

Leaders 4Life – July 2020

A newsletter from Y4Life

Y4Life: Sharing Your Life Legacy with Youth

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

Many of today's youth are actively standing up For Life in a culture that embraces death—and they are uniquely equipped to speak God's truth in areas where adults are less likely to tread.

Youth serve as witnesses to life in high school and college classrooms, on athletic fields and choir tours, and while working part-time jobs or full-time internships. And because they are often on the Frontlines, 4Life youth are able to offer physical, spiritual, and emotional support to those struggling with life decisions.

Yet youth need to be supported through educational opportunities, 4Life experiences, and purposeful mentorship. That is one of the reasons creating a **Y4Life Team** at church or school is so important. Not only do **Y4Life Teams** give students opportunities to learn about life issues, but they also provide powerful life-changing experiences.

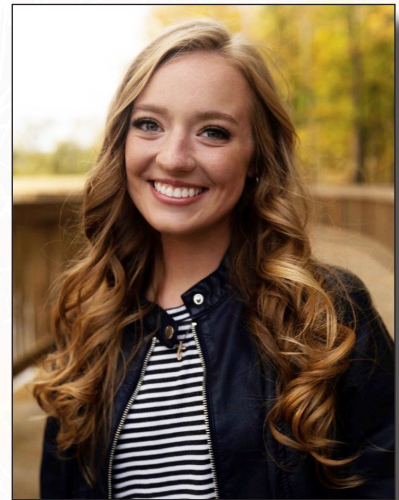
Audrey Sparling, a senior at Lutheran High School in Parker, Colorado, and a member of the Lions For Life team, was one of many students who attended **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.**, this year. Her reflection on the experience indicates just how impactful **Y4Life** opportunities can be:

The March for Life 2020 was an incredible experience. This was my very first year attending the March, and it has definitely changed my life. Standing side by side with hundreds of thousands of people to support life was surreal. It was inspiring that so many people from various backgrounds and experiences gathered to stand up for life. At the March, there were old and young people, Democrats and Republicans, and men and women from all over the world. All of these people shared one thing in common—the belief that life has value.

The March for Life plays such a vital role in bringing awareness to the importance of humans in the womb and out of the womb. Not only was I able to march to share the message that life has value but also that our value is found in God.

During this trip, I had the privilege of gathering with **Y4Life** to talk over important life issues with people from all over the country. This made me and many other people feel even more confident in our cause. During **Y4Life** discussions before the March, we looked deeper into what God says about our lives. At one of our meetings, we looked at Genesis 1:27 which says, **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** This verse reminded me that our lives are so special because only humans were created in God's image, and nothing else on earth was. Because God made us in His image, our lives have value.

The March for Life 2020 and the **Y4Life** conference gave me the amazing opportunity to stand up for life and share God's message that we are valued by Him.



Proverbs 1:5 says:

“Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.”

As a child of God, especially one who supports life, you, reader, are one of the wise. You know the truth about the value of life, and you continue to educate yourself on life issues. You support national organizations like LFL, as well as other 4Life organizations in your community, and you speak for life when you are able while simultaneously praying for atrocities like abortion to end. The Lord certainly hears your prayers and commends your good work, and He will continue to bless others through them.

But today I encourage you to extend your legacy of life support even further. I ask you to consider investing in today's youth. And though it may not be the most comfortable topic to discuss right now, I'd like to use the analogy of an investment portfolio to do so. (Don't worry; I think you'll like how this one ends!)

Investment portfolios, as you know, look different for everyone. Uniquely formulated for the individual, each one has distinct strengths, assets, and benefits. Despite suffering temporary short-term losses, portfolios are purposely built for long-term rewards; despite being unsure of what's to come, they help us prepare for the future we hope for.

As the people of God, we have portfolios, too—investment portfolios that were created by God Himself. He has filled them with a variety of strengths and an abundance of assets, but unlike our earthly portfolios, they are guaranteed to produce a profusion of fruit!

In 2 Corinthians 9:10-11a it states:

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way ...”

God supplies the seed we sow, and He supplies the bread. Our churches and communities are blessed with the gifts we need to carry out God's work; our investment portfolios are burgeoning with blessings from God.

Even better than our earthly investment portfolios, God has perfectly and uniquely formed each individual in His kingdom, providing inherent and inexhaustible talents and abilities alongside worldly goods. And all these gifts He intends for our good and for the good of our neighbor. *Who are some of those neighbors?*
Today's youth.

I encourage you to take stock of your portfolio this week, to look honestly at the gifts God has given you and to reflect on how those gifts might benefit the youth in your life. Can you mentor, provide insight, or work alongside young people as they volunteer? Are you enthusiastic about getting youth involved in life ministries or supporting a **Y4Life Team**? Has God provided you with the financial gifts to support **Y4Life** ministry?

Though we can't predict the future, we can prepare for the future we hope for. May our life legacy enable today's youth to reach the communities they are part of, sharing the life-saving and life-valuing news of Christ for generations to come. And may the sacrificial gifts given from our investment portfolios reap bountiful dividends in Christ, increasing the harvest of righteousness!



Chats 4Life

Are you interested in discussing contemporary life issues with other high school and college-aged youth? Would you like to learn how to address those issues from a Gospel-motivated perspective? If so, **Chats 4 Life** is for you! **Chats 4 Life** offers young adults opportunities to connect via Zoom with other 4Life youth from across the nation. During these sessions, youth are invited to network, ask questions, and engage in discussion about contemporary life issues. Watch our Instagram page for the next **Chats 4 Life** opportunity, and contact mbauman@lutheransforlife.org for the latest meeting code and password!



Y4Life High School Leadership Retreat – March 2020

Preparation. That was the theme of the weekend. And that's exactly what students from Lutheran High School in Indianapolis, Indiana; Trinity Lutheran High School in Seymour, Indiana; and Lutheran North in St. Louis, Missouri, came to do: Propose. Plan. Prepare.

Twenty participants arrived at Camp Lakeview in Seymour, Indiana, on Friday, March 6. Some were excited. Some were shy. And some were a little bit nervous. But they were clearly ready.

Ready for what? To learn about how to start a Y4Life Team.

Starting and supporting Y4Life teams on Lutheran campuses at the collegiate level has been a focus of LFL's Y4Life ministry for a few years now, but this fall, Lutherans For Life, through the work of Y4Life, began a new initiative: extend this support to Lutheran high schools across the nation. The Y4Life High School Leadership Retreat was specifically designed to aid schools in developing new Y4Life Teams and help them set a foundation for successful life ministry in their high schools.

Throughout the weekend, students learned and accomplished much. They discovered the attributes of godly leadership, learned what a healthy Y4Life Team looks like, created Gospel-motivated mission statements, planned a year's worth of Y4Life activities, and engaged in a project building workshop. Some groups began creating logos; others made a list of friends they wanted to recruit, and all of them received training on how to handle hardship. The room buzzed with enthusiasm, focus, and inspiration; excitement could be felt everywhere.

Learning, planning, and focusing on life issues from a Gospel-motivated perspective, is exactly what the Y4Life High School Leadership Retreat was designed for. And it happened. Our preparations played out perfectly.

But God had clearly prepared for much more.

In addition to the hopes we had, God provided unforeseen gifts. He showered the room with laughter and camaraderie during our ice breaker games. He connected students from different schools in a common purpose, creating a support system that now reaches far beyond classroom walls, school affiliations, and state lines. And as students mingled over meals, hiked during free time, and worshiped together, God built memories for our participants, memories of fellowship, friendship, and faithfulness.

Psalms 23:5 states, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." Little did we know that the first weekend of March would be the last weekend of March we could have gathered for our retreat. Little did we know that the Lord was serving us a banquet of fellowship at a table of blessing while an enemy was approaching. Little did we know how much our cup would overflow and how those blessings would sustain us in the coming weeks.

But God knew. And as the giver of all good things, He prepared us to focus on Him and on the gift of LIFE that only He can give, reminding us once again that God's ways are better than our ways. Always.

No matter the evils you have faced or the hardships yet to come, we pray that God might bless His people with LIFE in abundance in the coming weeks and that all your earthly joys might be filled with heavenly blessings! (If you would like more information about starting a Y4Life Team, or if you would like to participate in a leadership retreat, contact Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life, at mbauman@lutheransforlife.org.)



Remembering Refugees

Though abortion may serve as the initial introduction to life issues for many young people, today's youth are looking for ways to support life in other arenas as well. Concordia Chicago's **Y4Life Team**, CUC4Life, has had much success engaging students on campus by offering opportunities to learn about the issues facing their community. One particular educational event turned out to be eye-opening, thought-provoking, and life-affirming!

"CUC4Life decided to diversify a little this semester, and we took the opportunity to learn more about the refugee crisis and how we can support those individuals in the context of life issues," Jesse Muehler, co-leader of CUC4Life said. "We were able to partner with Exodus World Service to bring a refugee simulation to campus so our students had the opportunity to gain insight into the lives of those individuals who are affected by war, persecution, and the other trials and tribulations of our sinful world."

Nicole Chappell, CUC4Life's other co-leader, believes the experience was worthwhile. In addition to the simulation, the college students were given facts about life as a refugee and time to reflect on how they might handle the same trials. "I learned so much about the different things that refugees might experience as they run for their lives, and it made me realize how much of my life I truly take for granted," Nicole said. "Something that really hit hard was learning how long the average stay was in a refugee camp and how little help they had."

Not only did the students involved in the simulation learn a great deal, but they were also given opportunities to empathize with refugees, creating compassion for those suffering the loss of their homes; countries; and, in many cases, families.

Mackenzie Jean-Marcoux, a freshman at CUC who played the role of a smuggler in the simulation, agreed that the simulation and opportunity for reflection were powerful. "After volunteering at the refugee simulation at CUC, my entire perception of refugees has changed Being able to see just a portion of what refugees go through was heartbreaking ... [and] the idea of children having to endure the hardship and fear that goes along with being forced to flee their homes is devastating."

The topic of refugees certainly carries with it political undertones—and polarizing opinions in the media—but the CUC4Life Team recognized that the deeper issue was really an issue of LIFE. "The refugee simulation provided us

with an opportunity to talk about life issues with students from all walks of life, and it allowed us to open up a conversation that might not have been otherwise possible," Jesse said. "We were able to discuss the intrinsic value and sanctity of life, knowing that regardless of the circumstances or context a person finds themselves in, he or she is worthy of love and protection."

It is exciting to hear about the life-affirming success CUC4Life is having, and we pray God's continued blessing on their service. If you would like more information about how to start a **Y4Life Team**, or if you have a story to share, please contact Michelle Bauman, Director of **Y4Life**, at mbauman@lutheransforlife.org.



I'm **Y4Life** ... Now what?



4 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

I'm **Y4Life** ... Now what?

Offering high school and college opportunities

I'm **Y4Life** ... Now what?



5 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

