics’ Student Leadership Program is to reach more youth with the love and good news of Jesus Christ. We do this by equipping Christian students to share their faith and put their faith into action. Leadership training is provided, including regular Bible studies, on-going mentoring and discipleship, and an optional 12-day Leadership Pursuits opportunity to develop more leadership skills.

## Engaging in Youth Ministry

When working with students, there are many ways to be present in their lives, to walk with them through trials and celebrations, and to share the love of Christ with them. Youth Dynamics has a beautiful way of developing ministries that fit well within the communities they serve. In Nooksack, for example, students learn how to unicycle; in Anacortes, students can skateboard; and in Concrete, students gather together for games and a message. Each community is unique and different, and that is the main reason Youth Dynamics is such a beautiful and vibrant ministry.

Another ministry tool that many of our communities offer are weekly drop-in centers. Drop-in centers are just that, times for students to drop-in, hang out, play games, do homework and just be. These times allow staff and volunteers to develop relationships with students with no expectations or requirements except to be there. Students and leaders play pool, eat food, and chat about life. These times help to build lifelong, trusting relationships with students who wouldn't otherwise go to a church or Bible study.

### Drop-ins have become a way of life for ministry in the Stilly Valley.

The Mud Hut (Arlington) has been a safe place for students to go since the early '90s. The Spot (Stanwood) has been reaching students since the 80's first with Youth For Christ and recently through Youth Dynamics. In January, The Den (Oso, WA) opened, reaching rural students in the Stilly Valley. These drop-in centers have become home for many students, and the Youth Dynamics staff and volunteers have become like family.

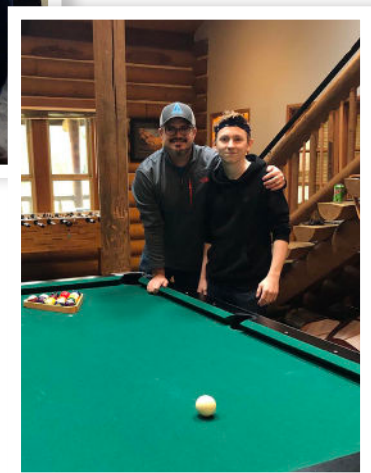
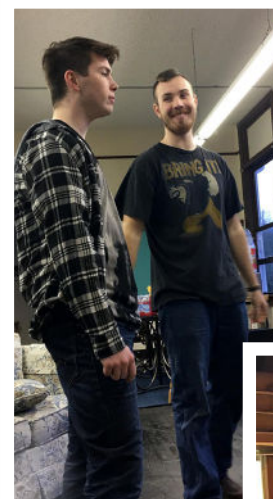
Drop-in is more than just a hangout. Drop-in means safety and security for many students. Drop-in is something students can rely on – when so much of life is uncertain. Drop-in means being in a relationship with staff and volunteers who are always available, and can be depended upon.

Through drop-in centers, we are living life with students and their families. Offering safety to students that don't have it and providing help for students that need it. We are offering Christ through conversation and being Jesus with skin on.



Submitted by Jessica Ronhaar

YD Communities Area Director, Stilly Valley, WA  
and Western Washington Regional Director



*Drop-in centers provide a safe place for students to gather and build relationships with adults who love Jesus.*

## Prayer Request:

Please pray for drop-in centers and the tool it provides in building relationships with students all across the Northwest.



## How do we reach youth?

Connection has always been an important part of life. God is a connector and created us to connect to Him, to one another, and others to Him. It is that focus and valuing of connectivity that is central in the ministry of Youth Dynamics. We desire to connect students to the God who loves them more deeply than they have ever experienced to date.

How does Youth Dynamics do that? Where do the students come from? How are they recruited if the majority of the students are “non-churched youth?” Why are youth drawn to Youth Dynamics?

There are a variety of ways the connection is made: through word of mouth, being invited by a friend, or perhaps doing some community service work. However, the majority of the connection is made by staff going to school campuses, sharing lunches, coaching a sport or volunteering in any way needed.



Whidbey Island School District, for example, values community involvement and Youth Dynamics staff are invited and welcomed to be on campus. Every week, staff go to the school and hold open the doors for students as they enter into the student union building for lunch. Not only are staff a help to teachers, but they provide an opportunity to sit and have a thirty-minute lunch with students. These thirty minutes are precious moments of connection.

Years ago, I met a young lady at a school. We talked for awhile, and I invited her to an event we were having the following week. She came to be involved in Youth Dynamics for all four years of high school. During those years, she accepted Christ, started attending church and went to a Christian college.

Every week, we take advantage of opportunities to be a part of the connections that God has created for us. Those minutes turn into an eternity of minutes together. I pray that God will open up more hearts craving connection and give all of us a vision of pursuit and love in that short, but powerful thirty minutes.



Submitted by Meredith Falk  
YD Communities Area Director  
Whidbey Island, WA

## Prayer Request:

Please pray for staff and volunteers to be present on school campuses.  
Please pray for relationships to form with students all in an effort to share the good news of Jesus.



*On a staff recruitment mission, Katelynn Kazen, Paul Spence, James Chidister and Sarah Strickland attended the Urbana 2018 conference in St. Louis, MI.*

## Urbana Update

In the week between Christmas and New Year's four Youth Dynamics staff, hundreds of other missions organizations, and 10,000 college students attended Urbana, a huge missions conference sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

On the morning of December 31, those 10,000 students were invited to say YES! to God's invitation to share His mission around the world. What will be the eternal impact of all those students saying YES! to the next step in missions? How many people around the world will come to know Jesus because of a YES! said that morning? At the end of the week, Youth Dynamics had over 160 college students who were interested in learning more about ministry opportunities with Youth Dynamics.

We pray that many of them will come to say YES! to Youth Dynamics, and through that, hundreds of more teens will hear about and accept Jesus!

## Praise the Lord for new staff!

Katie Chidister (Adventures, ID)

Chris McCormick (Wenatchee Valley, WA)

Brian Strickland (Stonewater Ranch, WA)

Heather Marsh (Adventures, OR)

Kati Klerekoper (Support Services, WA)

Stacce Clay (Support Services, WA)

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

Matthew 9:37-38

## Prayer Request:

Please pray for new staff raising support.

Pray for the follow-up of the 160 people who expressed interest in the ministry of Youth Dynamics.

## Pray for new staff raising support:

David Kerr (Wenatchee Valley, WA)

Joe Wiederhold (Stanwood, WA)

Casey Gibson (Stonewater Ranch, WA)

David Longenecker (Stonewater Ranch, WA)

Tracey Hamilton (Stonewater Ranch, WA)

Steve Jones (Moses Lake, WA)

Garrett Koepke (Adventures, ID)

**For more positions, detailed job descriptions,  
or to apply visit: [www.yd.org/jobs](http://www.yd.org/jobs)**

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**Youth Dynamics  
Mission Statement**

*To invite and challenge youth to  
a lifelong journey in relationship  
with Christ and His church.*



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