



Seeing the **hope and potential**
in every young person

SUZI'S UPDATE:

I'm not entirely sure if what I am experiencing as I sit here putting thoughts on a page for this prayer letter you are reading is called 'writer's block'. This feels more like, I don't really know what to tell you. I am trying to avoid talking about the 'elephant in the room' that has been around since March. I feel like we have all heard enough about that!

But how can I encourage you with a few thoughts captured on a page during this time?

Then I thought wait a second, perhaps I am the one who needs encouraging. (Now stay with me as I ramble so you can see how my little brain works.)

"I thank God every time I remember you. And I always pray for all of you with joy, I thank God for the help you gave me while I told the people the good news. You helped me from the first day you believed until now." Philippians 1:3-5 ERV (finish reading through to verse 11)

I began to think about all of you, my ministry partners, and the encouragement you all are to me. I recalled with fondness the great conversations we have had this year on the phone and in person. I peak in the box I keep with notes and cards with kind words and many of them are from you. All that to say, THANK YOU for standing with me and being such a source of encouragement and support...especially during this time!

KATE'S UPDATE:

Dear Fighters (1 Tim. 6:12),

I would LOVE to say that things haven't been that bad this year, but let's face it: things have sucked.

We were able to host a series of fun summer events where kids had opportunities to share their losses. Obviously, we can relate, but we can also tell them about hope.

If anyone understands what it's like to feel isolated, it's Jesus (I mean, for real - he was completely alone as he died on the cross). God knows our pain intimately, he hears us when we cry out to him, and he loves us unconditionally.

"Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his unfailing love from me." - Psalm 66:20

That is why we have deep-rooted hope, every day. This season has been really hard, and it's difficult to stay optimistic while grieving the loss of your own "normal". Students' lives have been turned upside down, just like the rest of us. A recent devotional of mine read, "Let's not make this seem easier than it is." YES! Be honest about how hard it is, but also about how God provides strength to get through every day! Please pray that we will be able to creatively share this message in the coming months!

I am so grateful for each of you and the role you play in our ministry family! Please let me know if I can be praying specifically for you, or if you want to just chat - I'd love to!

Love in Christ, Kate Heyen



SHANE'S UPDATE:

"Trust in Him at all times, oh people; pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:8). I don't know about you, but I have never been so thankful to have Almighty God as my refuge. During these past months of needing fresh creativity, boldness, sensitivity, strength, and everything in between, taking refuge in God has been crucial. I'll admit, some days I feel like I don't know how to take refuge in God; in such times I open the scriptures to passages like Psalm 62. You see, once I experience God as my refuge, I am empowered to model that same refuge to the amazing teens I work with. Remember, we can only give that which we have received: take refuge - then give refuge.

These are strange days, and many of our go-to methods of reaching young people have evaporated. Ultimately this has brought renewed focus to our ministry. As youth leaders, we are often tempted to look at numbers for validation (like how many teens came out to a particular event). These days, however, it's about quality, not quantity. I am relearning what I've known all along: humbly walk with God, humbly walk with teens. Our big games and flashy events are put aside for now, and in their place: mentorship, discipleship, relationship. Sounds just like refuge to me. Sounds just like Jesus, in the midst of the storm.

GRANT'S UPDATE:

I hope all is well with you and your families during this strange and trying time. Things are good with the Dodson family, with Noah now having started grade 10, and Sage having started grade 7. While it most certainly wasn't a typical summer, I'm happy to say it was a great one! The pace was slower, which allowed for more quality time together with family and friends, which I am super thankful for! I'm also super thankful for the ongoing support and partnership of amazing people like yourself, who continue to walk alongside of us and partner with us in our work to see every young person living fully in Christ!

While it was definitely different, I am beyond thankful to God for the opportunity to do some really great stuff this summer, with some really great youth! No, I'm not just talking about my kids, but also all the other youth who we were able to connect with through our socially distant outdoor youth events we had on a weekly basis throughout the summer! God is most certainly still at work!

In spite of all the hard things going on around us, God is still good, and he's still at work, which reminds me of a passage from Lamentations 3:22 - Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Praying you know and experience the never ending love and compassion of God today!



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