

THE WIRE

Desert Winds Youth Ministries Update
www.desertwindsc.org

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Eyes on the Prize

Pastor Joel shares insights on the challenges facing youth today!

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Student Leadership

Read about an exciting new initiative to help youth drive and own their own ministry!!!

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More Than Meets The Eye

Winter Camp '08 Focuses on Transformation

The Oaks Christian Camp is a beautiful setting just west of Palmdale. The weekend of February 8-11, it became a place for transforming youth! Sixteen young people enjoyed activities, worship, challenging Bible studies, small group time, and opportunities to reflect.

A quick review of some youth's Myspace sites reveal that one of the lasting legacies of Winter Camp is that we did a lot of physical activity! Capture the Flag, kickball, dodgeball, and an epic hike to the cross for communion were just some of the physically demanding activities we enjoyed!



We are committed to building a generation of transformed and transforming students. Friday night, we honed in on the power of a transformed mind. On Saturday, we moved to the emphasis of a transformed heart. Sunday we changed our focus from the transformation that happens in us to the impact that has (or should have) on the world we live in.



The Verge is Coming...

Next month we will enjoy something like Converge, which used to be our annual trip to Magic Mountain.

For only \$40, youth will get a night of fun here in the AV with a lock-in. The next morning we'll head to Magic Mountain for a day of thrills!

The Verge is happening Friday, March 14th and Saturday, March 15th.

Contact Cheri Sparks for more information!



Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize

Daily life can be so overwhelming that we can forget why we're even doing it! The frantic pace of life coupled with the numerous plates we balance can lead to a condition I call "The bored busy person."

While our planners are filled and time is our most precious commodity, many with the courage to look find a frightening lack of purpose to it all.

King Solomon, by all measures a busy man, asked a critical question: *"What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."* Ecclesiastes 3:9-11

Being a parent of a youth is not an easy thing. It's certainly not a tranquil time, either. The stressors and perils of this period are well documented. But take a moment to consider the things that really matter...the decisions and mindsets that lead to significant shaping of your child.

First, remember that our first priority is to help them develop a real and authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. Instead of force-feeding answers and behaviors to your child, learn how to facilitate a walk with God that will become his/her lifeline in times of trouble. Helping your young adult learn how to think

critically and apply biblical truths to their own lives is essential!

Second, focus on your own example. A recent study by MTV shows that parents are still the most influential people on a young person's life. Your own choices, behaviors, and responses are very informative to a young person. I remember something my dad told me: "The best gift you can give your kids is to love your wife." By doing so, they receive an example that will be a blessing to them! And when you mess up, it's a great chance to show him/her how the importance of confession, grace, and forgiveness.

Finally, your time continues to be your most important asset. Take the time to dive into their world. Learn to stay silent even when every bone in your body is screaming to respond! By spending time with them enjoying the things they prefer to do, you communicate intimacy to them that will allow you to remain influential in their lives when they most need your insight.

Every Wednesday night we host a group called Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP), hosted by Barry and Cara Hartenbach. Join us at Ignition for worship at 6:30 and then meet other PEP participants in Pastor Joel's office at 7:00! Call Barry or Cara at (661) 722-6128.

Building Leaders For Future Generations

One day in the future of Desert Winds Community Church, we will give the keys to the church to those who currently reside in the Kids Zone and Porch. Will they be ready for the task of building God's Kingdom?

We are thrilled to announce a new initiative intended to build a generation of leaders for the future by giving them key ownership of youth ministry today.

The Student Action Leadership Team (SALT) will be developed for the purposes of improving our ministry, giving ownership of the ministry to the kids, and developing future leaders for the Kingdom of God.

The team will consist of both junior high and senior high leaders, meeting monthly to bring new ideas and initiatives to our youth ministry. They will also have the opportunity to grow from the mentoring of adult leaders who will invest their time in the youth.

Already at the retreat, students began sharing exciting ideas that related to service in the community, outreach to

their friends, and opportunities for kids to grow in their faith.

All decisions for admission to SALT will be determined by a student's spiritual maturity, commitment to our ministry, and desire to be a servant first. Faith in Jesus Christ is essential for such an important position.

SALT will meet once a month in advance of the adult leadership team meetings. They will also have representation at that meeting and have the obligation to share their decisions and initiatives with the ministry as a whole. In the future you should see an article in here sharing the exciting things they've been doing.

Students who are interested in finding out more about student leadership can contact Pastor Joel and get an application. The applications will be reviewed, and all applicants interviewed for a one-year assignment on SALT.

"The world will belong to passionate, driven leaders—people who not only have enormous amounts of energy but who can energize those whom they lead." --Jack Welch

You Can Make a Difference!

Youth Ministry is one of the most critical endeavors a church undertakes. Doing it right means having enough people who participate and contribute to our success. Parents, volunteers, and youth come together to build a dynamic ministry which provides encouragement, wisdom, insight, relationships, and of course FUN!

We are always looking for people who are willing to jump into the picture. If you would like more information on serving in youth ministry or just have questions about what we're doing, please don't hesitate to contact Pastor Joel at 266-3400 or jdplantinga@sbcglobal.net

People who participate in youth ministry make an eternal difference!!!!!!



Winter Camp '08 Continued...

"I had a great time spending my hours with my friends and the Lord. Though I went up there with doubts and low expectations, I'm glad I came home with high expectations for myself and everyone around me", said student Laura Harmon. She added: "PS. I loved the food!" This reflects a goal that was set going into camp that we were going to experience something that would transcend the typical "mountaintop experience."

"One of my concerns is always that camps produce emotionally charged experiences that rarely translate into real change for the students when they get home", explained Pastor Joel. "But now we have some action items that the kids buy into that I'm optimistic we'll see action on." Student Juliana Katzman echoed that sentiment: "I am really looking forward to the next couple of months, to see how we as a youth group grow in the Lord and see how we can help transform the world."

The true gauge of success for Winter Camp '08 will be found in the fruit of our labor. People reached, needs met, relationships formed, and the degree to which our kids put their full faith in God will show the true transformation that occurred at camp.

Summer's Coming!

Even as our mountains continue to be covered in snow, we all know and understand that summer will soon be upon us. With summer comes the end of school (can I hear a collective gasp?), and that means lots of happenings for DWCC's Youth Ministry.

We haven't set a date/location for summer camp yet, but we should have something to announce within a month. The key for summer, according to Pastor Joel, is providing great value for the experience. "We want to be sensitive to cost so that many can come, but we also want a place that is conducive to ministry. If I'm waking up with flies and ants covering my body, then I'm not happy. And if Pastor Joel's not happy..."

Look for many opportunities to get involved in our community with cornerstone events like Vacation Bible School, Beat the Heat in the Park, and Yard Outreaches. Additionally, we hope to see a much higher youth involvement and participation at Summer Splash '08, slated for the last Wednesday in August.

"Our top priority is to engage our youth in the life of our church and community", said Pastor Joel. "I say it all the time...the youth are not the leaders of tomorrow, they are the leaders of today!" Events and activities give them a chance to serve God together and gain a new understanding of why it's important to get involved!

"I am really looking forward to the next couple of months, to see how we as a youth group grow in the Lord and see how we can help transform the world." –

Juliana Katzman (Student)

Random Tidbits...

- Ignition will not be held on Wednesday, March 26th.
- We're always looking for helpers/participants in worship for Ignition AND Sundays! Contact Pastor Ken at the office if interested.
- Check out Pastor Joel's "Myspace" and "Facebook" sites and get connected!
- PEP continues to meet every Wednesday night at the church concurrent with youth. Don't just drop off your kids...make the most of your time and get some PEP!
- Concert night in Whittier coming in April. Contact Cheri Sparks for information!

