



December 5th, 2022

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! I am so thankful for all of you and the impact that you have had on this ministry. You are helping to bring hope to so many teens. Christmas is my most favorite time of year, but amid all the hustle and bustle of the Christmas Season, let's not forget what Christmas is all about. Jesus coming to earth, so lives like yours, mine, and the many kids we work with could be changed.

Kids are struggling today. A recent study of 10,000 teens by the Springtide Research Group found that:

- 47% of young people say they are moderately or extremely depressed.
- 55% say they are moderately or extremely anxious or stressed.
- 1 in 3 young people feels completely alone much of the time.
- 45% feel no one understands them.
- Nearly 40% have no one to talk to and feel left out.
- 10% of young people always feel isolated from others.
- 12% always feel left out.
- 10% say they have no meaningful social interactions in a day.
- 66% say they have three or fewer meaningful interactions in a day.
- 35% say they have no one to turn to when stressed.

These stats are not just because of the Pandemic, that just amplified things. We have a mental health crisis among our teens! But let me give you some good news. A relationship with even 1 trusted adult results in a 16% decrease in feelings of loneliness and isolation. Raise that to 2-4 trusted adults, and it drops by 30%. Unfortunately, nearly 1 in 10 young people do not have a trusted adult at all and 23% have only 1 trusted adult relationship. This is why ministries like Youth for Christ are so important.

Now more than ever, teens need the connection of loving adults to come alongside them, get to know their story, and connect them to God's story. This is why **I am so thankful for the prayers and support of so many of you** that allow our staff and volunteers the opportunity to minister to the kids we do.

So let me tell you about some things I am so excited about. On the staffing front, God has been blowing me away with how He has worked this past year. Danielle and I were talking a while back and thinking how crazy it was that it was just the two of us on staff a year ago. Last year in this letter, I asked for your prayers for a young man who came to interview from South Carolina at the beginning of December. Well, your prayers were answered, and right after Easter, William Lawyer started with us as a full-time ministry staff member. Then things started getting crazy because God just started making His own moves. Paige Rockensock, Danielle's sister, started with us in June at 15 hours a week. In October, my friend Tim Brown started with us at 20 hours a week, and then on November 14th, just before Concert for a Cause, Deb Napton started with us as another full-time ministry staff member. God and His timing are incredible, and this team is fantastic!

Another thing I am excited about is the opportunities God is opening for us. We moved into Liberty Middle School this year, and we had hoped to do a mentor program on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. Everyone was for it, except the kids that needed the most help, were bus kids, and parents didn't want to or weren't able to pick up their kids after 4:15. Talk about a downer and one of those situations where you have to ask, "Why God?"

This was going to be so perfect." But, as usual, along comes God with His own ideas, and the school asked if we would consider coming five days a week during the last period of the day. Please be praying for this opportunity and that it materializes because this is a God-sized thing!

We have again been blessed to be back full-time in our alternative schools this year. The meals at Dakota High School have been going strong, and this year kids are lingering longer, hanging out more with our staff and are so interactive. There is such a sense of community; it is enjoyable to see. Moorhead Alternative School at Bethel Church on Fridays has been growing again. This is a rebuilding year in Moorhead, and every week has brought more kids to the program. In the juvenile detention center, we have young men and women hungry to get into God's word each week through 4 different Bible Studies, two chapel services run every Wednesday and one-on-ones. We are blessed to be in the center 4-5 days per week. God is so good and **YOU, through your prayers and support, help make that happen. Thank you!**

When I think about all of you who help make the many aspects of this ministry happen, I am overwhelmed. We are blessed to have faithful partners like you who help us reach kids who need it and expand this team through your support and prayers. You make it possible to bring hot meals to kids who need them. You make it possible to go into the detention center every week and walk alongside kids whose only hope is Jesus, and you help us get God's word into the hands of kids who are desperate for it. **Thank you, thank you, thank you!**

As this year ends and we get ready to start a new one, I ask you to consider making a special year-end gift to Red River Youth for Christ. We cannot accomplish this fantastic task without your help. Your donations will help staff and volunteers continue to walk alongside kids and show up for them. Your investment in their lives will pay off, not only today but can pay dividends for eternity. You can mail your gift in the enclosed envelope or give it online by going to [www.redriveryfc.com](http://www.redriveryfc.com) and clicking on the "Donate" link at the top of the page.

We hope your Christmas season is a rich and meaningful celebration of the birth of our Savior. We are grateful for your dedication to sharing the true Gift of Christmas with this generation. As a partner in the ministries of RRYFC, you are a vital part of this ministry's success in reaching young people and their families.

On behalf of all of us here at Red River Youth for Christ and each student we work with, **thank you for your generosity.**

**Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Greg Everett  
Executive Director

