



SPRING 2017 UPDATE

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"JUST GET OUT OF THE WAY, AND LET GOD DO HIS THING."

If you Google'd "how to get out of the way, and let God work," Youth Unlimited's Engage Sports program should be the first item to come up in your search. Over the last three months, I've often found myself saying the same thing over in my heart, "just get out of the way, and let God do His thing." The

Engage Hockey League kicked off in October 2016, featuring two teams created out of our weekly drop in at the Foundation Youth Centre. The same two teams played each other week in and week out for two months; little did I know what was about to happen next.

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Despite the simplicity of the program, youth were being challenged athletically, building solid relationships and breaking down barriers of pre-conceived opinions about each other. We developed a partnership with the Millwoods Assembly Church youth department, which allowed the use of their facilities for our Friday EHL games; this proved to be very valuable, in time for the New Year.

January rolled around, our winter 2017 season and two more teams were birthed - one from the Foundation Youth Centre and another from our very own Rebuild program. Fridays now saw weekly meals provided by brand new ministry partners and volunteers, followed by challenging discussions on topics such as "do you believe in Karma" and "what's my purpose in life".

Three new, full time volunteers joined Engage Sports. They are all heavily invested in the daily well being of our program. Each team has a Facebook chat group where they discuss strategy, along with



one Engage Hockey League chat, consisting of over twenty people who connect daily to

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encourage each other. Young people, who were total strangers to each other a year ago, are now all great friends. A family has developed.

We have been broadcasting one game per week on Facebook live, which includes play by play and will have anywhere up to two hundred views within forty-eight hours. To cap off our 2017 season, we received a private suite to the Oil Kings game on March 19th, which was the first time quite a few of them had ever seen the new arena.

Plans for our spring season, that begin in April, already include a new Engage TV Youtube channel, possible expansion of two more teams and positive growth in lives of the youth who Engage, with many more initiatives ahead that we can't mention yet! (Keep an eye out for June 2nd.)

I tried for so long to do things on my own, until I decided to "...let God do His thing". Now I literally can't stop the momentum of what God is already doing and will continue to do, in order to show each and every youth one important principle:

"You are worth it!"

-DAVE FALK
ENGAGE SPORTS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

“LETS TALK ABOUT SEX”

Gone are the days where our youth centre was flooded with only junior high students. Nowadays, we have more and more high school attenders. They bring with them a whole new set of challenges for us - staff and

volunteers. As kids get older, it's now not always as simple as playing a game of pool in order to break the ice and start building a relationship. Older kids make you work for it.

We have one student who tried pushing us away every time we talked to her. Her method was to tell stories that she thought would shock us or offend us so that we leave her alone or perhaps, consider her 'too →

far gone'. Instead, we listened and continued to invest in her. We attempted to show her that we will care for her, no matter what. Eventually, she started to let her guard down, one bit at a time and reveal some of her true self. She started being honest about her home life and we've learned that life has not been easy for her. She currently lives with an older sister, often goes without eating a lunch and then stocks up on food when she's at our youth centre. We're still learning about her and figuring out how we can be the best kind of help for her. But for now, we're excited that she's found a space where she feels free to be herself.

We also face challenges with our high school students as they are in and out of dating relationships, almost on a weekly basis. We once joked about creating a diagram in our office showing which kids are dating, which ones aren't speaking to each other anymore and which kids are neutral. Joking or not, that might actually be helpful! But what I believe to be a large contributing factor to all of this is that many of these teens have never actually seen a healthy relationship modeled for them. So our challenge as leaders is to help the kids under-

stand what healthy relationships look like and then encourage the kids to make the choices that work towards them.

Knowing that many of our teens who are in relationships are sexually active, we are passionate about addressing the topic of sex directly. In January, we hosted an event called, "Let's talk about Sex", where we showed Pam Stenzel's teaching video called "The High Cost of Free Love". The video shares extensive information on pregnancy, STI's and various other facts that sexually active teens today are not being told. Students were able to ask questions, learn a great deal and find out various re-

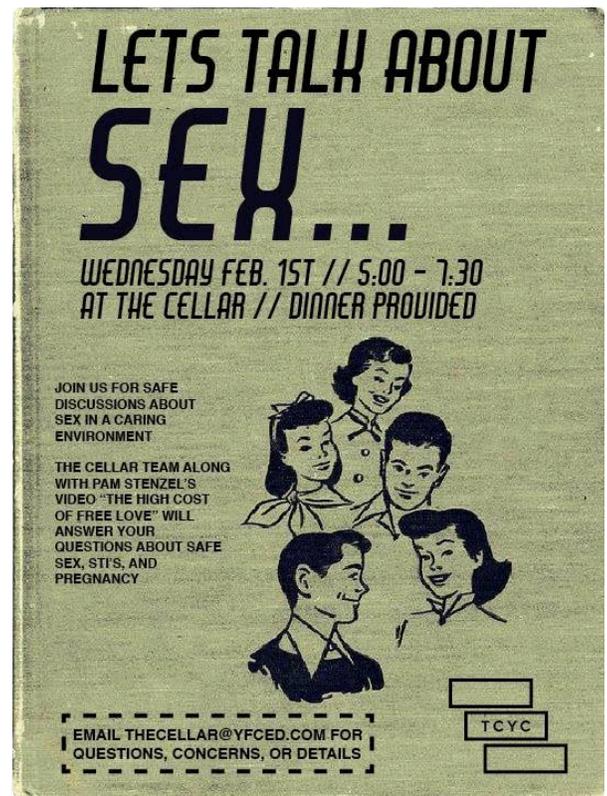
“ONE OF OUR STUDENTS EVEN ASKED IF ONE OF US COULD TAKE HER TO GET TESTED FOR STI'S.”

sources that are available to them. As awkward as these events can sometimes be, we had many of our high school attendees engage in the material. One of our students even asked if one of

us could take her to get tested for STI's. One of our staff members did so and it was a positive experience, with a practical example of what it looks like to walk alongside a teen through holistic care.

Our high school students are facing significant issues through rough home lives, navigating relationships, facing the consequences of unprotected sex and more, but they are not alone. They have you! Thank you for believing that there is hope for these kids and that through caring for them, we can work together to help them see their potential.

-AISLINN MACHUSHYK
COMMUNITY YOUTH WORKER



OVER 18

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT **PORN**

APRIL 27

7:00pm // Northgate Baptist Church (13208 95 Street NW)



TUESDAY – JUNE 6, 2017



REGISTER TODAY!

YUEDMONTON.COM/GOLFCHALLENGE



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