

## from our executive director

Have you ever wondered if you could start your life all over again? What would you do different? Would you have taken different education? Would you have traveled more? I am sure the older we get the more we wonder what we could have done differently! Tony Campolo asked the question? "When you were born, you cried and everybody else was happy. The only question that matters is this: When you die, will YOU be happy when everybody else is crying?"

Sometimes we are so busy with life; work, family and other responsibilities that we really miss out on some real meaning. We want to be that loving parent, reach out to our neighbours or volunteer for a charity. But, too much of life gets in the way and we feel trapped doing things we feel we need to do instead of things we want to do. I have met many people in the last few months that have said to me how they want a career change that is going to leave a legacy rather than just make a living.

As you read our stories in our Newsletter you hear the pain of youth in our community. Today you can step up to the challenge and volunteer, join our staff team, or give your financial resources to make a difference. In doing so...you are leaving a legacy that

God will bless you with. Our lives are too short to just live going through the motions of living...today make a difference and help us!

With Christmas only weeks away, would you consider making a generous contribution to our ministry at Youth Unlimited? Your funds will deeply impact the youth we are working with. I hear a lot of people say times are tough and we cannot give a lot. However, take some action now. \$25, \$50 or even \$100 a month will make a long-term impact in our work with youth.



greg hutchinson  
greater calgary  
executive director



# INSIGHTS

winter 2016



Check out our new website! You can now make secure donations online!

# youthunlimitedcalgary.ca

## Sign Up For Your Digital Tax Receipt!

Come 2017, Youth Unlimited Calgary will be able to email tax receipts. Please contact our office at 403.291.3179 or

email us directly at: [calgary@yucanada.org](mailto:calgary@yucanada.org) for a secured access pass to your giving receipts!

----- clip this portion and mail in -----

Yes, I want to support the ministry of Youth Unlimited!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

One time donation (Cheque Enclosed)

Post-Dated Cheques (Enclosed)

Visa or MasterCard: Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (Void cheque enclosed or credit card information above)

Total per Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Transfer Date:  1st or  15th Starting Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Designated to (Staff Name or Program): \_\_\_\_\_

Ph.403.291.3179 or 1.888.753.8575 Em.calgary@yucanada.org

Youth Unlimited #15, 1725 - 30th Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7P6

## youth guidance

Many years ago Maggie was referred to Youth Guidance (YG) by a social worker. Over the years she moved many times: Mom moved from place to place and Maggie moved from friend to friend, relationship to relationship and group home to group home. As with so many of our students I kept track of her by connecting with Mom, social workers and group home staff in order and to provide relational and mentoring support.

One day while looking for Maggie's group home contact info I noticed a name of a former student that appeared to be the Director of a different group home. I contacted this Director and sure enough, he was the former student. It was good to reconnect and hear how he was involved with young offenders in the Excel Open Custody Home. Through this connection the door eventually opened for me to volunteer at Excel house. Recently, the Excel staff shared that a student was still processing the principle of ambivalence that I had shared with the group the prior week. The ministry to these children has become one that is special and dear to my heart.

Maggie contacted me recently through Facebook after not hearing from her in over a year. She was looking for a former volunteer's email address. Maggie expressed gratitude and said that being involved in YG and the investment of this specific volunteer into her life had helped shape the person she is today. Maggie remembered the campouts and Christmas parties, mentioning that

they were special times. I am so thankful that Maggie shared this because I remember the challenges that we faced trying to connect with Maggie and how the group dynamics changed when she came out. We would often go out of our way to make it possible for her to be included, so hearing that we made a difference in her life was precious.

Maggie's call reminded me that my connection to Excel house was because of her. It was these circumstances that ultimately opened a door for me to volunteer alongside Excel house youth. God is so good and He is amazing in how He works.



bernie adam  
youth guidance  
program director

The vision here at Youth Unlimited simply put is this:

## TRANSFORMED YOUTH TRANSFORMING OUR CITY.

This is our end goal, our bottom line. We envision that young people in the Greater Calgary area, as they experience God, His love, His truth, and His life changing power will be transformed and will be a redemptive presence in our city and beyond.

We invite you to read the stories straight from the field and discover more about the work God is doing through our ministry team. We challenge you to ask God how you can become a part of changing the lives of youth, allowing God to use you and your resources to be a part of an incredible ministry and bringing youth to the knowledge of Christ!

## campus life

Three points into the game, I noticed one girl on my team was nearly in tears. A few points later, I noticed another girl frantically yelling at her teammates to make less mistakes. Another girl came off the court and sat on the bench, rocking back and forth with her head down. We were not even five minutes into the game we found ourselves calling a time out simply to calm them.

The score was even, the mistakes were few, and the level of play was consistent with how it had been all year. So what was going on? Why was everyone so tightly wound on this particular evening? It seemed like there was no logical reason for this level of stress so early on in a game.

The answer turned out to be anxiety. They were frantically anxious about winning this game. Anxious to the point of tears, anger and even illness.

I've seen crippling anxiety present itself in meaningless sports events, but I've also seen it show up in high-pressure situations. And in both circumstances, I've seen people become unable to process, unable to rationalize, and unable to move. I haven't learned all the steps to help, so I don't always know

what to do when I see someone battling anxiety. However, I have learned a lot about the value of story.

The girls I work with all have so much going on in their lives under the surface. Recognizing that in them allows for so much more perspective and grace to be demonstrated in every situation – two things our world is in desperate need of.

We ended up winning the game by a sizeable margin. Immediately the anxiety level went down, until the next game when it happened again. We will likely battle against anxiety for a long time, but the understanding of what we're up against is half the fight. Oddly enough, everyone is really calm when we're losing by a lot. Something I just won't ever understand.

**sara wagar**  
campus life  
program director



## streetlight

I first met Sasha four years ago at StreetLight's drop-in centre. We have had the opportunity to journey together through these years, working through life, relationships, family struggles and some significant legal complications two years ago. Through StreetLight we were able to help Sasha fulfill her required volunteer hours and after some lifestyle adjustments, we connected her with a partnering business for a job. She was hired on the spot and has continually impressed the owner with her skills, character and work ethic since day one. Sasha has been dubbed a "poster child" by the owner and he has taken her under his wing. Over the years she has been given more responsibility at her job and recently was promoted to supervise the kitchen during the evening shift.

In the midst of these incredible steps of growth, Sasha has been discovering an entirely new set of challenges. Sasha still lives with her mother Lucy and as she explores life as a young adult and is forming her identity, she is working through the family conflict that follows. For Lucy, Sasha is still her baby and needs to be protected. As she struggles with stepping back as a parent and allowing her daughter to make mistakes and experience the consequences of decisions, Sasha sees Lucy as

domineering, unsupportive and emotionally hurtful. While they have experienced some incredible family restoration, the struggles are still very real.

Our journey these past months has been navigating a mother's love for her daughter and a desire for an incredible future. At the same time Sasha continues to reach out, looking for support, affirmation and celebration while she navigates the world around her filled with tough choices and great opportunities. Sounds familiar to me!



**ivy friesen**  
streetlight  
advocate against  
human trafficking  
and prostitution

## worth auto

As I reflect back on some of the young people who have come through our doors over the years, I'm thankful for the awesome ministry God has called us to. We've seen young men come to us from situations that would make even the hardest soul weep. From physical, sexual and ritual abuse to neglect of all kinds as well as addicted and dysfunctional parents, we've seen it all. We've had occultists, atheists and agnostics as well as new believers who are all looking for more meaning in their lives. Some of the young men are just looking to gain skills for employment but end up leaving with much more.

As we work alongside these young men in the shop environment, something amazing happens. We all just become people. We pull off the masks we wear and become co-workers with a common goal and after a while we begin to build relationships. Depending on the individual, this can happen quickly or take a long time but the results are almost always the same; a lasting friendship that can span years. Building these relationships is what gives us the "Ethos" or credibility to share our faith with the young men who God has placed in our path. It's not something "churchy", it's not something fake or contrived. It flows from the genuine experience of Christ living inside of us and the Holy Spirit does the work in these young lives the same way as He works inside us. Whenever we're able to share the hope we have within us, God takes His word and begins to work in the individual. We don't even always get to see the results but we know that His Word never returns to Him without accomplishing His purpose and so we continue to do what we do.

An example of this is Tim, the man who was in our program as a youth back in the 80's. He went from our program to selling drugs and living a life of self-destruction until one day, at the end of his rope he planned to kill himself. Just as he was about to pull

the trigger, God spoke to him and told him to contact us again. He listened, and drove three hours to see us. When he came and sat down in my office and told me his story, I was able to lead him in a prayer of faith and today he's living his life for Jesus. I had nothing to do with the process except I got to be there when he made his decision to surrender himself to Christ. What a joy! How unexpected! But who can figure out God's ways. Not me, I'm only called to be obedient, and so I continue...



**doug waugh**  
worth unlimited  
program director



With the snow starting to accumulate on the mountains here in the Canmore and Banff area it reminds me of our winter camp with "Eric". Eric some years ago was in an accident and seriously injured his leg. He has a limp now; but he is so very positive that we tend to forget about his handicap and he participates in everything. We were planning for winter camp and Eric assures us he is good to go.

The trip up the mountain starts off on hard packed soil and then light snow. The higher we go the deeper the snow. Soon we unstrap the cross country skis from our packs, gear up and begin to glide our way further. This does not work well for Eric. He can not handle the bindings on cross country skis with the twisted foot from his handicapped leg and limp.

The further the group goes the farther behind Eric drops. The white fluffy stuff gets deeper. Eric in frustration abandons the skis and tries to walk in waist deep snow. He is exhausted. He has given up multiple times by now. With constant encouragement I get Eric started again an equal amount of times for each time he quits. We get into camp well after dark. Together we made it.

The situation is such an obvious parallel to how God continues to encourage me every time I'm exhausted and want to pack it in. How could I not show the same patient encouragement to Eric?

This is why we appreciate all of you, our partners, for you supply the encouragement God wants to send our way in Youth Unlimited. Thank you for being the instruments God uses to keep all of us going strong.



**david lister**  
bow valley  
program director

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