

Dear Friends & Family,

By the time you're reading this letter, I will have been in Fargo almost one year! It is crazy how time has flown over the past 12 months. God has been moving rapidly in the lives of not only our staff, but also in the lives of the kids that we are getting to build relationships with.

Liberty Middle School has been such a blessing to be involved in, I'm there (as long as there's no snow days) seven times a week doing the mentorship class Monday-Friday; as well as doing lunch on Thursdays and Fridays. The kids have started to warm to me in both the class and at lunch. Every day the kids in the mentorship class wave me down and say hey to me before I even see them. Whereas when it started they wouldn't even look in my direction. Carmen's students still continue to give me updates of how Mrs. Lawyer is "so mean", or "she was actually nice today". It amazes me how a sixth-grader's brain will flip and do a 180 in just a day. Her students also love to give me grief about the Eagles Super-Bowl loss and want me to "Hit the grid" (a dance) for them. I agreed this past week that if they could get the principal to do it with me, that we would do it together for them. They got a yes from the principal, however he was called into the office for a kid's behavior (I know, I'm thinking it too.... How convenient)... But I kept my end of the bargain and did it solo for them. A couple of Carmen's boys even asked for me to sit by them Friday that was the first time they had asked me. A little confused, I asked them why they wanted me to sit by them? They gave the typical middle school boy answer of "I don't know", so we just talked about sports, and life in general. However it struck me later on that they just wanted communication with an adult. These kids don't need anything fancy, they just need our time (our undivided attention).



Another story from Liberty happened this past week. I was standing next to a table full of sixth-grade boys... (It's ok if you yelp because that is indeed a scary thing). As I watch the boys use powdered drink-mix to mimic a line of cocaine. I corrected them, because pretending to do something like that leads to the desire of actually doing something they'll regret later on in life. A few minutes passed by, and I made another lap around the cafeteria. One of the boys at that same sixth-grade table stopped me and said, "Why don't you yell at us and get mad at us like the other adults". Taking a second to think of a reply I smiled at him and told him because I don't have to. You and I both know what you guys are doing is wrong, just me being here is making you feel guilty. And that feeling alone should help weigh the decision if you are going to continue doing stuff like this or not. I can't make the choice of throwing food or "Snorting drink mix" for you and your friends. You have to decide if you're going to make that or not. But just know there's consequences for both sets of actions, however one of them is a lot better than the other.

The Detention Center continues to be a place full of lost souls. During a recent bible study with a few of the residents, we were talking about the topic of how you can be saved. After finishing up I asked if any of them had prayer requests for us to be praying for them during the week. One of the boys questioned what a prayer request was. I explained that it's asking for prayer for various things. I gave the example of "if your mom was having surgery and you wanted us to pray for her and the doctors

during the procedure.” Looking at me he bursts out and says he doesn’t want anyone praying for him. And how he had a really good pastor he used to meet with, pray over him for protection from others praying bad things on him. This was a new one for me, I really didn’t know what to say other than we wouldn’t pray bad things for him but I respect where he is coming from... Little does he know the next day he was prayed for by myself and a few others that I had shared the story with. I believe those prayers were heard because two days later during Church, he asked if we would pray for his mother and siblings. This is the stuff kids in America are facing, and I believe it is only going to get worse. We have begun to turn a blind eye and just assume everything is fine because they are in America. Honestly I believe the “American church” is part of that problem. We have gone from something that people live out, to being a fuel stop on Sunday’s, where people live how they want during the week ignoring the “make me feel good message”. Kids today need the truth given to them. Not just something that will make them feel good for the moment, because that moment runs out and just like the rest of us will be judged by Our Lord and Savior.



Carmen and I are just one week away from surviving our first true winter. It has definitely been a culture shift for us. Back in South Carolina it has been in the 70’s, while here we are still in the negatives some days. It’s gotten to the point where if it’s in the 30’s we want to get out of the house to feel the warm sun. God has made our adjustment fairly smooth as we continue to navigate marriage together. We’ve added another four legged friend to the family, Fargo! Just like us she has a BIG personality. (She fits in quite well in the stubbornness category). We are continuing to learn from each other every day and just like every couple have our good days and bad. However, we’re so blessed to have the other by our side as we navigate life in the newness of Fargo!



God answered the prayer of our living situation, and we will be staying put thankfully! He has also blessed us in our relationship and the growth that we have seen in the last few months. If you guys could be praying for our ministry as we are beginning to seek out more volunteers for our ministry sites. Continued prayer for Carmen and I as we still go through our first year of marriage, and all of the new challenges that we face in it. Lastly for the kids that we come in contact with, for us to be used by our actions and words to continue to reach these kids.

I just want to personally say thank you to everyone who has generously donated to help support myself, and the Youth for Christ ministry. I’m so grateful to have friends and family come alongside me through prayer as well as financial gifts. Currently, I have \$1,176.25 committed per month towards my \$1,500 goal. However I have also been so blessed through one time gifts. I ask that you would prayerfully consider joining me as a monthly donor. Donations can be given online at: <https://redriveryouthforchrist.givingfuel.com/giving> and selecting the “WL” option, or through the enclosed envelope.

Now that Winter is ending, I look forward to seeing the multiple “we’ll visit you when it warms up” people visiting us this Summer! ;)

William Lawyer
Youth for Christ Ministry Staff