

ON THE LEVEL

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PROFILE

Jessica Taylor Adds to
YFC's Winning Outcomes

OPINION

Jon Coker Advocates for
Youth Owning the Pond

RAY NELSON IS WELCOMING YOUTH IN

PLACES OF POWER

GET USED TO IT!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“WHEN WILL THIS BE OVER?”

“I’VE HAD ENOUGH.”

“OKAY, OKAY, OKAY, ALREADY.”

These are a few of the common expressions that fire off in people’s minds (or out of their mouths) when they are annoyed or can no longer stomach a particular activity. Certainly, amid the COVID-19 crisis (and now the variant), many have uttered, if not screamed, such mantras. I’m convinced there are valuable lessons just waiting to be learned from repetitious occurrences that we can’t always control.

The toddler constantly banging the empty cup at the kitchen table. The hotel alarm clock that buzzes from the unoccupied room next to where you’re sleeping. The insect that’s attracted to the fragrance you’re wearing while seated in church. These are examples of annoyances that can in some way be controlled if appropriate action is taken.

When it comes to advocating for issues that urban youth believe need serious attention, I say, grab cups from the cupboard, set the alarm on blast, and release the gnat collection. Why? Because, until the right people in power not only hear but take appropriate action, let the banging and buzzing resound.

In the fall issue of *On the Level*, Ray Nelson (YFC 2018), Jessica Taylor (Portland 2013), Jon Coker (San Antonio 2017), and a host of DVULI fellows are pounding cups on the table for urban young people in their communities. Just like the gnat in your face at church, they are not going away.

I’m convinced there are **VALUABLE LESSONS JUST WAITING TO BE LEARNED** from repetitious occurrences that we can’t always control.

Whether you’re on the sending or receiving end of repetitious advocacy for our urban young people, you might as well get used to it because they’re not going away either!

Trust the process!

Gerald Bell
(Kansas City 2003), Editor

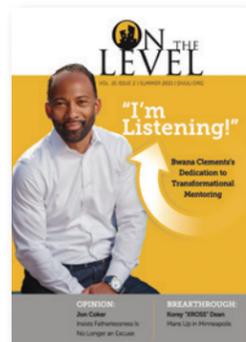
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OUR BAD!

The summer 2021 issue of *On the Level* reported inaccurate facts in the Korey “Xross” Dean (Twin Cities 2018) breakthrough story. Korey became a single

dad at age 20. He received college scholarship offers and attended the University of Louisville in Kentucky. The Man Up Club is for young men ages 12 to 24 and was launched in 2012. Thank you, Korey, for letting us share your story of breakthrough. Keep up the amazing work! OTL

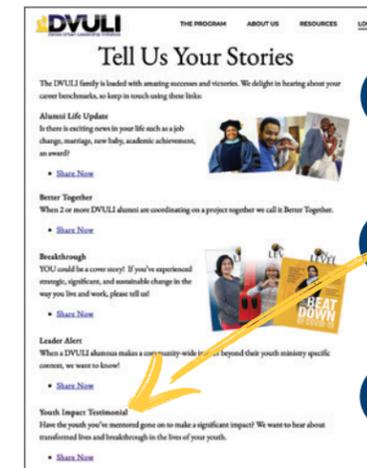
YOUTH IMPACT STORIES WANTED!

WHAT ARE YOUR YOUTH ACHIEVING?

WE WANT TO TELL YOUR YOUTH’S STORY!

Here is a chance for you to highlight the youth you lead and how your ministry is impacting their lives. Share the stories from the front lines, where children are making a difference in the lives of others in their communities. Did they make local or national news? Did their significant acts of service go unnoticed or unmerited? Let’s acknowledge it! DVULI wants to spotlight and champion them.

So please **SHARE** today! It’s easy as 1,2,3!



- 1 GO TO DVULI.org/yourstories
- 2 CLICK Youth Impact Testimonial
- 3 FILL OUT the online form

YOUTH IMPACT EXAMPLES:

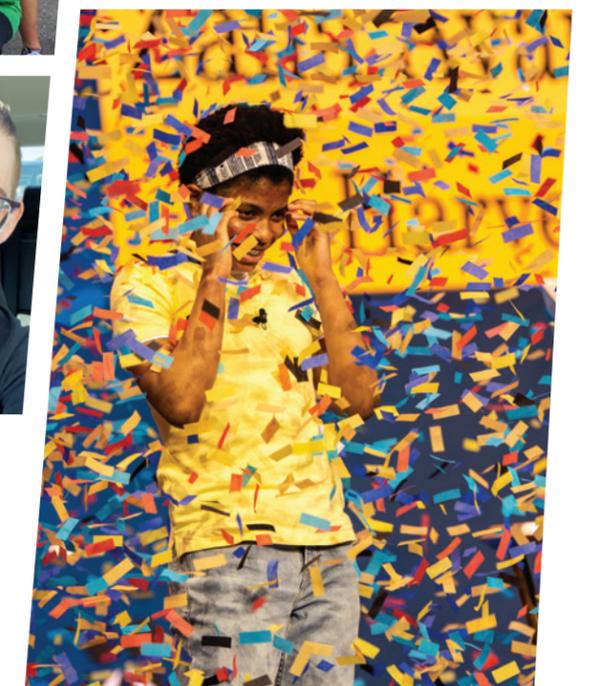


CLOCKWISE: Contagious enthusiasm: Sandy Hook Promise touts 13 teenagers serving on its youth advisory board. *Photo courtesy of newstimes.com.*

Seventeen-year-old Dasia Taylor was named one of 40 finalists in the Regeneron Science Talent Search, the country’s oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors. *Photo courtesy of Society for Science.*



Confetti rained down on Zaila Avant-garde, the Black 14-year-old national champion of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. *Photo courtesy of Heather Harvey / Scripps National Spelling Bee.*



Joseph Garcia, 20, is a former Mexican foster youth who helps others in the system. He is the President of Leader United Voice Advocates of New Mexico, an advocacy group to help better the foster care system. *Photo courtesy of Joseph Garcia.*

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022 CITY COORDINATORS



PLEASE WELCOME DVULI'S NEWEST CITY COORDINATORS

This is the selected team that will lead the class of 2022. If you know urban youth leaders in their cities who are good candidates for the DVULI investment, please contact our office or share your nomination here: dvuli.org/nominate.



MIKE DEAN
PORTLAND, OR
@MikeBDean



DVULI CITY COORDINATORS



SHANNON GASTON
DETROIT, MI
@DetroitYoungLife



BRANDON HILL
LOUISVILLE, KY
@B Hill_bttag



THOMAS BRACKEN
WASHINGTON, DC
@TbrackeenJr



SANDY VOGELMAN
SAN ANTONIO, TX
@SanAntonio_YFC



NOW RECRUITING FOR 2022
DVULI.org/Nominate

Inspiring urban youth to make the world a better place begins by listening to what they have to say. Although social media platforms are a hot spot for young people to speak their minds, there is no guarantee what they are posting, tweeting, and tagging is reaching the right ears and eyes.

Advocating for change, seeking improved conditions, or redirecting systems in any form demands speaking to certain powers, which tends to be a space where many urban young people believe they are neither qualified nor welcome.

AMPLIFYING YOUNG VOICES IN ALL THE RIGHT SPACES

By Gerald Bell (Kansas City 2003)



Ray Nelson (YFC 2018)
@RayNelsonSpeaks

"My dad's generation used to say that children should be seen and not heard," recalls Ray Nelson (YFC 2018), a national youth advocacy specialist and leadership trainer. "Through the years, we have become accustomed to building programs for urban youth and determining what they need without inviting them to be a part of their own solutions."

According to Nelson, giving youth a voice in places of power means doing the work to "create a culture of love and invite them to environments that are conducive to their growth and ability to speak and be heard."

"We (urban youth workers) have to challenge our community leaders to change their perception from seeing young people as liabilities to recognizing them as assets," argues Nelson, who's been serving youth for nearly 20 years in key positions with World Vision and Youth for Christ. "We use young people to set up tables and chairs but don't value what God has already put inside them."

For change and transformation to occur in the communities where urban youth live, learn, play, and advocate, it will require offering them a seat at the table

with power players and decision-makers. Being welcomed to the right table (in schools, community organizations, churches, government, etc.) is what Michael Mata, Director of Network Engagement and Leadership Development at TogetherLA, offers as the best way to amplify the voices of young people.



"Youth will definitely tell you what they think these days," Mata affirms. "But you have to guide, cultivate, and present their concerns in such a way that their passion, energy, and conviction for issues in society and in the community are translated clearly to the authorities in the room."

Mata points out that one of the top barriers young urban voices must overcome is what's called adulthood. "There are adults who don't value or appreciate the opinions youth have," he says. "They are certainly not on their social media platforms [consuming] what youth are saying."

"That means our youth have earned the right to be seated
IN PLACES WHERE CHANGE HAPPENS
and where systems, structures, and laws are created."

Mata adds how he's observed many adults in official positions who are highly impressed with the way youth articulate their desire for change when the adult takes time to be fully present and listen to what's on their agenda. "This proves you don't have to be angry, arguing, rioting, or protesting," he says. "And that we shouldn't be underestimating their potential."

"First, leaders have got to recognize that our young people bring skill sets, knowledge, fresh ideas, and artistic expression that can reach and influence the culture—as well as their peers—in a way that adults can't," insists Nelson. "That means our youth have earned the right to be seated in places where change happens and where systems, structures, and laws are created. Give youth a seat in places of power so they can also learn, discern, and be challenged to be a voice and speak into those processes."

WHAT'S A YOUTH WORKER TO DO?

Both Nelson and Mata advise that making space for urban youth to illuminate their voice begins with relationships. For instance, Nelson regularly invites youth to accompany him on speaking engagements and to meetings where significant decisions are being made. He believes such mentorship activities build relational trust and expose young advocates to conversations that contribute to the formation of their voice and build upon communication skills and the confidence to speak.

For the urban youth worker who detects that the young people they serve have a message, challenge, or solution to issues that must pass through higher-level positions, Nelson and Mata offer these non-exhaustive recommendations as steps toward building youths' capacity:

- When convening youth, give attention to how the room is organized. Put chairs in a circle so everyone can see one another, which signifies that the dialogue is completely open with no beginning and end.
- Probe into what youth wish to be different or better in their communities. Ask which issues they want to combat. (This could be something that affects them or their peers.)
- Clarify with youth what they value, so they understand why they feel the way they do.
- Drill down and assess with youth why they think the problem they want to address exists.
- Coach youth on how to express their issues articulately.
- Determine what platforms or audiences are best to release the power of their young voices.
- DVULI alumni should revisit Community Youth Development Workshop materials.
- Google "Community Youth Development" to reference what new resources come up.

DVULI HAS A NEW LOGO WITH A NEW LOOK, FEEL, AND SOUND!

DVULI /Deh-VOO-lee/

YOU SEE D-V-U-L-I BUT SAY DEH-VOO-LEE.

Many of you already refer to us as Deh-VOO-lee. We recognized that this pronunciation is easier to remember and say (even in Spanish), so we made it official!

By Kimberlee Mitchell

SAME MISSION, NEW INSPIRATION

In the new acronym logo, note the familiar city skyline design element added to the brand family in 2007. We wanted it to be distinct and memorable with a nod to the urban communities we serve.



The new wordmark artwork symbolizes God's light shining upon urban cities where our youth leaders, in turn, reflect His light back into the communities they serve.

Some of the additional versions of the new DVULI acronym logo were added to the brand family. You'll notice a refresh of our communications mastheads and social media accounts.

DON'T: WRITE OUT /DEH-VOO-LEE/ in your communications. It's a sound-spelling created to help with verbal (not written) pronunciation.

CONTINUE OLD HABITS of calling our program "DeVos," the "Initiative," the "Institute," or any of the other monikers.

Do: JUMP IN! You will see the new DVULI acronym logo everywhere, and it's yours to own and say!

USE the new /Deh-VOO-lee/ pronunciation in conversations. Set the example with friends, pastors, and alumni.

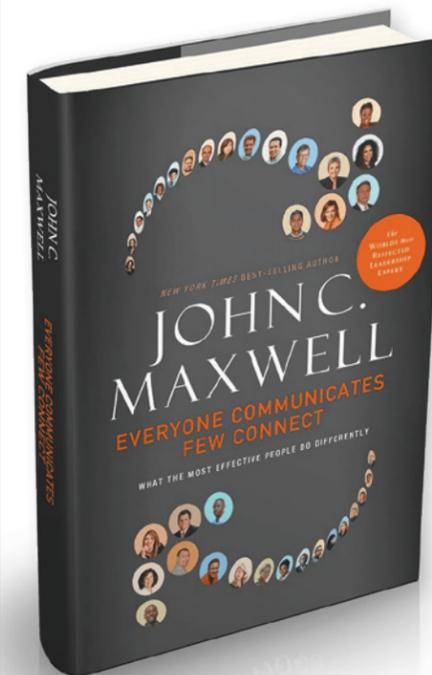
WRITE OUT the acronym DVULI when referring to our program.

WATCH THE CAMPAIGN VIDEO ONLINE:
[DVULI.org/News](https://www.dvuli.org/news) — DVULI-is-now-Deh-VOO-lee.

JOIN THE DVULI ONLINE COMMUNITY

The DVULI family is engaging with each other on social media. Tag us in your DVULI-related posts to keep everyone in the loop of your news, and you might receive some classic or new DVULI swag!

- [instagram.com/dvuli/](https://www.instagram.com/dvuli/)
- [facebook.com/dvuli/](https://www.facebook.com/dvuli/)
- [linkedin.com/company/dvuli/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dvuli/)
- [YouTube.com/dvuli](https://www.youtube.com/dvuli)



EVERYONE COMMUNICATES, FEW CONNECT

By John C. Maxwell

by Gerald Bell (Kansas 2003)

ONLY ONE THING STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND SUCCESS. IT ISN'T EXPERIENCE. IT ISN'T TALENT.

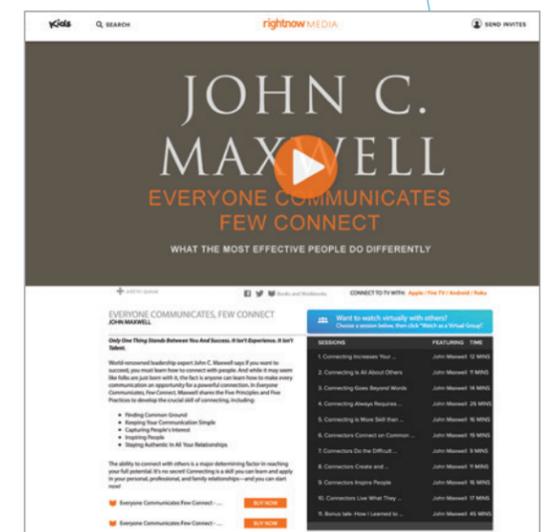
Every one of us has an audience. Whether you lead a small group, run a local training, mentor others in one-on-one relationships, or pastor a church, the book *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect* by John C. Maxwell will teach you how to captivate, retain, inspire, and strengthen every relationship.

World-renowned leadership expert John C. Maxwell says that you must learn how to connect with people if you want to succeed. While it may seem like folks are just born with it, anyone can learn how to make every communication an opportunity for a powerful connection. Plus, the ability to connect with others is a major determining factor in reaching your full potential. Connecting is a skill you can apply in your personal, professional, and family relationships—and you can start now.

rightnow MEDIA

PREFER TO LISTEN VERSUS READ? OPEN THE APP!

Enjoy a 12-video series on the book *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect* on your RightNow Media app.



BREAKTHROUGH



TAMMY BARNETT (Cincinnati 2012)

DISCOVERING THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP OF BALANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

By Kimberlee Mitchell

Tammy Barnett (Cincinnati 2012) has lived a unique and—some may say—charmed life. However, being married to a college coach and former professional football player is not without its challenges. For 17 years, Tammy, a mother of two, moved her family to wherever the best opportunities were for her husband Harlon’s career. “Every season, we brace ourselves

for what’s next,” shares Tammy. In the early years, she plugged into a church at each new location where she served in youth ministry. Managing ministry life with the “if-it-ain’t-broke-don’t-fix-it” mentality, Tammy worked hard to balance her personal life and professional life. When she started the DVULI program, Tammy was part of a flourishing youth ministry and CEO of a nonprofit



organization (S.O.A.R. Development Corp); however, she was consumed with balancing youth ministry and her personal life. “At the rate I was going, something was going to give, and it would have been my ministry life and serving in the kingdom,” admits Tammy.

DVULI helped her recognize the vast difference between managing and balancing. Tammy recalls, “The most consistent and noticeable lesson I learned from the program was how to operate in ministry without sacrificing my personal life.” For Tammy, the integral key to striking the core value of balance was an ongoing process, achieved only through consistent and strategic accountability.

“I NOW HAVE ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS IN MY LIFE. NOT JUST ONE, BUT SEVERAL IN A VARIETY OF AREAS:

PROFESSIONAL, PERSONAL, AND SPIRITUAL.”

“DVULI was instrumental in helping me recognize that it’s okay to admit and acknowledge the areas in my life where accountability was necessary,” reflects Tammy, admitting that as a counselor, accountability is hard to find, especially as a woman. “I now have accountability partners in my life. Not just one but several in a variety of areas: professional, personal, and spiritual. When I feel depleted or not in tune in one of these areas, I seek those individuals, and they help me realign.”

Tammy has a standing 45-minute coffee meeting with one of her accountability partners every week. The meeting starts with check-in updates and soundboarding. The structure has “evolved a bit through the years” but consistently includes “complete objectivity” and no-holds-barred transparency. Tammy chose this particular accountability partner because she’s a “phenomenal woman of prayer and faith, who succeeds in having a professional career while being a wife, mom, and grandma.” Tammy explains, “I knew I needed someone who was the very example of who I wanted to be. She and her husband also co-pastor a church in the community.”

This like-minded accountability relationship and others modeled after it helped lead Tammy to her breakthrough, which was to complete her PhD in Christian Counseling in 2016. “DVULI gave me just the

right amount of motivation and resources to continue and complete the work,” shares Tammy.

Today, Tammy is blessed with a 30-year marriage, two adult children, a “bonus” son-in-law, a granddaughter, a doctorate, a thriving women’s ministry, and, more recently, a book publishing deal. Looking back, she claims, “DVULI added years to my ministry life. I was able to dig deep, learn the core values, and apply the core values to both my work and personal life. A large portion of that work can be extremely uncomfortable, but the return on your investment pays off over a lifetime.”

LEFT: Tammy’s accountability partner, Dr. Margaret Eggleston. BELOW: Harlon (husband), Tammy, Tori (daughter), Ever (granddaughter), Elijah (bonus child/son-in-law), and Todd (son).



ADVOCACY: EMPOWERING YOUTH TO BE DIFFERENCE MAKERS

By John Coker (San Antonio 2017)

WHEN THE WORLD WAS SHUT DOWN, OUR YOUTH WERE SHUT UP.

The events of the past two years traumatically impacted our nation's youth, and somehow, in all of the breaking news coverage, their stories were left out. We saw countless statistics about our youth, but we heard very few insights from their perspectives. When parents lost their jobs, their children did not eat. We saw their innocent faces plastered on food drive promos but never heard their voices. When the news preached the daily death tolls, our sons and daughters internalized anxiety in isolation. We saw them turn to destructive behaviors, and we tried to fix them rather than listen to the source of their pain. When schools shut down, our students were shut up and forced to struggle through the glitches of virtual learning. Most students in urban communities found themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Our students are challenged to perform at their district's set standard of excellence, but only a few of them were adequately equipped to do so.



Jon Coker (San Antonio 2017) is the Student Ministries Director at Christian World Worship Center in San Antonio, Texas. He is also a multimedia journalist and digital reporter for KENS-5, a public speaker, and a contributing writer. jcoker34@gmail.com

YOUTH ADVOCACY IS ALL ABOUT EMPOWERMENT.

It is knowing when to speak to someone, when to speak for someone, and when to speak less altogether.

strong sense that this generation needs more preaching pastors—advocates who will champion their cause from the mountaintops while tending to their wounds in the valley trenches. They do not need people to fix them. They need people to understand them, and we have allowed too many voices to define, diminish, and diagnose them without passing them the mic. Kids are coping with a rapidly changing world. Industry leaders are determining what is best for them without considering the pain they are suppressing.

Several organizations, including the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), reported significant surges of mental health symptoms in teenagers since last year. Many student groups aging between 13 and 17 were surveyed and reported increased symptoms of anxiety (73%), depression (67%), and suicidal thoughts (48%). Couple those experiences with the isolation of quarantine, the absence of deep, meaningful relationships, and the stresses of managing a plummeting grade point average via Zoom. The West Virginia Education Association reported that in 2020, the average American teenager spent an astounding nine hours a day entertaining themselves with digital technology, video games, social media, and streaming videos. This excessive screen time does not include hours spent during the regular virtual school day.

Our kids are seeking an outlet and settling for an escape into the virtual world. The internet is the new mission field. Although the most at-risk youth reside in urban communities, they live online. To be a "fisher of men" today requires casting our net into the net. Who better to reel in the lost souls of the deep than the stakeholders who have seemingly mastered every app? They are the innovative entrepreneurs who discover ways to manage e-commerce businesses from their phones while in class.

They launch TikTok channels and podcasts to cancel what they hate and normalize what they love. It is time to provide our youth with the space, voice, and power to make their mark. Youth advocacy is all about empowerment. It is knowing when to speak to someone, when to speak for someone, and when to speak less altogether. Today's youth leaders are the opportunity brokers who can make room for our next generation to excel in every industry.

The path forward is simple. Give a kid a fish, and you feed him for the day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. Teach him how to own the pond, and you shift the trajectory of future generations to come. These are not multiple-choice options. They are the progressions of true advocacy.

However, I do have a strong sense that this generation needs more preaching pastors—advocates who will **CHAMPION THEIR CAUSE FROM THE MOUNTAINTOPS** while tending to their wounds in the valley trenches.

Psalm 127:4 says, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth" (NKJV). The psalmist compares children to arrows. Like arrows, it's dangerous to launch a child into life without first aiming them. The trajectory of a young person's life is shaped by the balance of advocacy and affirmation—the voices that speak up for them and the voices that speak into them. Unfortunately, today, the arrows of our future rest on the brittle bowstrings of our negligence. The fifth verse of that text says, "Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. He will not be put to shame when he confronts the enemies at the gate." If we aim our youth today, they will be our

arrows of defense tomorrow. We can rest in our old age knowing our children will represent us in courtrooms, develop breakthrough cures and technologies, and guard the values that bind our families together.

I have served as a youth pastor in an urban San Antonio community for nearly 15 years. We learned that our success in reaching young people has been more connected to our presence than our preaching. We see great momentum in all expressions of our ministry, but nothing validates young gifts and voices like our attention. We would never suggest substituting the preaching of the gospel for casual social gatherings. However, I do have a

STEP ONE: GIVE A KID A FISH

Advocate on this level by simply meeting the felt needs of the ones entrusted to your care. When students come to you hungry, do not try to teach them. Feed them. When young people trust you with their wounds, tend to them, and fight for them.

STEP TWO: TEACH HIM HOW TO FISH

Advocate on this level by teaching youth how to advocate for themselves. Create judgment-free spaces where they feel safe to discuss their ideas and test their gifts. While they are building their confidence, create opportunities for them to be the difference makers. Change the traditional roles. Pass them the mic and take a seat in the audience. Lead them while they lead their peers and teach them how to meet the felt needs of others.

STEP THREE: TEACH HIM HOW TO OWN THE POND

Advocate on this level by teaching them how to advocate for others.

ALUMNI PROFILE

by Will Cumby (Houston 2010)

NAME: Jessica Taylor (Portland 2012)



NAME OF ORGANIZATION:
Youth for Christ

POSITION: Chief of Staff

JLTcoach Jessica Lynn Taylor (cpc)

How long have you been involved in youth programs, and how do you fulfill your mission?

Fifteen years ago, I felt God calling me to empower upcoming generations of world changers. Without having a clue what that calling would come to mean, I jumped in. For the past four years, I have served young people with the organization Youth for Christ (YFC). What began as a unique way to serve youth in my community soon became the chance to serve as Special Advisor to the President of YFC, and now I serve as Chief of Staff to our new President, Jake Bland.

I believe that good leadership inspires and models a preferred future to those it impacts. As leaders, if we are not healthy, engaged, and fully ourselves, young people don't have a good example to follow. YFC reaches young people everywhere with the hope of Jesus. We do this by going to where kids are in their communities with safe, empowering adults. It is a beautiful picture when Christ-centered leaders work, lead, and advocate for a kingdom mission. I hope to inspire leaders to co-create a world where leadership is not defined by followers but by impact.

Why do you think God has called you to this work?

I am confident that my calling is to empower others and to position myself as a kingdom collaborator. I believe that young people have the keys to unlock what we have thought of as unsolvable problems. Engaging in a healthy, humble, and empathetic way will change the world and will certainly change the world of a young person.

What do you hope to accomplish while you serve in this capacity?

I envision a movement where leaders abide in Christ and are empowered to work together to model interdependence to a divided world. As a body of believers, I hope that we continue to grow into the kind of people God uses to communicate the hope of Christ to young people. I want to see the leadership in our organization represent the young people and communities we serve so we truly can reach young people everywhere as our mission calls us to do. When we process life together with the Spirit of Christ by hearing, listening, and seeing one another, we achieve a multidimensional, thriving community.

AS A BODY OF BELIEVERS, I HOPE THAT WE CONTINUE TO GROW INTO THE KIND OF PEOPLE GOD USES TO COMMUNICATE

THE HOPE OF CHRIST TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

What challenges have you or the organization had to overcome?

Our local YFC chapters, staff, and volunteers made essential pivots to rally around young people experiencing complex realities last year. Our communities were desperate for continued engagement, and we answered that call. We used a "replace not cancel" model, which meant we were creative, gritty, and connected in a time when so much disconnection and chaos was present in the lives of young people.

We instituted drop-off care packages and birthday presents, front door family photos, food drives, and a social distance food pantry. We held virtual clubs and on-line game tournaments that provided the most incredible response. Our people found such creative ways to stay in touch as they continued impacting young people, sharing life, telling stories, and keeping relational ministry alive.



LEFT: June 2021
Curtis Wright is a mentee of Dr. Perkins and former YFC employee and our new President Jake Bland (bottom right). We did a special session on reconciliation for the movement of YFC to encourage all the leaders.

What collaborative opportunities are benefiting this work?

We are deeply connected in our local communities and prioritize empowering leaders from within the communities we serve, so young people see themselves represented in leadership. We are collaborating with countless churches, universities, parachurch ministries, and other like-minded partners. Collaboration prevents us from wasting valuable time and resources or reinventing the wheel, so we can leverage that time to engage youth. When we lay down ego and focus on the larger impact, we really can function better together.

What are you most proud of that YFC has accomplished?

Right now, I am most proud of the growth we have seen in incorporating more diverse voices in our movement as we have been championing the inclusion of women and people of color in more meaningful and substantial leadership roles. This comes as a result of our commitment to enduring humility as we learn and grow in this space. The outcome of a more diverse expression of the kingdom means more young people can be engaged in relationships with adults and with God.

How can your DVULI family pray for you as you move forward?

As we continue to reach young people navigating such a complex world, pray that we would be leaders who abide in Christ, and from that abiding, God gets the glory for the eternal impact.



SELF-CARE vs. SOUL-CARE: THE DIFFERENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF EACH

By Archie Honrado (Los Angeles 2010)

The ongoing pandemic has exposed existential angst in many of us. The body and mind have discovered the will to survive through self-care, which many refer to as "me time." Self-care can be life-giving, and when regularly practiced, it can prevent certain mental health issues such as burnout. In times like this, give yourself permission to do self-care, refusing to let any voice guilt-trip you. Also, learn to understand the difference between self-care and soul-care.

Self-care is exclusively leisure and pleasure for the body or mind. Soul-care is all that plus feeding our spirit the bread of life. Self-care can be a holy leisure that turns into soul-care when it is more than intentional me time. Soul-care is a variety of spiritual practices that pursues intimacy with Christ.

Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. —John 6:32 NIV

Our self-care initiative becomes the true bread of life when taken with intention and mindful of the presence of the indwelling Christ. Self-care without soul-care is like saying Moses was the one who gave the true bread from heaven, not the Father, as Jesus mentioned. This leads us nowhere near Jesus but only leads us back to ourselves because it lacks soul depth.

TO ACHIEVE SELF-CARE THAT NURTURES THE SOUL, I SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING:

- Adopt a permission-giving attitude to allow yourself to practice self-care.
- Talk about your self-care experience with a spiritual companion like a spiritual director, pastor, or counselor.
- Give your self-care practice a spiritual power, turning it to soul-care by surrounding and enhancing your activities with prayer, journaling, and reflection.
- Imagine your self-care activity as a sacred act that draws you closer to Jesus, and in doing so, your self-care will begin to transcend to soul-care.

While self-care cultivates loving yourself, soul-care cultivates loving your neighbor.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION FROM ARCHIE



Archie Honrado (Los Angeles 2010) offers fellow DVULI alumni three complimentary Spiritual Direction sessions. To learn more, contact him at archiehonrado@gmail.com.

For more soul-care guidance, visit my Facebook page: facebook.com/soultrellis.



DVULI ALUMNI ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: FREE COUNSELING!
In any given year, we offer three sessions per episode of care.

TO LEARN MORE, go to dvuli.org/alumni-resources and look for "Counseling Services."

LEADER ALERT

WHAT COMMUNITY-WIDE IMPACT ARE YOU LEADING?



» REV. CARY JAMES

(Washington, DC 2009) was featured in the *Washington Informer* for his help in combating the coronavirus.

Photo by William J. Ford/*The Washington Informer*.



» DANNY MARQUEZ

(YFC 2018) organized a fundraiser to encourage community involvement by helping 80+ people rappel down a 17-story building.

📷 @danny_marq



» LATONYA GATES

(Atlanta 2019) purchased a food truck that will be beneficial to community members who are elderly or without transportation.

📷 @pawkids_at_grovepark
@latonyagatesjohnston



» JOHNNY FINE

(Cleveland 2007) made the local news when his ministry van was stolen, and he used the opportunity to reflect a forgiving spirit and unwavering heart.

📷 @jonny.fine



» DANNY SANCHEZ

(Oakland 2021) partnered with public schools to provide COVID-related support to students and families.

📷 @pastordanny_sanchez



» ISA NICHOLS

(Seattle/Tacoma 2011) toured several correctional centers for women around the Northeast to inspire inmates on the subjects of trauma and reconciliation.

📷 @IsaFarrington



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DVULI ALUMNI UPDATES



Leroy Barber (Atlanta 2008) received the 2021 Tom Locke Innovative Leader Award from the Wesleyan Investive.

 @leroybarber



Daniel Cody (Newark 2014) became a father for the second time when he and his wife, Tiffani, welcomed Olivia Grace into the world on May 21, 2021.

 @droyul



Chris Bates (Los Angeles 2010) helped lead the USA Water Polo Men's National Team all the way to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics.

 @coachbatesatc



Sonya McNeil (Cleveland 2009) married Brian Kimball on June 12, 2021. They honeymooned at the Mansion at Noble Lane in Bethany, Pennsylvania.  @smilingsonya



Tara Bollinger (Dallas 2019) married Hakan Oksuzler on June 21 at the Grand Wailea Chapel in Maui, with only 16 guests attending. Their honeymoon was spent with the entire family in Maui.  @radiant_tara



Juan Vasquez (Newark 2014) married Julia Davis on July 3, 2021, at Chesterfield Presbyterian Church in Chesterfield, Missouri. They took their week-long honeymoon in San Diego, California.  @vasquez.juan1410



Krista Schlereth (Pittsburgh 2018) and her husband, Chris, welcomed baby Logan into their family on May 9.  @krista.schlereth



Bryant Keal (Philadelphia 2019) and his new spouse, Brittany, were married on June 24, 2021, at the Cira Green Park. The Keals honeymooned in Columbia.  @bryant.keal.75