



Taeryn Novak, *Seeing Growth*

I walked down the school hallway, smiling and dodging students as they eagerly rushed out of class towards their lunch break. I quickly reached the classroom, card games in hand and ready for another day of Games Club and time to connect with youth.

Some students and I were playing a game of Anomia when Jack walked in and sat down. Now, Anomia is a fun, fast-paced card game with categories of person, place or thing. If your card has a matching symbol with someone else's, you have to yell out something from their category before they say one from yours.

On this day when Jack came in, he didn't join in the card game like he usually does. I asked if he wanted to play, but he said his "brain wasn't fast enough." Not long after, I looked over to see what he was doing and saw pages full of beautiful calligraphy. I asked him about it, and he told me he had been teaching himself. I was so impressed and told him so; he tried to shake off the praise and say it wasn't that good, but I kept asking him about it and he started to open up. Soon after, Jack decided to join our round of Anomia and we all ended up laughing and having a great time!

There is power in simply noticing a young person and what they're interested in. It can take patience and things aren't always what they seem on the surface, but I've seen that when I keep showing up and reaching out to these youth in small ways, that's where relationship really grows. And whatever Jack was going through that day, I was glad that even just for the lunch hour I got to see him grow from feeling like he wasn't smart enough, to joining the game and having fun.

Isn't that how it is in our faith? Small transformations, every day, in each area of our lives. And how incredible is it that God sees us as we are and says, *I notice you; I love you*. He is patient with us.

Each week, whether we're helping in the schools or going out for coffee with a young person, we have all of you standing behind us. Thank you! Please continue to pray for the youth in this Valley to be transformed by the love of Jesus.



Josh Clark, Volunteer, *From the Inside Out*

It's that time of year again. The hype of Christmas dissolves and both adults and students alike settle back into their regular routines. As students go back to school, it gets me dreaming about what God could do in the high schools through the students in the Comox Valley.

During one of our youth service nights at Northgate, I had a student come to me who looked distraught. He went on to share with me how he felt like he has wasted his high school career because he hasn't grasped the opportunity to evangelize to his peers. He wanted some guidance as to what he could be doing to make a positive impact on his classmates. I had just started serving at YFC's KD lunch program and invited him to come out and join us. Every week proceeding that conversation he has been helping us make delectable Kraft Dinner and connecting with his fellow students.

As I reflect on this, it makes me excited about what this new year has in store for students in our local schools. If we ever want to see shifts in high schools we must empower students to lead the charge. As God transforms lives from the inside out, we must also strive to empower students to change their sphere of influence from the inside out.

Needless to say, it has been an honour serving the youth of the Comox Valley and partnering with YFC. I look forward to many more stories like this in the near future!



Keagan Preston, *So, What Do You Believe?*

I was once shown the analogy of time we spend with youth as marbles in a jar. With each week they grow older, a marble is removed from the jar until they become an adult and start leading their own life. It asked the question; how can we impact a youth's life for the better before they start adulthood? This image stuck with me.

Recently I took a youth to see a movie, and we had a great time. On the drive home we were discussing the movie and laughing a lot. In the movie, the characters are in a video game, and they die and are reborn. I asked Evan, "What do you believe happens when we die?" He replied, "I am going to be real with you so please don't laugh... I believe in reincarnation and in karma, so if you do good in your life good things will happen to you and when you die, you will be in a better position in this world and vice-versa."

He then continued to ask, "So what do you believe?" I told him that I believed in God because of His faithfulness and the things he has done in my life which are too precise to be coincidental. Then I explained to him a little of my story of coming to Canada and the answers to prayer that I received.

I am so grateful to be able to come alongside young people and be able to listen and help them figure out life together, rather than their having to do it alone. To return to the story of the marbles, I believe each conversation with a young person can have an impact. Evan didn't come out of that conversation with his mind totally changed but was able to be honest and open and express himself without fear of being judged or mocked.

Thank you so much for being a partner and enabling me to connect on a deeper level with youth in the Valley.

DONATE TODAY



Ryan Blaak, Board Member, *Lay Down Your Burdens*

There is a really challenging dichotomy in the world of youth (and adults) today.

On one hand, our youth are said to be the most anxious generation ever. Worried and stressed about real threats like climate change and terrorism but also more nuanced concerns about image, success, and self-worth. Such young people often seem paralyzed by the world around them. Afraid, unsure, and, sometimes, hopeless.

On the other hand, many young people are more self-empowered than ever. They are told that they and they alone can define themselves and their story. Such young people present a confidence in themselves that is empowered by the range of technological platforms available today. Yet, this is a façade that is exhausting and ultimately unsustainable.

So, we have both an anxious and self-empowered generation that need to hear the message of the Gospel. The message of Jesus says they can lay down their burdens whether it be worry or the façade of self-reliance. In the midst of these challenges, Jesus' message is: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Robbie, Taeryn, and Keagan, through YFC Comox Valley and with your prayers and support, are telling young people about the God who can give them rest. What a privilege to provide such a critical message of hope to the youth of the Comox Valley.



Robbie Taylor, *Relationship and Truth*

Congratulations on making it into the year 2020! It was once thought to be futuristic, like a TV cartoon (the Jetsons once predicted that we would have flying cars and vacuum-tube travel!). We may not have gone that far but we get to enjoy video chat and other advancements like drones, and electric cars. Needless to say, there are always great advancements in many areas of life that allow us to enjoy a connection with those around us locally or globally. This for me has been a game-changer in allowing my mom in England to see Ellie via FaceTime- what a privilege in allowing that relationship to be more tangible for both her and us.

Despite making it to 2020 with all the advancements and changes, we see one thing that remains a constant reality: the need teenagers have for a saviour, and to know the love of God that saves and transforms our broken heart's condition. As I made

time to reflect on the new year and seeing all the ways things have changed, one thing that I kept being reminded of was to focus on was the importance of relationship and truth. There is a vital balance of loving well, caring for one another, and allowing relationships to deepen and have space for spiritual truths. I was reminded that engaging teens in relationships and loving well makes space for spiritual input and wisdom to help see them succeed.

So, 2020 has arrived with all the buzz around another decade. At YFC Comox Valley the buzz is very much still on moving forward together in the mission to see *all youth living fully in Christ*. It's another year to make greater steps in the gospel advancement and to love and serve local teens. Another year of finding a new and creative way to connect and serve youth and to bring gospel hope to their stories. I'm grateful for your heart and commitment to believe with YFC Comox Valley in seeing teens find Jesus. For this I'm truly thankful.

P r a y e r R e q u e s t s

- Youth groups where we serve: Salvation Army Church, Courtenay Baptist, Comox Pentecostal and Northgate
- One-on-one mentorships that our staff have with youth
- For God to bring us more team members to fill opportunities to serve youth in the community
- Prayer for continued financial provision

Support our Kraft Dinner Lunch Program

Provide lunch & connection for local students. Help us reach our annual goal: \$2000 for 24 weeks

10 weeks

CUMBERLAND DROP-IN FLOOR HOCKEY
 THURSDAY NIGHTS @ CUMBERLAND REC CENTRE // COST \$2
 6:00-7:00 PM FOR AGES 5-11
 7:15-8:30 PM FOR AGES 12-18

TEEN RETREAT AT CAMP HOMEWOOD
 FEBRUARY 28-
 MARCH 1