

# UWM Great Lakes Youth and Family Ministry Annual Report, 2024

## Highlights and Accomplishments for Jan. - Dec. 2024

YFM Coordinator (Cassidy)

Report Date: 08/15/2024

### YFM State of the State

- Youth & Family Ministry offerings appear to be **growing** around our region, based on reports from folks who attend the monthly ministering with families calls, as well as what we're seeing attendance-wise at the Great Lakes Youth Events. Read on for more details on this wonderful news!

### YFM support

- Monthly Ministering with Families calls were held via zoom on topics ranging from sacred safety, change management, fundraising, to recruiting volunteers and gaining supporters of a YFM in congregations. Content is driven by what participants ask to discuss, as well as Cassidy's experience both as a local YFM Director (Unity Mpls) and her individual consults with folks around the region and beyond. Monthly attendance is approx.. seven, an increase from last year now that more people know about it and regular reminders are sent.
- As mentioned, Cassidy regularly provides resources and consults to YFM leaders throughout the region, from new hires, to volunteers, to seasoned YFMers, by zoom, calls, texts and email.

### Youth Retreats/Teen Leadership

- I am thrilled to report our highest attendance yet at our most recent Regional YFM retreats, despite having a bit of a gap year with Regies from Summer 2023-Spring 2024. Both were held at Lutherdale Retreat Center in Elkhorn, WI.
- Fall Youth Retreat Oct 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
  - Given the desire to build momentum with youth numbers and reduce individual chapter resources devoted to sending youth to WI, I made the decision to combine Uniteens and YOU for a joint fall youth retreat.
  - Chelsea Short, YFM Director at Unity of Louisville, led material creation for the fall event (based on a previous event, themed, "Be The Change") while I reached out to NGU ages to invite them back to facilitate the Uniteen spirit groups. Typically YOUers facilitate Uniteen spirit groups, but we wanted them to feel like the weekend was for them, too.
  - Past regies and other teens (4 total) stepped up to facilitate the weekend based on the script Chelsea and I adapted, and attendance was our highest yet post-pandemic: 42 participants (18 Uniteens, 11 YOU, 2 YOU grads and 11 adults)
  - Pricing was \$225/person, which was set to allow us to break even, which we did.
- Spring Youth Retreat April 26-28, 2024
  - Given the success of our first ever joint event, we decided to repeat the format for Spring. This time the theme was "Uncover Your Voice"
  - We broke our post-pandemic attendance record with 56 folks from 12 chapters in MN, IL, MI, KY, IN, WI and OH.
  - Two YOU grads returned to help facilitate Uniteen spirit groups, plus 15 YOUers, 21 Uniteens, and 18 adults.
  - A huge accomplishment was converting all the registration documents from paper to online. This new online registration system saved hours of efficiency vs. paper forms, which will carry forward to future events.

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- Another highlight was having 5 participants from the Spiritual Living of Greater Milwaukee, our first non-Unity new thought connection.
- Regies
  - Happily, three YOUers -Maddie Chapman in Grand Rapids, Joey Short in Louisville and Alex Bornstein Des Plaines were installed as Regies in an online ceremony June 23, 2024 and we are already hard at work planning the Fall 2024 retreat, to be held Nov 8-10<sup>th</sup> for both Uniteens and YOU at Lutherdale in WI.
- IYOU 2024
  - Approx 70 YOUers and adults attended the International YOU retreat at Unity Village July 7-11, including 12 participants from Great Lakes.
  - From my time serving in a family group with teens, I saw how much they need spaces like YOU Chapters and youth-led retreats where they're unconditionally accepted, learn practical spiritual tools and make deep connections with their peers while being cheered on by loving adults.
- Chapter X
  - This is an online, youth-led chapter for YOUers who don't have a home chapter. Some incredible services have been developed, as well as leadership trainings for youth and sponsors. I continue to recommend that ministries in our region without YOU programming send teens to Chapter X.

## **Routine Activities and Communications**

- Keep Constant Contact YFM email lists and points of contact for ministries updated
- Marketing YFM support calls, training and retreats via monthly newsletters, social media and with ministry reach-outs
- Phone calls, meetings and emails with board YFM Liaison, Treasurer, and Great Lakes admin as well as YOU Alumni Network reps, and Regional YFM Team Leaders (YFM Consultants) and Teen Regies
- Monthly finance and activity reports to board
- Input to regional newsletter and website

## **Vision/Upcoming**

- Continue
  - Offering trainings and upskilling opportunities across the region
  - Making connections with YFM contacts across region and offering support
  - Increasing teen leadership and developing regional officer pipeline
  - Inviting non-Unity new thought orgs (like Centers for Spiritual Living) to our teen events
  - Growing attendance at youth events
- Work to keep registration costs down while keeping event quality high (including fundraising campaign for retreat "scholarship" funds)
- Upcoming Youth Retreats: Fall 2024 Youth Retreat, Spring Unitreat 2025, June Rally 2025