

Key Ministry Gains Impact by Reaching Out to Hispanic Youth

For Youth For Christ (), a pillar in the youth ministry community in America for the past 77 years, part of their mission of reaching local youth and creating impactful relationships that connect young people with the truth of the gospel is understanding the local community. For the San Antonio YFC chapter, this means being aware of the prevalent Hispanic community.

San Antonio is heavily influenced by its Mexican roots, with 54% of the population identifying as Hispanic and 91.3% of the Hispanic population tracing their ancestry back to Mexico. This community is the focus of SAYFC's many ministry outreaches. With reports of Black and Latino children disproportionately falling behind in today's society of virtual or hybrid learning due to the lack of computer access, infrequent ability to use the internet, COVID-related health challenges and other various struggles, SAYFC is more determined than ever before to connect with Hispanic youth in the community.

With ministries such as Campus Life, City Life, Parent Life, YFC Lit, and YFC camps, SAYFC reaches out to local youth and provides a safe place for them to feel connected and represented. Gilbert Hernandez, Chief Executive Officer of SAYFC, stated, "The mission of Youth For Christ is to engage lost kids with authentic, Christ-sharing relationships with loving Christian adults. The youth in our area are in tougher places than they've ever been before. More and more studies are showing us that while it used to take one or two adults to impact the life of a student, now it's six to seven adults that are needed to make a positive impact. And for the young

people in San Antonio, we have engaged over a thousand kids in public school systems through mentorship relationships to make that positive impact.”

For youth who need to feel a sense of belonging, having a place like SAYFC is crucial. One local youth named Leeandra stated, “I have a lot of struggles in my life right now, but through all of it, Campus Life has helped me. I continue to go to Campus Life because the energy is so positive; everyone is so unbelievably nice and sweet, and they just like treat me like family.”

“As we engage kids to become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ, our hope is that they become not only lifelong followers of Jesus, but those disciples make more disciples,” Hernandez said. “We want to direct them towards our leadership pathway so that they can find their calling and purpose in Christ Jesus. We at SAYFC see this as a great opportunity for them to grow, belong and serve—to not only start the journey, but go full circle and then come back, love and serve the very community God called them from.”

Jacob Bland, president and CEO of YFC, recently released his five-year vision for YFC leadership, with the goal to continue fostering meaningful relationships with youth like this and to engage one million kids for Christ. Bland stated, “This is our pivotal moment to serve the church by creatively reimagining youth ministry yet again. I believe the cultural conditions are right for us to experience the greatest youth revival our generation has ever seen. God has given us the right team to do this—and His hand is clearly on our mission.” {eoa}

Youth For Christ has chapters impacting thousands of communities across the nation that seek out and serve youth from all walks of life. Many teens are silently struggling through a wide variety of challenging issues—and through the ministry God empowers through YFC, they see the living power of a loving God. YFC trains its leaders in a proven,

relational ministry model called 3Story®, which encourages staff and volunteers to be good news while also sharing the stories of the Good News of Jesus. It involves building relationships through the ups and downs of everyday life in order to lead people to Christ.

YFC has been a pillar of missional ministry since 1944, when the Rev. Billy Graham served as YFC's first full-time staff member. Since then, Youth For Christ has continued to be both a rural and urban ministry on mission, and it is always about the message of Jesus. YFC reaches young people everywhere, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, passion for sharing the love of Christ and commitment to social involvement. Youth For Christ operates in over 100 nations and has 137 chapters that impact communities across America.

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