

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Churches in Argentine
Write a New Chapter



godparents and grandparents
new at youthfront | presence-centered parenting and caregiving



Godparents and Grandparents

Exploring the roles and impact of critical spiritual influencers

Grandchildren can be a constant source of joy, wonder, awe and (sometimes) consternation! My wife and I have 11 unique young people we're privileged to call our grandkids. In our own family, our church and faith communities and here at Youthfront, we're just learning how much impact grandparents have on the spiritual formation of their grandchildren.

Godparenting was a hallmark of the early Christian church, though few denominations have held onto the practice of blessing an adult spiritual guide for a child. Godparenting - and the critical role of grandparents - is one of the traditions we're exploring at Youthfront. This work is an important part of our Presence-Centered Parenting initiative funded by a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant through its Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. Youthfront is developing and testing practices and resources to help grandparents, godparents, parents and caregivers play an active role in the faith journey of the children in their lives. Through our YF Family program and our church partnerships, we're sharing those tools to support families on their faith journeys.

This summer, we were thrilled to invite the grandparents of campers in select weeklong sessions to come out to camp. Grandparents could take a tour, participate in our Something to Eat™ service project, and just be with their grandchildren in this special place where they have agency to explore their faith. Simply being present at camp to hear their campers' stories was a way to create new opportunities for grandparents to listen and share their own faith journey.

Thank you to all the grandparents who said "yes" to that invitation, who joined their campers in tours and camp ice cream, and made a lasting memory that reflected the love God has for each of us, our children and grandchildren.

I invite you to read more about our parenting and caregiving initiative on page 6 of this issue. We hope it will be a blessing to families and churches in the coming years.

Mike King, President and CEO



Grandparents were invited to visit camp during select weeklong sessions.

NEW AT YOUTHFRONT

Support for Pastors and Ministry Leaders

In October, Youthfront hosted an event for youth pastors and youth workers focused on the youth worker as public theologian. D.J. Coleman, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Indiana Wesleyan University, shared insights about the role of the youth worker beyond the walls of the church. Children's and Family Pastors also gathered at Youthfront this fall as Rev. Kara Root led a Sabbath experience in a mini-retreat format. If you are a ministry leader and would like to be invited to upcoming events, visit Youthfront's website and hit the "Stay in the Know" button to subscribe to the communications you'd like.

Making Faith Matter

Youthfront is a collaborative partner in the launch of Tenx10, a movement to make faith matter more to the next generation. Young people are leaving the faith at an alarming rate. More than 100 partners have come together across denominational lines to support and resource ministries on the frontlines of reaching youth and building the faith of the next generation. Youthfront's Mike King and Jim Newberry attended the launch event for Tenx10 this fall. Read more about the project and its other partners at tenx10.org.

New Faces at Youthfront

Since the last issue of *Youthfront News*, Youthfront welcomed Jackie Broyles as Accounting and Grant Reporting Specialist and Chad Wiswell as Camp LaCygne Facilities Manager.

Counseling Center Growth

Youthfront's in-house affiliate, Presence-Centered Counseling, continues to expand mental health and therapy services. Child Play Therapist Caroline Oas has opened additional appointment opportunities. Connect with Caroline or PCC lead therapist Jamie Roach by visiting presencecenteredcounseling.com.



Children's and Family Pastors gathered for a mini-retreat



Mike King and Jim Newberry at the Tenx10 Launch Summit



Child Play Therapist Caroline Oas is accepting new clients

BUILDING Community

Churches in Argentine Write a New Chapter

An aerial view of the section of the Argentine neighborhood of Kansas City, KS, home to three historic church buildings that have evolved in name and methodology, but hold fast to the mission of loving their neighbors (above). At right, an Adventure Academy volunteer helps a student practice reading in the afterschool program, a partnership of Youthfront and The Hub Argentine.

Three sight words.

That was all 8-year-old Anthony* could read when he first came to the Adventure Academy afterschool program. Two weeks later, he was flying through all 20 words and wanted more.

"It's all about confidence," says Amber Booth, Youthfront's director of neighborhood programs. "Sometimes kids are convinced that reading is something they can't do. But once our tutors spend time with them one-on-one, they realize they have it in them. Then they get excited and get their friends excited too."

YF Neighborhood (YFN) partners with The Hub Argentine to offer the Adventure Academy in the neighborhood of Argentine (Kansas City, KS). Each day after school, elementary students can find homework help and individual tutoring, games, crafts, snacks and outdoor activities in a safe environment.

Adventure Academy is just one of many community programs giving new life to old buildings.

The Hub Argentine took over the property of the former United Methodist

Church on Metropolitan Avenue in Argentine. In addition to Adventure Academy in partnership with Youthfront, The Hub hosts a Community Market three days a week, along with a Clothing Closet and a Community Garden. The facility also is home to the Ushindi Methodist Fellowship, the

Kansas Micronesia Church worshiping in the sanctuary on Sundays, and community organizations officing there during the week.

"The Argentine neighborhood is full of gifts found in neighbors, culture and community organizations," says Rev. Carter Ellis, Executive Director of The Hub Argentine. "We are grateful that so many organizations, like Immanuel and Argentine Mennonite, are using their gifts of building and space to benefit the community."

Across the street from The Hub, the historic Argentine Mennonite Church donated its building to Youthfront. The congregation celebrated its 100+ year roots in Argentine and church history at a prayer filled transition service in October to bless Youthfront continuing ministry on the site. The building, which will be the new home of YF Neighborhood's ministries, is undergoing targeted renovations and updates to meet the future needs of YFN programs.

Two blocks down, the Immanuel Lutheran Church building is bustling with a drive-through food pantry for those in need. Home to the Immanuel Community Outreach Association (ICOA), the Immanuel Lutheran Church was formed in the Argentine community in 1884, when the church worshiped in German. Today, the surrounding community largely speaks Spanish. In 2007, the congregation began offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to meet the needs of neighbors. Three years later, with the friendships developed during ESL classes, the church began bilingual worship services in Spanish and English. The ICOA currently partners with Youthfront to offer a language exchange program at the church. The exchange brings together those who want to learn Spanish with those wanting to improve their English skills.

"All of us work together," Booth said of Youthfront's partners at The Hub and Immanuel Lutheran. "We coordinate as we try to identify and meet community needs while working alongside our neighbors. It's so encouraging to be part of the community development happening in and through the renewing and revitalization of these historical churches."

**Name changed to protect privacy*



Each Wednesday, nearly 20 students gather at the Argentine Mennonite Church as part of the YF Neighborhood Youth Group. Each week, local teens share a meal, participate in a Bible study (left), and experience community (right).

A New Home

More than a decade ago, Youthfront established a presence in Argentine, coming alongside youth seeking to make their neighborhood a better place.

YF Neighborhood's programs - from Something to Eat™ to The Snack Shack KC or afterschool and youth programs - continued to expand, operating from shared or rented space but without a permanent home.

"We're so grateful for this incredible gift from the Argentine Mennonite Church," says Kurt Rietema, Senior Director of YF Neighborhood. "Youthfront sees this as so much more than transferring a building to us. They are bestowing their calling and mission on our shoulders to bring it to a new generation. We never imagined being right across the street from the kids we serve at New Stanley Elementary and so near our other partners."

Get involved! There are renovation needs and improvements necessary to make this YF Neighborhood's new home. If you, your church or small group can help, please connect with us at yfn@youthfront.com.



Presence-Centered Parenting & Caregiving

The first year of a national grant to Youthfront is helping underwrite tools and resources for families and congregations.

Highlights from the first year of the initiative include:

A new Family Journal to supplement the content children were learning at Day Camp this summer. The journal included thoughtful conversation questions, blessings and prayers for parents and caregivers to engage their campers.

A take-home activity focused on the parable of the yeast for families of overnight campers with questions for campers to ask parents and questions for parents to ask campers along with a no-fail bread recipe and a packet of yeast.

A Holy Week guide for families that provided activities and reflections leading up to Easter.

A 5-day parenting devotional, “A Gift of Presence,” delivered via the Youthfront App, developed to encourage parents and caregivers.

An Advent resource for families and a **companion guide** for youth leaders.

Articles, blogs and tips from experts made available through **YF Family**.

The free resources available through the initiative, along with more information about the projects, is available at youthfront.com/parenting.

Youthfront’s Presence-Centered Parenting and Caregiving Initiative is focused on helping parents and families actively engage in the Christian formation of their children. Funded by a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant through its Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative, these resources will assist families and congregations to engage children in spiritual formation through classic Christian practices.

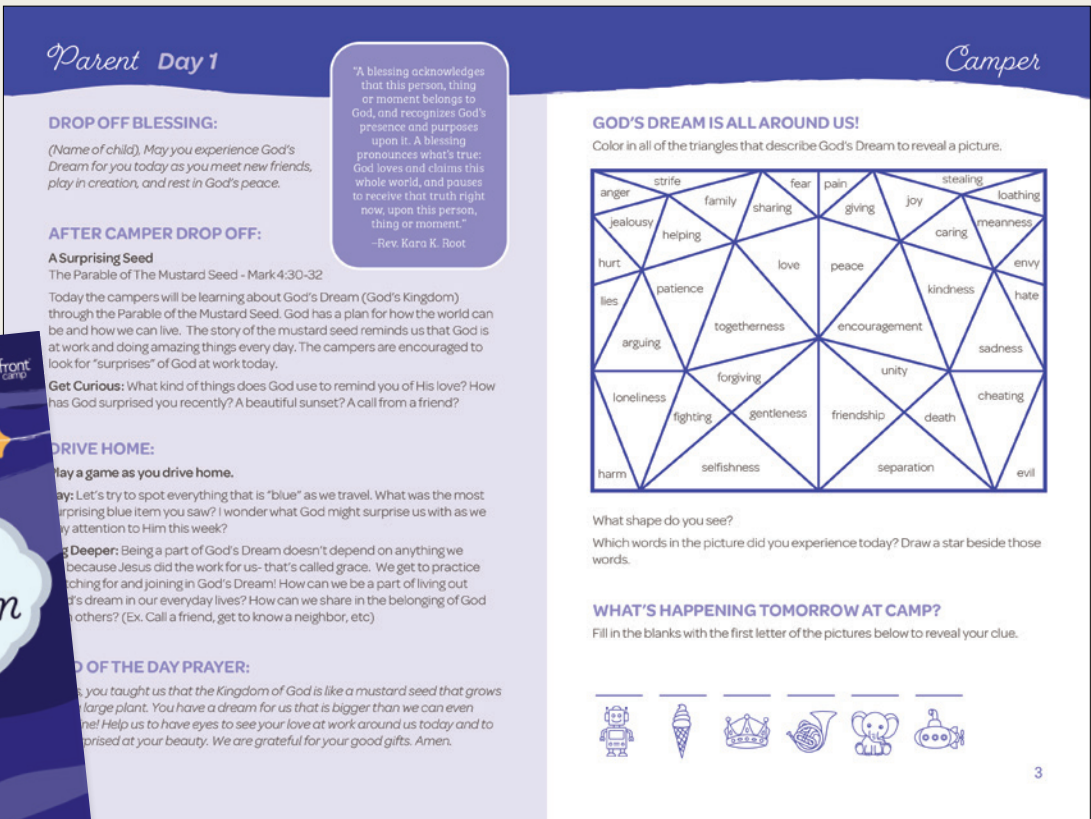
This year, the initiative has also supported multiple gatherings of and trainings for Children’s and Family Pastors, Youth Worker Training events as well as the launch of parent/grandparent cohorts speaking into the resources developed. The Spanish-speaking parent cohort has provided unique insight into the needs of the parent/caregiver and church community needs in the neighborhood of Argentine, Kansas City, KS.



The theme for Youthfront Camp in 2023 was “Seeking God’s Dream.” Day Campers learned about God’s Dream (God’s Kingdom) as they explored five of Jesus’ parables covered each day of camp and in their Day Camp Family Journals.

“LOVED this resource. It was super helpful to know the lessons being taught each day and to encourage conversations.”
— LAURA,
DAY CAMP PARENT

A LOOK INSIDE THE DAY CAMP FAMILY JOURNAL



Developed as an at-home companion experience for families of 1st-5th graders in Youthfront’s Day Camp, the journal provided five days of blessings, reflections, evening activities and prayers to help families connect over the spiritual concepts being taught at camp. To view the full journal, visit youthfront.com/parenting.



4600 Rainbow Blvd, Kansas City, KS 66103

TWO FESTIVE WEEKENDS: DECEMBER 1-2, 8-9



LUMINARY NATIVITY WALK | BONFIRES & S'MORES | THEMED GAMES
LIGHTS | BARREL TRAIN RIDES | FESTIVE TREATS | PHOTO BOOTH

TICKETS & MORE INFO: [YOUTHFRONT.COM/CHRISTMAS](https://youthfront.com/christmas)

CHRISTMAS *at Camp*

Special thanks to our presenting underwriter, The Burbridge Family Foundation, and to our presenting sponsor, 1stFruits!
Event ticket sales, sponsorship and proceeds all support Youthfront's ministry programs.