



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

SUZI'S UPDATE:

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

This scripture and the whole idea of blessing has been on my mind, along with that great old hymn ‘Make me a Blessing’. I’ve been thinking about all this in light of the challenge we find ourselves in for the past year.

I think more than anything I’ve been reminded, ‘Suzi, you don’t need to be physically present to bless someone!’

I recently began having phone conversations with a young lady. Her mother (who is a former student of mine) reached out to me and asked if I could speak with her daughter. Those who know me well know I jumped at this opportunity!

I’m really enjoying my conversations with this young lady and am humbled that she has invited me to journey with her.

Her mom sent me an incredibly kind text message that blessed me beyond measure! In it she reminded me to never underestimate the impact of the work I do, and she commented on how neat it is that I am now beginning to mentor a second generation. (That one, although very true also made me feel a little old!)

I set out to be a blessing and in the end was blessed myself! Although we cannot physically be together, we can continue to bless each other.

How can you bless someone today?

KATE'S UPDATE:

This likely won’t be surprising, but ministry has been really challenging for a while now, and discouragement is the opponent that we face daily. While I have been blessed to be able to connect with a couple of students via messaging platforms, I **really, really** miss seeing students and being able to build relationships with them face-to-face.

Meanwhile, God has drawn my attention to 1 & 2 Timothy lately. I LOVE the example that Paul sets for us by encouraging a young man of faith to wholeheartedly pursue his relationship with Christ, growing in his own faith and leading others in theirs. We should be doing the same for our youth! This is a challenging time for everyone, but many young people feel lost and hopeless right now. Will you join me in praying for our youth and dedicating them to Christ? Pray for them as Paul prayed for Timothy: that they will pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22), and that they will train [them]selves for godliness (1 Tim. 4:7). While we can’t physically be with these youth, God is calling me to support them spiritually and lift them up in prayer – and I hope that you will too!

PS – On a personal note, God answered our prayers with the perfect house, and our move in January went very smoothly! Thank you for your prayers as we made the move to our hometown!



SHANE'S UPDATE:

Do you ever wonder what Caleb and Joshua did during the 40-year sentence they spent wandering the wilderness for a crime they didn't even commit? Did they rage against the injustice? Grumble? Succumb to bitterness? Maybe. But I think they also committed themselves to the 'ministry of memory'. Ministry of memory is a beautiful act of worship in which a person devotes time to reflecting on the miracles God has done in the **past**. It's why Israelites are still praising God for parting the Red Sea, thousands of years later! These days we have more time for study and reflection: let's not waste it. Nor should we neglect the 'ministry of memory'. Who has God positioned in your life to encourage you at key times? When was a time you experienced miraculous peace? This past week I found a card written to me from a man named Al McLean. Al worked for Youth for Christ in Abbotsford, BC – my hometown. Al was instrumental in my spiritual formation as a teen. He had a knack for reaching out at the exact right moment, undoubtedly led by the Holy Spirit. Though he is with Jesus now, Al McLean is a part of my ministry of memory, and tonight as I read over his formative words, written decades ago, I thank our awesome God who sustains us, encourages us, and brings men and women of faith into our lives at the exact right moments to lead us onward!

GRANT'S UPDATE:

I hope this letter finds you well as we are now well into 2021! While 2020 was certainly a difficult year, I also recognize that God did some great things in the midst of all the challenges and struggles! Whether it was the great stuff that our Stratford staff did to love and support local youth and families through the challenges of the pandemic, or the awesome relationships and impact I was able to have coaching as a part of Compass Basketball (in partnership with YFC London), or serving and supporting the work we're doing in TriCity, Mid-Huron, or our newest satellite, in Sarnia-Lambton, God has certainly been at work in and through our organization! As we set out in 2021, a verse that God has really laid on my heart for this year is found in Romans 15:13 – "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." These days, it seems like people are searching for, and even desperate for, something, or someone to put their hope in. I'm sure we could all name off a handful of different things we like to put our hope in, and my prayer for all of us, is that we would put our ultimate hope and faith in Jesus. He created you, He loves you, and wants nothing more than to carry you through this challenging season we find ourselves in.



Tour For Teens

Want to spend some time cycling through the countryside of Perth County, while also raising funds for valuable programs for teens? Mark your calendar for the annual Youth Unlimited YFC Tour For Teens, happening Saturday June 12th. Riders can choose from either a 25 KM, 50 KM, or 100 KM route, and are asked to raise a minimum of \$300 to participate. To register or for more information, call 519-272-1614, email us at info@yfcstratford.com, or visit www.swoyfc.com/tour-for-teens



Ministry Celebration Banquet Alternative

Unfortunately, we won't be able to gather together in spring of 2021 for our annual Ministry Celebration Banquet, but fear not, we're working on an alternative that will still allow us to achieve the three goals of this event – to glorify God for all he's done over the last year, to engage our community, and to raise some funds. Stay tuned for more information!



Wanted: Silent Auction Donations

Every spring, we have a silent auction to specifically raise funds to assist with the programming, retreats, and camps we do as part of our work to serve and support the youth of our community. This spring, our silent auction will once again be happening – this time online! If you, your family, your church, or your business has a great new or unused item or service that you'd like to donate for us to auction off, please reach out to us.