

Jake's Story

Relational adventure ministry happens year-round here at Youth Dynamics. However, the summer adventure season is a prime opportunity to invite new middle and high school students to get involved. And this was such a summer.

Jake is an incoming seventh grader who had a hard time making friends and is trying to figure out how God fits into his life. Being new to Youth Dynamics, he heard about an upcoming raft trip and wanted to go (scholarship funds helped pay his way!). He knew some of the kids that were going, but he wouldn't consider them to be friends. Jake wanted to go anyway.

The ride down from Arlington, Washington, to the Oregon Adventure Base just outside Portland is where the bonding story of this group of energetic middle school students begins.

Jake didn't know everyone in the van, but he felt welcomed. During the entire trip, he felt included in games and conversations, and even when he was a little scared of whitewater rafting, he felt encouraged. Jake was making friends and was sharing more than normal. It felt good.

On the last day on the river, after hearing about God's love all week, Jake and the rest of the group were asked where they were in their relationship with God and compare it to their rafting experience. Were they in the boat paddling with the guide (God)? Were they holding onto the boat trying to get in? Or were they in the water watching the boat float by?



Photo: Students enjoying fun times on the river!

Jake felt safe with the group, so he shared that sometimes he felt like he was in the boat. But there were other times he felt on the outside of the boat, and he didn't know how to stay in the boat.

As each person shared, they committed to staying engaged with God and each other when they returned home.

The level of honesty and vulnerability this group of middle schoolers displayed with each other amazed the staff.

It will be exciting to continue to develop relationships with Jake and the rest of the students over the next school year.

It will also be exciting to see how these students support and encourage each other at school and in their daily lives.

The relationships formed on adventure trips are life-changing. They allow for trust to build between students and their peers, between students and our staff, and, most importantly, students learn to trust God. It is beautiful, and we are so thankful for your support to help reach young people like Jake.



Photo: Typical (friendly) water fight on the Deschutes River.



Story submitted by Jessica Ronhaar
Regional Director
Western Washington

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The Ministry is Expanding

Seeds are Being Cast Far and Wide — and They're Taking Root!

In August 2023, Youth Dynamics celebrated its 53rd year of ministry. God grew the ministry Paul and Connie Evans started in 1970 from one community in Washington state to 18 communities across Washington, Oregon, and Idaho with 55 staff and hundreds of volunteers. And the ministry is growing.

Last year, Youth Dynamics expanded ministry to Grangeville, Idaho, to offer its fourth adventure base to serve youth. The Salmon River Adventure Base will be the base of operations for new local ministries in the central Idaho region. It will also allow for logistical support to the other adventure bases, as well as future ministry expansion into Montana and beyond.

Last year, the ministry began in Riggins, Idaho, and Brewster, Washington. Coming soon, new ministry locations in Emmett, Idaho, and Tonasket, Washington.

To view more ministry areas for which we are praying, please visit yd.org/locations. If you don't see an area but want it to be on our prayer list, contact info@yd.org.



Photos (L-R): One of several new vans purchased this summer. Group photo before an adventure. Map showcasing current and possible new areas.



Do you want a Youth Dynamics ministry in your area? Scan to learn what it takes or visit yd.org/expanding-youth-dynamics.

Then Jesus 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 NIV

Praise and Prayer Requests

- Pray for Jake and other students like him who are seeking a relationship with Christ.
- Please pray for the eight additional staff who are in the process of raising their personal support to enter full-time ministry.
- Pray for the open positions that need to be filled. Visit yd.org/join-our-team.
- Praise for the many volunteers, ministry partners, and supporters who are investing in the lives of teenagers. Pray for discernment, grace, and boldness as they share Christ.
- Praise for the 208 (half-day to multi-day) adventures and 108 retreats this summer.
- Praise God for the many seeds that are planted through adventures, relationships, internships, and leadership development opportunities.
- Pray for the fall and winter ministry season, and protection around new student outreach efforts, new communities launching, and new relationships forming.
- Pray for Youth Dynamics and its impact.



Responding to His Prompting

A Story of Answering the Call to be in Full-time Ministry

Everyone's calling into ministry is different. But each one reveals how God is constantly at work. Mine is no different, and it began with a trip back in high school with Youth Dynamics.

In 2014, my youth group from Washington took a road trip down to the Oregon Adventure Base for a 3-day trip, which included rock climbing, whitewater rafting, and a challenge course. I had an incredible spiritual takeaway, to say the least, and had no idea that God was planting seeds for the future.

Fast forward to spring 2018, my sophomore year at George Fox University. One morning, I decided I would pop into the ministry fair that the college was hosting so I could say hi to a friend. As I entered the door and found her, I noticed a Youth Dynamics booth right next to hers! I walked over and realized that the staff member there was the same guy who had led my trip back in high school.



Story submitted by Allyx Williams
Staffing Manager
Oregon Adventure Base

Reconnecting with Youth Dynamics wasn't just a coincidence, and I realized later that it had been God's plan all along.

As I began to volunteer later that spring, I wondered what full-time ministry looked like. I learned that it not only meant leading adventure trips but also raising personal support. Was this something I could commit to through prayer, conversation, and listening? My answer became a confident "yes!"

As I look back on the journey from high school to now, I feel humbled and excited to be a part of something bigger than I could've ever imagined.

Thank you to the many people who support Youth Dynamics and our mission to invite and challenge youth to a lifelong adventure with Christ and His church. We could not be here without you!

Thank you!

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."
—John 1:5*

This photo collage captures the various activities this summer.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- 1 **Volunteer** with a community or base. yd.org/volunteer-opportunities
- 2 **MADE FOR SOMETHING MORE** year-end giving campaign begins this fall and runs through December 31, 2023. Please consider making a special year-end gift. yd.org/christmas
- 3 **Adventure Scholarship Fund.** Make a special gift to help youth attend adventure trips and leadership programs. yd.org/asf
- 4 **Leave a Legacy.** Consider including Youth Dynamics in your planned giving or estate plans. yd.org/legacy-giving

Made for something more!
Jesus said, "Blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." (Luke 11:28 NLT)



Be on the Lookout!

Each year, Youth Dynamics provides an opportunity for you to make a special year-end gift to bless a staff member, an area or base, a special project, and/or to the Youth Dynamics general fund to help reach more youth so they hear the good news of Jesus.

The theme this year is **Made for Something More**. Jesus said, "Blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice" (Luke 11:28 NLT).

Be looking in your mailbox this fall and winter for your opportunity to respond. Or go to **YD.ORG/CHRISTMAS** and give your gift today!

Letter From the President

Dear Friend and Supporter of Youth Dynamics,

Today, many young people face a certain darkness. It could be a broken home, a sense of isolation or abandonment from adults, the pressures of trying to fit in on social media and show a perfect life, exposure to pornography, or a world in which Christian values are often under attack and church attendance isn't a part of their lives.

That is why John 1:5 is featured in this edition of Reflections. The Apostle John writes, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."

Billy Graham once said, "Christians are to be 'the light of the world' (Matthew 5:14), illuminating the darkness caused by sin and giving guidance to a world that has lost its way."

This is why we partner with you – to bring the 'light of the world' to the youth of the Pacific Northwest who have lost their way!

When young people are given opportunities to discover the light of Christ, they are never the same. This is precisely what we did at Youth Dynamics this past summer. We hosted 208 Christ-centered adventures and 108 Christ-centered retreats! Here is what a few of the students said about their experience:

- "My relationship with God has grown a lot over the summer!"

Thank you for being such a valued ministry partner!

- "This was my first interaction with adults I felt wanted to spend time with me. I appreciate that they listened to me and told me the story of Jesus. For the first time, I want to grow in my personal faith!"
- "I loved not having my phone this week. Not having the distraction has made me feel closer to God. I don't even want to get back on my phone when I return. It's just a distraction."
- "I learned that God is big enough to handle the hard questions, the angry cries, and the questions of unbelief."

As we look to a busy school year of ongoing ministry, will you please continue to pray for our youth and support the ministry?

With God's leading and your help, which we are so thankful for, we are fighting the darkness and bringing the light of Christ to young people who need it, and young lives are being forever changed.



Tom Davis

Tom Davis, President