



December 14, 2021

Dear Friends & Family,

What an unforgettable year it has been! December marks 6 years in Fargo for me, I have spent almost 4 and a half years on staff with Youth for Christ, I installed a car seat (I'll come back to this one), and I got engaged. July 3rd my boyfriend of three and a half years at the time, proposed. Cody and I are planning our wedding for June 25, 2022 (formal save the date to follow). Back to the car seat as I don't want to let that one hang too long. For those of you following Momma B's story, in October Baby B was returned from Child Protective Services to Momma B's full-time care. In loving Momma B and Baby B well, it meant installing a car-seat for our morning trips to daycare and all life's various adventures. While I get confused looks from other passengers of my vehicle who know I don't have children, loving people sometimes looks a little funny.



In April we said see you later to a long-time staff that resigned, leaving us at just 2 full-time staff and our wonderful volunteers to help run the ministry. While that meant extra work in areas, it also meant a lot more ministry hours. It has been an adjustment, but now I look back and see how much I've grown personally, as a leader, and how the ministry has continued to flourish. I am also so excited to announce that last week we received confirmation that William, a young man from the Carolinas, has accepted our open ministry position. William will start the first week in April and will be followed by his fiancé Carman after she finishes her school year as a middle school teacher and their wedding July 8th. We had the couple up for a few days in the beginning of December and are excited for the addition to the team. Additionally, our hope and prayers are that he is not the only one we are able to hire in 2022. As we know from Matthew 9:37 "...The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." The ministry opportunities available are endless and we pray that God would continue to grow this ministry.



While 2022 promises new beginnings for me personally as I begin my married life with Cody, it also promises new beginnings for the hundreds of kids we love on throughout the year. New hope found in Christ as we show kids that they are loved, seen, heard, and valued.

Seen, heard, and valued looks different for everyone, but for us here at Red River Youth for Christ it might look like a ride to the homeless shelter, trips to the food shelf, card games within the walls of the detention center, lunch for hungry teens, letters written to a kid in placement further away, or simply coffee and conversation.

While we use church services or youth groups, programing, and Bible studies to share Christ with kids, it is also the simple moments showing up for teens that help build relationships and trust, opening doors for deeper more meaningful conversations.

Among my favorite conversations with youth from this past year include reading from Luke 19 with a group of young men in the detention center. We were reading the story of Zacchaeus. I read verse 8 "Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." I then asked the guys what they thought Jesus meant by that. One young man blurted out "Boi, you're sleeping on the floor tonight. Jesus sleepin in yo bed tonight." I chuckled at his interpretation, but they were engaged. These incarcerated young men and women need Jesus, and they are attentive, respectful, and eager to learn.



Another favorite encounter is after a young man in the center requested a Bible. He was leafing through the pages and asked, "Are all the stories in here?" I replied that yes, he was receiving a full Bible. I asked if he had a particular story he was looking for. He replied, "That one where the guy walks on water." I helped him find Matthew 14 and we read this story together. I love this encounter because this young man didn't have the verses memorized or even knew who it was that walked on water, but it led to authentic conversations and an opportunity to point him to Christ.

Lastly, I had a young person test me and try to get a rise out of me. After correcting me on how to refer to them and sharing that their pronouns are He/Him, he asked me why I did this. "Why did I decide to work for Youth for Christ and come into the (detention) center?" I thought for a moment and replied (definitely less eloquently than I'm writing now), "Being a teenager is hard and God has called me into this ministry. I truly believe that inside these walls are some of the most intelligent, creative, adaptive, and beautiful people who just need to be given a chance. I love being able to love on teens and let them know how incredible they truly are and share the love of Christ with them." While I was sharing this, I was looking into their eyes. I'm not sure this was the answer they were expecting, but they absorbed every word and I felt as they stared into my soul as I spoke. How can you not just want to love on teens so eager to be loved.

We have such an opportunity at Youth for Christ to love on the least of these, the overlooked, and the hurting. This ministry allows teens to be seen, heard, and valued and this is what I get to share with you. This is just a taste of the exciting things God is doing through the ministry of RRYFC that I get to be a part of. We know that only God can heal these kids as they journey through life altering events. Would you please keep our (expanding!) team and I in your prayers as we continue to befriend teens by getting to know their story, sharing our story, and ultimately connecting them to God's story? Please pray that God would continue to use us to impact the lives of kids for eternity.



As we close out 2021, would you consider ending on a positive note by making a gift and supporting the ministry of Red River Youth for Christ? Since we are a non-profit, we rely on partners like you to help fund this ministry. Would you please prayerfully consider making a year-end financial gift and investing in the lives of teens? Donations can be mailed in the enclosed envelope, or you can give online by going to www.redriveryfc.com and clicking the "Donate" button at the top of the page. All donations are tax-deductible and will be receipted if an email address is included. Thank you!

I am so thankful for your prayers and support! Thank you from everyone here at Red River Youth for Christ and the students we love! Your thoughts, prayers, and support are truly a gift!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Danielle Hill

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