

Life STORIES



Making Memories

We've just got back from our annual retreat (Boot Camp), and it was an absolute blast! **Boot Camp is an opportunity to take our students out of the city, to be safe, eat lots, and have the most amount of fun ever.** It's the weekend that all of our returning students look forward to the most, and this year, it was simply fantastic. We know we've hit the mark when kids come back and immediately want to know when Boot Camp is next year!

We decided to switch things up, going to a totally different venue at Hepburn Heritage Common (AKA the old Bethany College campus). Instead of cabins we stayed in dorms, and instead of a tiny gym, we played in a massive one. It really changed the game, but also allowed our kids to strut their stuff, showing off all the skill they've worked on this season. It was a tight tournament and ended up being an incredible, and memorable, weekend.

Kim Worthington, our previous Executive Director and founder of the Youth For Christ Hockey League, was our speaker for chapels this year. He told his life story, shared about his family struggles, his battle with addiction, and ultimately the miraculous exit from that lifestyle that he experienced. He shared about the risks he took in starting this hockey league and reflected upon its almost 15 years of success. **The kids loved listening to his story and, obviously, could relate to a ton of it.** It was so great to have Kim there and to see what this league has become.

What we're really looking forward to, is seeing how the relationships have changed in our community. Because, as we switch up the teams for this tournament, we always find the beginning of new friendships. **Good times and bad times can bring people together, and lately we've had both.** Our hope is that these friendships and experiences will result in greater unity of our community.

Persevering

It's been a hard season. We've had some great things happen lately, but have also been met with heartbreak. Through the sadness we continue to persevere.

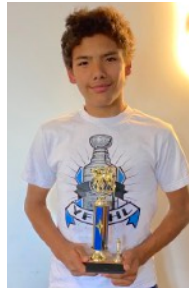
With all the difficulties the one thing that has not changed is the amazing support we've continued to receive. **We still maintain that 90% support and a full paycheque for the foreseeable future.**

Thank you for continuing to lift us up as we work through some really difficult situations. **Your prayer, encouragement, and support keep us going.** Thank you.

Evan & Rebecca

"This was the bestest weekend I've ever had in my life. This is the longest I've ever been happy."

Mourning Together.



If you haven't heard, we've been heartbroken for the last few weeks. **Robin Godfrey was a beloved member of our community and passed away tragically in an accident on February 23rd. He was the most energetic and positive kid I think we've ever had the pleasure of working with.** He came to us a little earlier than most, joining our community when he was only 9, and boy was he a handful. **Through the years we saw this little boy grow up to become quite a thoughtful and respectful young man (though still with a massive pile of energy).**



He was a real bright spot for us. Earlier this year he had moved away to Battleford and we were sad to see him go. However he had made an effort to let us know he was actually doing really well. He had found a great group of friends and was enjoying being outside on an acreage. We wanted to keep Robin around, but were encouraged by the check-ins we'd received from him. He'd check in on us wondering how things were going and how we were doing, because that's the kind of kid he was.

We have been devastated as a community. Because of some complications with the service we were unable to attend the funeral. **We decided to hold our own little memorial service for him, just to give our students a way to grieve and mourn, and do it together.** We are going miss him, but **he knew that we loved him deeply. We were blessed to be a part of this young man's story and share the hope of Jesus with him.**

We loved Robin. We were blessed to journey with him these last 6 years

Dealing with Death

I was reminded how close death is to so many of our students these last few weeks. Our students experience death regularly. Most have no idea how weddings work, or what to even do at them, but they've experienced their fair share of wakes and funerals. **Death seems to always be circling our students, and dealing with it often goes poorly.**

The Wednesday after Robin passed away, I talked through the concept of pain and how death is the absolute worst kind of pain. There is a reason why the Creator of the universe sees that pain in the people around Him, feels it Himself, and is reduced to tears. Even though He would raise Lazarus back to life, He feels the pain it caused and it produces a powerful two-word verse; "Jesus wept." It wasn't even a final death, but it still produces powerful emotions, reducing Jesus to tears. **Death is the worst, and refusing to deal with its pain can bring terrible consequences.**

With this reality, **it's no wonder why so many of our students and their families deal with substance abuse problems.** There are helpful, and unhelpful, ways to deal with pain. When you've never been taught to handle things properly, the default response is usually toward the easiest, least helpful solution. This is where we see substances take over. **They provide the easy out, numbing and ignoring the real cause, which is so much harder to deal with.**

After going through, yet another, traumatic experience, my prayer is that our students learn to deal with this properly. It is too easy to avoid this and move on without really grieving and feeling the pain of losing Robin. **Continue to pray for us as we try to guide our students through this.** We want to point them to the One who defeated death, yet still mourns and grieves with them. "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." - John 16:33b



A picture from our own little memorial we held for Robin. We had about 30 people attend from our community. We looked at pictures, shared stories and ate together. Hopefully this provided some closure to those around us that needed it.