

## **Synod of the Heartland Director of Youth Ministries Activities in 2010:**

**Middle School Retreat:** We had approximately 350 participants. A lot of training goes into the 25 - 30 College students to facilitate this retreat and carry out the various responsibilities of speaking, small groups, recreation, work projects and overall direction of the retreat.

**HIS Work Camp:** I worked with a fantastic Organizing Team/Support Staff to provide a mission project experience in Alcoa, TN in June of 2010. Approximately 200 participants were involved in this opportunity with the P&W music being provided by the LOH band from Meredith Drive Church and the night speaking was shared by youth leaders and Organizing Staff adults. This was a very powerful experience of mission and worship for all participants and site families.

**Power Connection Work Camp:** Worked with an Organizing Team of 9 plus a summer Intern from NWC to accomplish this Work Camp. Over 400 participants of Jr. High students and adult leaders housed at Peace Reformed and neighboring churches came together to serve the Minneapolis area.

**Power Connection:** One Thousand participants were lodged at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN for this event. With a speaker, praise band, and drama group the participants were challenged in their spiritual journey and many lives were committed to Christ.

**LOH Retreat and process:** LOH went paperless this year with the materials available online with passwords required. This enables leaders to download or e-mail each week's lesson out to their students. This Leadership Development process continues to spread slowly throughout the denomination with groups in CA. IA. Ill. MI. MN. SD and Canada using it. We offered one retreat in Central IA. This year and had approximately 120 participants attend. This retreat was held November 12 – 14, 2010.

**Youth Clusters:** There are 4 youth clusters throughout the Synod that meet together on a regular basis. These continue to very effective as we resource, support, encourage and pray together in these clusters. We see more longevity of ministry in our youth pastors and I would attribute the fact that they feel connected and cared for as they serve in a high burn-out role in ministry. Within these youth clusters we also have connections with the Central College RCA representative Kristin Tremper, The CRC Youth coordinator, Kandace Brands, and several CRC Youth Pastors. These connections are proving to be very helpful for our area ministries.

**College Students:** I have the privilege and advantage to be able to connect with college students at NWC and facilitate 3 individual class times throughout the year connecting with Freshmen and Seniors as they begin their journey in Youth Ministry and enter the career or Youth Ministry. Having 25 + students work on the Middle School retreat is a huge opportunity of mentoring and training and we have seen several of these students go on to Seminary and full-time ministry. I also hire an Intern each summer to work on the Power Connection Work Camp and Rocky Mountain High. These experiences give them one of the best learning opportunities possible to help them in their future employment.

**Seminary Students:** In November I visited Western Seminary and connected on an individual basis with 5 of our SOTHL students, Chelsea Harberts, Josh Vander Maaten, Zack Poppen, Chad De Jager, and Lindsey DeKruif. Also, met with Matt Floding and Beth Smith. This visit was very productive and encouraging as 4 of the 5 students have been involved with me on a personal basis in H.S. and College before moving into the Seminary.

**Denominational Youth Team, YMCA Board and ATLAS Board:** Served on the YMCA of the Rockies board in 2010 and just accepted a board position as of Jan. 1 on the Atlas Board. These ministries are very much an arm of our churches through Rocky Mountain High and as Atlas connects with all area churches and many unchurched individuals. The DYT offers Project Timothy, Leaders On the Horizon and Youth Lync to our entire denomination.

### **Youth Ministry plans for 2011:**

This year is Rocky Mountain High, which will put us in contact with approximately 125 of our Synod Churches. Working with an Organizing Team of 12 and 100 support staff from across the Synod this event makes a huge impact on 2500+ students and adults both in preparation as well as out-come potential. Personal commitments, mission opportunities and spiritual growth are experienced during and following RMH as we attempt to empower participants in a life long journey of faith.

The Middle School Retreat and LOH will also continue on the schedule as well as a high commitment to the Networking of Youth Pastors and supporting of Volunteer youth leaders. Coaching, 360 evaluations, resources and healthy relationships continue to support the Youth Ministries throughout the Synod of the Heartland.

This year we are offering a Crucial Conversations Workshop in January which gives youth leaders additional tools of communication and healthy relationship skills in day to day and career paths. In addition this opens up a large group of Coaching opportunities to follow up on after the workshop.

As we look at 2012 we are considering offering two different sites for the Power Connection Work Camp which would require two interns and a split Organizing Team to carry it out. This will require additional time to build the team and equip the interns to carry this out. It will enable us to better serve the work camp experience and increase the potential participation. We hope to have 250 participants at each work camp which would allow us to increase the numbers by 100 while offering a smaller and more manageable experience at each location.

The Denominational Youth Team is also working at connecting with one Youth Pastor/leader from each Classis throughout the denomination in an attempt to support youth ministry in the RCA. We are currently working on a 3 year plan to identify pastors and youth pastors who will carry the youth ministry flag in their classis.

Building a foundation of individuals committed to God and His desire to bless the Church through them, is an exciting journey to be a part of.