



## Now More Than Ever...

Imagine being a marginalized young person in the year 2020. You are fearful after a global pandemic has created unprecedented health concerns. You are trying to navigate online learning and struggling to adapt. You are socially isolated from peers, teachers, and coaches. You are consumed by social media and seeking after attention in unhealthy places. Your family is in disarray and you don't know who to trust. You are overwhelmed by a hostile political landscape. You are depressed and wrestling with suicidal thoughts. You don't know where to turn. *Is life really worth living?*

I cannot emphasize enough that thousands of youth, right here in our community, are hurting — overlooked, vulnerable, anxious, and falling through the cracks. This is especially the case in 2020 when strains are evident in the lives of youth from a variety of angles.

As I think about our mission at YFC — to reach lost youth with the love of Jesus Christ — I am compelled by it **now more than ever**. There's urgency. There are lost young people deeply in need of God's transforming love.

I am drawn to Luke 15 and the parable of the lost sheep. Read this and sit on these words:

*"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' Then Jesus told them this parable: 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.'"*

I am struck by two reflections:

- May our hearts not be cold towards the lost like the Pharisees. May we rather reflect the beauty of God's love.
- Can we envision Jesus leaving the ninety-nine to chase the one lost sheep? Consider the depths of love that pursues the one and rejoices over it.

We are facing tremendous challenges as a community and country, but we are also facing tremendous opportunities. I am convinced that we need renewal in God's relentless love. May we repent of hard hearts that do not reflect the posture of Jesus to others. May we in turn embrace the life-changing love of Christ.

The radical love of Jesus draws us to His heart and then calls us to action. Help us take further action at YFC. Help us chase the lost sheep who has wandered off. Help us mobilize our mission to more sites and more youth.

**Your year-end gift is a strategic blessing that moves our mission forward as we work on an exciting vision for 2021. Thank you.**

In Christ,

Haddon



## Why Your Gift Matters

During 2020, our team engaged in over 2,500 Intentional Conversations, over 1,500 Christ-Centered Conversations, and hundreds of Authentic, Christ-Sharing Relationships. We are proactively reaching youth in our community, such as the following:

- Emma was locked up and knew she needed change. A YFC staff member embraced her and helped her seek God's purpose for her life—speaking to her weekly over the phone about her relationship with God and aspirations. She has now been released and is in cosmetology school while staying connected to YFC.
- Malachi was feeling the weight and pressure of his older brother being incarcerated. He was then introduced to YFC through that same brother. He's now been involved in our programs. It takes a village, but the more positive adults in his life, the more love is shown, and the more he knows he is loved by our amazing God.
- Avery was holding in years of unspoken trauma... She built a wall around herself while keeping everyone out. Through weekly conversations she started to open up more and learned for the first time that it was okay to cry and express her pain, and that God was with her in that. Conversations started to include her dreams for the future including making better choices in school and becoming a criminal defense lawyer.

Stories such as these are **why your gift matters...**