

YMI Newsletter

2013 No. 1

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An Inside Look

It has been over six months since Kathy Rexroad began as our coaching coordinator. Her main role is to support our field coaches, ensuring that our youth ministers get consistent and quality coaching. We have had several coaching adjustments which have increased the quality of field instruction our youth ministers are receiving. In some cases we have assigned more than one coach to provide a broader range of expertise.

I have had a few other observations regarding YMI coaching.

#1 Kathy is pretty awesome! Her attention to people and their needs is precise. She is intentional at assessing needs and finding coaches who can fulfill those needs. She is delicate on the phone, affirming our coaches, reassuring supervisors and keeping our youth ministers in the loop.

#2 Expectations are rising. With the addition of Kathy, senior pastors and youth ministers expect more out of the Youth Ministry Institute. While I think we are operating at a higher level, I have noticed that we receive more direct criticism regarding our coaching. We might possibly receive it because we invite the feedback. Kathy does an excellent job of connecting with pastors. We believe that this provides a pressure release, some of which could be directed at the youth minister by the pastor if we didn't call regularly. So, internally we think we are doing better. Evidently, externally we have a long ways to go.

#3 There are some coaching superstars. We just hope they don't flame out. Our coaches traditionally do a great job in their first year. They tend to lose momentum the second year. Coaches that are doing the best job for us are meeting with their youth minister monthly and communicating with Kathy the important details of their meeting. This feedback loop helps all of us to better meet the needs of a youth minister so that we can help them to continue to grow and learn.

#4 We are changing culture. When Kathy and I become frustrated when the coaching isn't happening in the manner in which we design it, I keep reminding us that we are creating a culture where youth ministers intentionally help each other professionally and personally. This culture hasn't existed previously. Don't get me wrong. Youth ministers are very collegial and friendly. We are trying to go way beyond that. We want to create an interconnected and interdependent cadre of youth ministers who unselfishly go beyond their own job description to help another youth minister grow into their calling. It takes time to change culture. But, we are committed to it.

I know we are in the process of refining our coaching process. It is worth the effort. I know we will see the day when expectations match output. At some point the culture will reflect our desired result. Kathy and I will continue to work towards those goals because those youth ministers with excellent coaches tend to have more confidence in their ministry skills. Great coaching is critical to the success of a youth minister.

Most Recently at our Annual Dessert Fund Raiser

A record number of people attended our dessert fund raiser last month! We used Legos to illustrate our theme, "Building Excellence in Youth Ministry". Local television news personality, Vanessa Welch, and NFL kicker, Ryan Longwell, spoke about how youth ministers shaped their lives. Emma Harmon, a tenth grader, and Greg Rusch, a YMI youth minister, shared their perspectives on youth ministry and the Youth Ministry Institute.

We raised \$10,580 at the dessert, slightly below our goal of \$15,000. That includes 30 new donors to YMI. Our annual donors are sending in checks to make sure we reach our overall goal of \$40,000 for the year. If your gift is well intentioned, yet undelivered, know that we will receive it when you are ready. We are grateful for all that support the Youth Ministry Institute. Enjoy the pictures!









Random Statistics

Baseball season is starting. I am not Bill James. But, I do like statistics. Here are some that may interest you.

4.1 years **Average Tenure of a Youth Minister (nationwide) at One Job**

1.7 years **Average Tenure of YMI students who don't complete YMI.**

71% **The rate youth ministers complete our two-year program.**

78% **The percentage of YMI Grads who were employed a minimum of five years at the church who enrolled them or are still working at that church**

We would like to see 80% of our graduates working at the church that hired them for five years or longer. We will nudge above that percentage this year. Maybe this could be our on-base percentage (another head nod to James).

Final Word

From the YMI Guy's Blog

I finally turned 50. What a relief.

I know I'm not unlike most people at a particular point in life. There are milestones that we all dread. 30 was no big deal. At 40 I could look at most of my friends and still claim hair on my head. It is 50 that has been the hardest for me.

It wasn't a big deal until the summer after my 48th birthday - my 30th high school reunion. At other reunions I was pretty pleased with my showing. I felt like I compared favorably. Come on. Admit it. That's what everybody does at their high school reunions. You look in the mirror before you go. And, then you look at all the other people. We revert back to high school essentially. How cool am I? Do I look good?

At 46, a few years before the reunion, I felt like I would make a good showing. I had lost a bunch of weight, the first time I had seen 180 pounds since my late 20s. I felt good. My body did what I told it to do. Then, I fell apart. I hurt my neck. I hurt my back. My metabolism changed. I didn't stay at 180. If only the reunion were two years earlier!

A driving trip from Florida to Kansas City for the reunion didn't help my weight. It only increased as I sat behind the wheel of my car in a sedentary position. We did a lot of eating with friends and family. Most of it was very good. By the time the reunion rolled around, the photos exposed my age. Even a dark room couldn't hide it.

For the last 18 months age depression has weighed heavily on me. I don't look young anymore.

Turning 50 relieved the pressure. This is how I am supposed to look - older. If you are younger than me then you have a right to look younger. I am 50 and this is how I am supposed to look.

Of course, my abilities have diminished, too. My basketball game is non-existent. My knees lock a little when I jump. My right arm hurts from the nerve damage as a result of my neck problem four years ago. I'm not quick. And, I don't care. The other day I told the group of guys I play basketball with that I am only planning on getting worse at this game and not better. They better be okay with it because I am.

50 gave me permission to be who I am, an aging want-to-be athlete. That coupled with my German genetic code means that I am stuck, uh, blessed with the body I have. So, I'm done complaining about it or expecting more out of myself than I can give.

I'll still play basketball. I just played last night with several 70 year olds for two hours. So, I know I can enjoy the game for a while longer.

I'll still smile at myself in the mirror. The guy looking back isn't as strange and old as he has been the last few years. He is just a guy who finally accepts himself as he matures through this next stage of life.

Hmm, maybe this is what it feels like to finally get over the hill.