

News from the World of Youth Ministry

Thank you to everyone who supported our youth as they fundraised for NCYC in August and collected backpacks and school supplies. Through your generosity, more than \$11,000 was raised for NCYC, and approximately 100 backpacks were donated along with a significant amount of school supplies. Thank you for supporting our youth ministry efforts.

A hopeful story about our young people is also worth sharing. In today's ever-changing world, teenagers are sometimes described as lazy, thoughtless, or uncaring about the rest of the world. It can be easy to fall into those assumptions, even while working closely with high school youth. The world in which today's teens are growing up is certainly very different from the one many adults experienced in the 70's '80s, & 90's (and, for some of us, even earlier!) Of course, adults at the time held some of those same attitudes about our generations. With that perspective in mind, here is a glimpse into the lives and hearts of some local teens.

This past Wednesday, during our Pre-Confirmation session—which is predominantly made up of high school freshmen—the youth shared what we call their “4 H’s”: their history, hopes, heartbreaks, and heroes. During a small-group discussion, the teens took the activity very seriously and shared some remarkable experiences and aspirations. Their names are not included, as promised.

Two young ladies expressed a strong interest in pediatric medicine, with one hoping to become a surgeon. There is no doubt that both girls are capable of achieving their dreams. One young man shared that he and his family have twice been held at gunpoint by a cartel in Mexico. Despite those frightening experiences, he is grateful for the life he has, deeply faithful, and hopeful about giving back to society.

Another young man, mature beyond his years, said that his goal is to create a better world. Three young ladies hope to become lawyers, with interests in environmental, criminal, and immigration law. One young lady shared about wandering away from home at the age of two because her babysitter was not watching her. Her parents, understandably, were not too happy with the sitter. She now hopes to become a voice actor.

Another young lady is growing up in a difficult family environment because one of her parents struggles with alcohol use. She showed remarkable compassion and understanding for what her parents are navigating.

In almost every case, the young people named a parent or another family member as their hero.

Not everyone has the opportunity to see into the world of teenagers. Spending time with these incredible, wonderful, and beautiful young people is a blessing that should never be taken for granted. Their honesty, compassion, faith, and hope are inspiring.

Thank you again for your continued support. May we never lose hope in our young people. They are navigating growing up as best as they can, and are watching the adults around them—whether we are their parents or other people who have a place in their lives.

Please continue praying for our teens. They, like us, are made in the image and likeness of God.