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Your God's Gift Appeal donations at work:
Youth and Young Adult Ministry mentors our young Catholic Church

Kathy Loney

Have you ever stood among young people at camp watching their minds and bodies come alive knowing that they just "got God"?

Have you ever knelt with a group of young people on retreat in front of the monstrance watching the tears flow down their cheeks knowing that they just "found God"?

Have you ever been on a bus with a group of young people for hours, coming back from a national event and discussing the ups and downs of life and realizing that the quietness that is beginning to happen is because they "are turning their lives over to God"?

These are just a few of the special moments that occur when Youth and Young Adult Ministry is truly happening.

Through the generous contributions given to the God's Gift Appeal, youth and young adults can participate and grow in their faith through MI Youth Camp, SEARCH retreat weekends, Junior High Rally, Senior High Celebration, Youth 2000 retreat, National Catholic Youth Conference and Catholic Youth Advisory Council, to name a few.

Through these events, young people learn about the many gifts God has given them and how to share them with the larger community and begin to develop into disciples of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned in Pope John Paul's, "Listen to the True Word of Life," 1993, "young people need to be able to see the practical relevance of their efforts to meet the real needs of people, especially the poor and neglected." Young people learn that their actions can change the world and make a huge impact with those they come in contact with, as Jesus did.

Within each event, retreat or trip, activities are planned based on one or more of the components of these ministries. Those components consist of advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, leadership, pastoral care, prayer and worship, and service and justice. When teaching within all eight components, Youth Ministry builds well-rounded young people grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Young Adult Ministry programs are developed within each individual parish. Some parishes come together, network and offer programs, outings and social events, working together to bring young adults to a more mature faith life. In the Fargo-Moorhead area a website has been created to spread information about these happenings. Anyone in their 20s or 30s, married or single, with children or without, are invited to become a part of this network of young adults. Check out www.fmcya.blogspot.com for up-to-date information on this ministry.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry doesn't happen without dedicated adults giving of their time and talents to the youth of our parishes. God's Gift Appeal subsidizes adults involved in this

ministry through the Youth and Young Adult Office with resource materials, participation in certificate programs, workshops and scholarship funds for the Education for Parish Service program.

Recently, six youth ministers from the Fargo Diocese participated in a two-year study program for youth ministry presented by the Center for Ministry Development. All six were given scholarships, provided by God's Gift Appeal, to help finance their participation in the program.

Catie Vetter, youth minister at St. Benedict's Catholic Church in Wild Rice, is the first to complete the entire program, which included 16 days of class study and several written assignments for each class presented. Congratulations to Catie! Thank you to Father Jared Kadlec, the staff and the parish for supporting Catie in completing this certificate program. We know the other five youth ministers will be completing the program soon.

Following are just a few of the ongoing programs that are planned, promoted and produced by the Youth and Young Adult Ministry office:

- A Junior High Retreat is set for May 6, 7 and 8 for students in sixth through eighth grades at Cooperstown Bible Camp. Led by youth ministers from Dunseith and Belcourt, in collaboration with the Youth Office, this retreat will present information to our junior high students on the topics of the Blessed Virgin, prayer, how to evangelize and chastity. It will be physically active and spiritually uplifting. The cost is \$100 per student. Scholarships are available through the diocesan Youth Office. Registration forms are online at www.fargodiocese.org under the Youth and Young Adult Department.
- MI Youth Camp, (Militia of the Immaculata), is for students 13 through 17 years old. This camp is usually based on the teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe and his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This year we will be focusing on five different saints, one for each day of camp. Students can choose: July 10 through 15 or July 17 through 22. The cost is \$210 per student. Registration forms will be on the diocesan website soon. The deadline to register is Tuesday, May 31.
- Senior High Youth Celebration will be Thursday, Oct. 20, in Napoleon. This event is for students in grades nine through 12. More information will be on the diocesan website as it becomes available.
- SEARCH weekends are peer-ministry driven with adult mentoring. A SEARCH weekend is a great way for teens and young adults to grow in their faith and build lasting friendships. This retreat is offered on four weekends during the school year. Consult the diocesan website for more information on next years' dates.

Thank you to everyone who supports the God's Gift Appeal. Please pray for the youth and young adults of our diocese and the generous people who work with them on their journey to learn more about Christ and develop into faith-filled disciples of Jesus Christ.

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