

FM419 Hits the Mark in Milwaukee

✖ For Violet Rose Heckman, FM419 was a place where, for once, she really connected with other people. The 18-year-old is working to overcome childhood abuse and several suicide attempts. Trusting other people and forming close ties has been a challenge, “but it was easy to talk to people there,” she said.

“The FM419 leaders prayed with me and helped me believe in my dreams and believe in myself,” said Heckman, who wants to help other people experiencing the kind of pain she felt growing up. “My God and my art helped me more than anything; now I want to serve others. FM419 was a good boost to that vision.”

Heckman is not alone in her enthusiasm. More than 730 people from the Milwaukee area came out to worship with Aaron Gillespie and learn more about Christ and how to share Him with their friends during the upcoming Rock the Lakes event Aug. 20-21 at Veterans Park.

FM419, a youth-oriented version of BGEA’s Christian Life and Witness Class, prepares youth leaders and students to be a light in the darkness and

qualifies them to serve as counselors at Franklin Graham Festivals and Will Graham Celebrations.

John Cass, one of the trainers in Milwaukee, emphasized the importance of the gospel. "The intent with FM419 is to challenge young people to step up and step out, that the gospel isn't something to be ashamed of. And it's not just because God's Word says so."

Cass told the audience: "If you start living out how your life has been changed, if other people see that, they are going to watch you live this thing called life, and they are going to want to know what's going on."

The gospel is the key to reach young people, Cass said. FM419 is effective because it specifically targets youth. "That lets kids know they are important. We help them reach their demographic—their friends, their neighbors, their family—in a setting that is not like their parents' or their grandparents'."

Effective indeed. More than 140 people made decisions for Christ at FM419 in Milwaukee a few weeks ago.

"The event impacted the lives of students at our church, and that following Sunday, one of our students gave his heart to the Lord," said Genene Hibbler, a youth pastor in Milwaukee. "It was a revival for young

people. The three speakers were very personal and inspired the students with their testimonies.”

David Santiago, another area youth pastor, said: “Everybody loved it. The speakers did an amazing job and the information presented was meaty. The message and teaching was right on and the students were changed by it.”

“The content was amazing and the way it was delivered kept it live and moving,” said Phil Schank, Rock the Lakes student committee head. “Watching the kids come together to worship was very powerful.”

“It was awesome,” said youth pastor Tom Gessner. “I wish we could have more of these events throughout the year. It really encouraged students to share their faith and it was all very relevant to their lives. FM419 gave students the opportunity to enter into God’s presence and called them to love other people like Christ loves us.”

For Gessner, the call to love God and love others really stood out. “The song that Aaron Gillespie sang with the lyrics—*For all Your sons and daughters who are walking in the darkness, You are calling us to lead them back to You*—was really inspiring and relevant.”