



Robbie Taylor, *Expectant Hearts*

During a wonderful Christmas break, the theme of anticipation and preparing room meant a lot more to Amanda and I. It truly took on a real meaning for us as we awaited our first baby to come into this world. We went from preparing ourselves to being eagerly and hopefully excited and a little impatient (as you do with all amazing surprises and events in life). Waiting became harder and harder as we were overwhelmed with the joy of soon having our first child. What a great lesson in patience and gratitude for the little things each day and the prolonged joy of this gift of life!

In 2019, Youth for Christ Comox Valley hopes to serve the local teens in our area with expectant and hopeful hearts. We desire to see young people find new life in Jesus and see His power of transformation in their journeys and life stories. As a team, we continue to engage in relational opportunities with students across our community by meeting with them in school support programs, enriching youth group nights at local churches, and providing staffing and mentorship on a weekly basis.

We are excited for new opportunities in 2019 for young people's lives to be transformed and for them to find true life in Jesus. For me, a year of new beginnings starts with the birth of our first child and being a dad for the first time. I'm now on another one of life's learning curves to experience even more of what God's love is and truly understand the heart of a father as we now love our newest family member, our daughter Ellie Taylor!

Like all major changes in life, there are always needs and adjustment periods to learn a new rhythm and way. Prayer for us as a missional family would be wonderful as my role in the leadership of the ministry and growth of life responsibility causes our financial needs to increase. We trust and rely on the Lord for provision, wisdom and guidance as we seek to gain new ministry partners in this gospel work.



Taeryn Novak, *The Power of Relationship*

I have the privilege of being a leader for the Junior High youth group for grades 6-8 at Courtenay Baptist Church. I love the students in this group so much! They are energetic and candid and if you are familiar with this age group you'll know they can tend to say whatever comes to their minds! This can result in some funny moments, but can also lead to memorable discussions, especially in the small group time. It's been amazing to see that as I've gotten to know the girls in my group more- through just chatting with them and having fun during team challenges - how some of them have really opened up.

One night a few weeks ago during small group, we were taking turns sharing stories about a time when we felt connected at church or youth group. One of the girls said, "I never really felt loved until I came to youth group." To me, this statement reveals the power of relationship. Through her youth leaders this young woman has experienced Jesus' love and found a safe place where she knows she belongs.

Amidst the difficulties that youth face, from bullying to stress at school and much more, having a place that they can come and feel loved is so important. I read a statistic that said that "70% of youth who are considered 'at risk' succeed against the odds if they have one significant person investing in their lives." As I get to know these girls even more this year I pray that I can be a positive influence in their lives and point them to the One who will ultimately fulfill them.

## Weekly Ministry Schedule

### Monday

Glacier View Alternative School (Cassia)  
Jr High Youth @ Courtenay Fellowship (Taeryn)  
Salvation Army Youth Group (Keagan)

### Tuesday

Highland Secondary, Open Gym (Keagan)  
Glacier View (Cassia)  
Sr High Youth @ Courtenay Fellowship (Keagan)

### Wednesday

Lake Trail Middle School, Games Club  
(Keagan & Taeryn)  
Glacier View (Cassia)  
Thrive Youth Group @ Northgate Foursquare (Keagan)  
Elevate Youth Group @ Comox Pentecostal (Cassia)

### Thursday

Lake Trail Middle School, Coach's Corner (Keagan)  
Glacier View (Cassia)  
Cumberland Drop-in Floor Hockey @ CRI  
(Grant Nelson & Keagan)  
The Linc Youth Centre (Cassia)

### Friday

The Linc Youth Centre (Keagan)  
One-on-one time with youth



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Reuben Pearl, ***A Life Lived For Him***

My name is Reuben and I was a summer intern for YFC Comox Valley in 2016. Getting involved with youth ministry and surrounding myself with people who were passionate for the Lord and bringing the Gospel to teens put me in a place where God worked in my life and gave me a passion for Him and His people. Through this internship, the Lord took me from being a pleasure-seeking, adventure-hungry person looking for purpose in all the wrong places to someone who

finds their purpose in Christ and I discovered the adventure a life lived for Him holds.

As a result of the work the Lord started with my YFC internship, I have been able to truly live an adventure of faith and am now living part time in the Comox Valley serving in ministry and part time serving as staff with *Patmos Reality Discipleship* out of Southern California. The Lord truly has blessed me and I am thankful for how He has used YFC to impact my life and the lives of teens here in the Valley every week with the love and compassion of Christ.



Cassia Philippon, ***Unexpected Opportunities***

Being in ministry, especially in youth work, there is a sense of feeling “on” all the time. I feel a lot of it is because we live in a small community and the chance of running into the youth I work with is high. Being an important adult presence in their life is a top priority for me. Which means when I drive past them or see them in a store I go out of my way to wave hello and let them know I have noticed them.

So that feeling of always being on is very real because the fact of the matter is that I *am* always on. Needless to say, Christmas came as a much-needed break for me and I was glad to finally feel like I could get away and not have to feel like I was always on. I would find myself during the break hoping I wouldn’t run into anyone I knew in order to save that minuscule time for myself.

I was up on Mount Washington for a good portion of the Christmas break and I felt the freedom of being bundled up and not being noticed. I know a lot of the youth I work with spend time on the hill snowboarding, skiing and even working there but I was sure they wouldn’t notice or recognize me behind my goggles and snow gear.

God, as always, had different plans. While waiting in line for the ski lift one day I noticed a wave and hello in my direction. I kindly responded with a “Hey, how’s it going? Sorry, I don’t know who you are!” because they too were bundled up behind goggles and gear. They responded, “It’s me!” and I still couldn’t tell who they were. “It’s me! Riley!” he said as he took off his goggles and showed me his face. Excitement flooded over me as I noticed it was one of the kids from the drop-in who rarely wants anything to do with me and is very keen on not talking to me at all. I responded with “Riley! Hi! So good to see you!” - in a very truthful way. Despite not wanting to be recognized and to keep all my break time to myself, I was beyond excited to have a kid who never wants to talk to me actually extend a hello and, even though hard to recognize, want to be noticed. It changed my mindset from always feeling on to feeling fortunate about the small community we live in and the chances God gives us to impact all the lives we come into contact with - especially the tough ones. Thanks for being a part of this with us!



Keagan Preston, ***Games Club at Lake Trail School***

As I look back so much has happened in 2018 that it honestly feels like two or three years all in one. Reminiscing on all of the memories, from first coming to Canada to where I am now, I realize how far I have come and how much I have developed as a person and grown into my role at YFC. It has been a wonderful journey and the people I have met along the way have helped me as I strive to reach my full potential, which in turn allows me to help inspire youth to pursue their best.

Since September, I have been building relationships with youth all across the Valley and getting to know their stories. A program we run on a weekly basis is Games Club at Lake Trail Middle School. We have a number of regulars who are there each week without fail. There was even an instance where a student came by just to let us know that she wouldn’t be there due to a rehearsal and reassured us that she would be there the following week. For me it was a realization of how important this club is to some students and how much they appreciate and look forward to it during the week. Another great thing about the club is that it brings together students who normally wouldn’t associate with one another and opens them up to new friendships. I am thankful to be able to provide a reason for these students to enjoy school and have a place to be themselves and make fun memories.

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