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THEIR FUTURE IN OUR HANDS
Our future in their hands



about us

Youth for Christ KwaZulu Natal is a mission and development agency committed to serving and addressing the needs of children and youth in KwaZulu Natal. Some of the current needs and issues are: homelessness, HIV and AIDS, personal development, gender empowerment, sexuality and reproductive health, unemployment, spirituality, leadership development and team building.

Youth for Christ began in KwaZulu Natal in the 80's. The organisation possesses deeply Christian spiritual and evangelistic roots and through the many years had to identify how to live and preach Christ in a way that young people can relate to and respect. A key aspect of YFC/KZN has been to live, serve and preach Christ to youth in a way that is real, accessible and relevant.

Youth for Christ reaches out to the unpopular, the somewhat unlovable groups like children and youth on the streets, young people in schools and communities that are on the edges of society. As an organisation Youth for Christ has learnt a tremendous amount about what works and what does not work in social and youth evangelism in South Africa. What effectively reaches youth and what clearly does not? It is an organisation rich in it's learning experience, with much to share with Christian and Non-Christian youth and other organisations alike.

MISSION STATEMENT

Youth for Christ KwaZulu Natal exists to bring hope to children and youth in and from disadvantaged communities by creating opportunities for holistic development. Holistic development encompasses mental, physical, spiritual and social development of young people. This includes giving every young person it comes into contact with an opportunity to become an informed follower of Jesus Christ.



core values



CHRISTIAN

We are committed to being Christian in every aspect of our beliefs, behaviour and mission.

TEAM

We believe in the importance of creating a team culture at every level of the organisation. We see interdependence, synergy and the sharing of resources and skills as vital in fulfilling our mission.

EXCELLENCE

We desire to develop standards of excellence in every aspect of conduct and business. We aim to set the highest standards that will result in us being seen as a role model and best practice.

PEOPLE

We are committed to loving people and to treating all with respect and dignity. This applies to both those with whom we work and partner, as well as the young people we seek to serve.

INTEGRITY

We are committed to a lifestyle of integrity through personal and organizational accountability. This relates to lifestyle, relationships, finance and mission.

we seek to serve...

HIV & AIDS

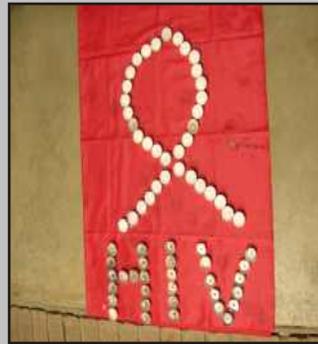
HIV and AIDS and Youth A Generation at Risk

Since AIDS first came to be known, it has created such a widespread presence that there is no country in the world that has completely escaped its impact. It is a universal disease with no respect for colour, tribe, creed, religion or economic background. Living in South Africa, a country where the AIDS pandemic is one of the worst in the world, the disease affects all segments of society, but has particularly ravaged historically disadvantaged communities, rural poor and urban marginalised, such as informal settlements and migrant workers.

But what about our Children and Youth?

HIV and AIDS is not only taking away our children's present, but also their future. The daily ravages of the global pandemic on millions of children and youth that live with dying parents or have been orphaned is a heart rending tragedy. Concern exists with the rapid spread of HIV and AIDS, disappointment at the apparent reluctance of young people to change their sexual behaviour and alarm and horror at the levels of child abuse and rape that exists.

What is the way forward in this struggle? This is a question with which we wrestle, as we engage in the fight against AIDS. What can we do that will actually make a difference? We believe passionately that the AIDS tide will be turned back by seeing young people as the solution. YFC/KZN's work with children and youth in all projects affirms young people by believing in them enough for them to believe in themselves. Building resilience, practising compassion, and teaching biblical values are part of the way forward.



leadership & team building



The Outdoors Experience

People today NEED to be taken from their environment into another that is 'safe' but different. This temporary community experience helps them to confront their fears, speak about their challenges and hopefully make decisions that will result in a future filled with hope. Getting back into 'creation' goes a long way to helping people reconnect or connect for the first time with their Creator. This connection is what brings true hope.

- Acknowledging the significant role that the 'outdoors' has to play in bringing healing
- Imparting skills, and sharing experiences that will help young people face their future with hope.

YFC/KZN makes use of this amazing opportunity. The indigenous forest, scenic trails and waterfalls form the backdrop for people to discover themselves, their Creator and realize the potential of 'being' together as a group.

Some of the issues addressed:

- Leadership
- Self awareness
- Decision making
- Dealing with conflict
- Poverty
- Peer pressure
- Dysfunctional families
- Formation of teams
- Group dynamics
- Self esteem
- HIV and AIDS



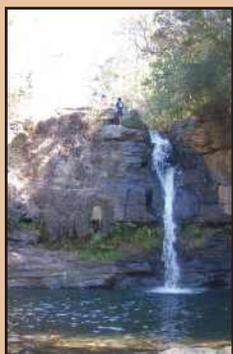
Utilising the 'outdoors' enables YFC/KZN to offer an experience of 'growth through discovery' leading to HOPE

For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water; I was a stranger and you invited me into your house; naked and you clothed me; sick and in prison, and you visited me.

Matthew 25:35

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to everyone, everywhere. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved; but those who refuse to believe will be condemned.

Mark 16:15-16



Anyone who oppresses the poor is insulting God who made them. To help the poor is to honour God.

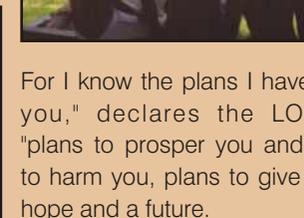
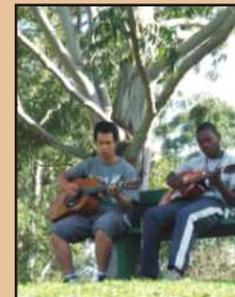
Proverbs 14:31

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Acts 2:17

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:29-31



For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all it is dead and useless.

James 4:17

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love kindness and mercy, and to humble yourself and walk humbly with your God?"

Micah 6:8

spirituality

Passion for Christ and Passion for Youth

Since 1944, Youth For Christ has had a distinctive history of youth evangelism. Beginning in dozens of cities across the USA enthusiastic young Christian leaders preached the gospel to a young generation weary of the costs of World War II. With a heartbeat of reaching the youth with the gospel of Christ, the motto **“Geared to the Times and Anchored to the Rock”** was coined.

Today with the same passion Youth for Christ seeks to present the gospel to every young person that it comes into contact with. The message of the gospel is timeless, a message that will never change but Youth for Christ seeks to be flexible in creatively communicating this message of hope, grace and love in the context we serve in.

The times we live in of poverty, moral decay, impact of HIV and AIDS and homelessness, just to mention a few issues, calls for a rebuilding of our moral fibre and upholding of biblical values. Our anchor is Christ. Our message is Christ centred that aims to restore dignity and present salvation to youth.

Billy Graham once said, “When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; but when character is lost, all is lost”. We cannot shape our present and our future with a generation of young people who are lost and are lacking in character. There is hope and potential in every young person to be all that the creator intended for them to be.

Christ Is Our Perfect Role Model



homelessness

Homelessness is defined as being in a state of having no home of any kind. This definition is very true for most of the adult population who are homeless, but is it also true for the homeless children and youth of our society?



In a survey which was done around this issue in the year 2000 showed the following findings:

- Children will leave home if their home life conditions are stressful or they don't have parents; either by abandonment or death. These children and youth generally leave their homes early to try to survive on their own.
- About 60% of homeless children have not been in an institution or shelter, while about 30 % of children who live on the streets have lived on the streets for more than three years. The more these children are distanced from possible rehabilitation resources', the more absorbed they become in the culture of street life.

This makes it clear that the issue of being homeless is not exactly the same as that of adults.

One of the differences between the adult homelessness and that of young people is that young people choose to run to the streets as a symbol of hope whilst with the adults it is usually represents giving up.

Some of the factors contributing to adult homelessness are sudden loss of means for an income, unemployment and lack of housing. However most young people choose to run away to the streets with the hope of making enough money to go to school or the hope of escaping the abuse at home and starting afresh. Young people almost always need an adult to advocate on their behalf and look out for them. It is therefore very unfortunate that frequently the adults that these young people come into contact with are the same ones that take advantage of their vulnerability and rob them of their innocence and positive outlook in life.

We have to make a commitment to be the kind of adults that will advocate for the disadvantaged and vulnerable young people of our society. We have to take steps to make sure that young people in our communities have adults that are looking out for them and their needs. YFC/KZN is investing its energy on initiatives with children, youth and their families from at-risk communities. Our intention is to hold families together.



gender and reproductive health

It has often been said that the teenage years are the “best years of life”. However, it is also a risky period of life. For youth, risk taking is a norm but some risky behaviour for youth is unsafe that has consequences for the future.

Being a teenager is a developmental period of life, there are tremendous biological, social, psychological and cognitive changes taking place in ones life. Attitude and values about behaviour is learned and internalised. For teenage boys, these can include viewing girls as sex objects, equating sexual prowess and multiple sex partners with manhood. These attitudes have led to human rights abuses and violence perpetrated by young men. Besides this, sex has become very common among youth and sexual behaviour that is fed by images from media, drug and alcohol intake and inaccurate information from peers has led to the practise of risky reproductive health and gender behaviour.

Reproductive health and gender knowledge is essential to promote a healthy life style as well as responsible behaviour. It would reduce youth vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, it would stimulate positive attitudes, build self esteem and promote values that enhance life. Youth need to develop skill necessary to practise safe behaviour, to be critical thinkers and to be positive decision makers.

In YFC/KZN, this is addressed through a variety of life skills and peer education programs in both primary and high schools.



volunteering

Whether you want to solve a problem, advance a worthy cause, improve your CV with new skills, meet new people or to develop as a person, volunteering can change ones life forever. Volunteers are from all walks of life who give freely of their time and sometimes their resources in order to make a difference in the lives of people.



Volunteer involvement benefits both the organisation and the volunteer. It increases the capacity of the organisation to accomplish their goals, provide support to full time staff and give children and youth individual attention, love and support they need.



For the volunteer, the benefits are numerous. It builds their confidence and self esteem, introduces them to new opportunities and challenges, provides them with a sense of fun and adventure, advances their ability to become employable, and is an opportunity meet and experience people from diverse cultures. The list goes on....

In Youth for Christ KZN, the value of our volunteers is priceless. As they serve the organisation by helping children and youth, they end up helping themselves thus creating a better community for all.

By asking people to volunteer, you are not asking people to work for free. It is about giving them an opportunity to make their lives richer

*The best way to find yourself,
is to lose yourself in the service
of others - Ghandi*