



HIGHLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

YOUTH MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Highland United Methodist Church, Raleigh, NC

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Youth Ministry Architects, October 10th, 2010

BACKGROUND

Highland United Methodist Church is a neighborhood church located in Raleigh, North Carolina. It has many diverse programs that nurture both the congregation and the community at large. Often described as a “mission oriented church,” the church’s mission undertaking includes a community garden, an English as a Second Language Program through a local community college, a library, a computer lab, Highland Service Project, South American Outreach, and an annual Pumpkin Patch. Some describe the church as “thriving” and “stable” while others reflected the church was “aging” and “static.”

On December 4, 1953, The Reverend Brooks Patten was appointed by the North Carolina Conference "to organize a new church in West Raleigh to be known as Ridgewood Methodist Church." The first worship service was held on May 2, 1954, in the Frances Lacy Elementary School. Early in 1955 plans were developed for a four-stage building project consisting of the Fellowship Hall and Chapel, a Church School unit, a youth wing, and a Sanctuary.

At the Annual Conference in 1975, Highland Church was the recipient of The Church of the Year Award, awarded to churches with membership of 1000 or more. The Highland Service Project, a local outreach ministry, was established in July 1985. In 1992 a project was completed that renovated all existing facilities other than the Sanctuary and constructed a large, new building with a fellowship hall/gymnasium that would seat over 400 people for a meal, a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen, several classrooms, and an elevator.

In 2004, Highland celebrated 50 years of ministry. Currently, the membership of the church is around 2000 and on an average week, 410 people attend one of the church’s three worship services. Some say the church comes together around its mission: “*Making Disciples for the Changing of the World.*” Other focus group participants reflected that the mission statement is outdated and “the church as whole needs to define its direction.”

From 1995 to 2001 the youth ministry was under the direction of one Youth Director and was described as “vibrant and exciting.” Since 2001, the ministry has been led by four different staff

members and a number of volunteers and parents. The youth ministry during this time was described as “unstable,” “lost,” and “lacking structure.”

In the spring of 2010, the Minister of Youth and Families (who had served once before in this position at Highland) was hired and serves in that role today.

Currently, there are approximately one hundred 6th through 12th graders on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, about 40 of them participate in either Sunday School, worship or UMYF. There are also a variety of events that are established traditions among the youth, including The Pumpkin Patch and Highland Service Project. Many youth and their families participate in these projects. The youth ministry is described by some students as “energetic” and “deep” and parents described the program as “outdated” and “lacking structure.”

The church has a 2010 budget of \$1.3 million. For the year 2010, the youth ministry has a budget in the neighborhood of \$68,500. This includes the program budget and salaries/benefits for the staff, consisting of one full time Minister of Youth and Families and three part time youth interns.

There are approximately 5 adult volunteers involved twice a month in one of the major youth programs. Others help out at special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

Over the last ten years, the youth program has had many leadership and directional changes. When the Minister of Youth and Families was hired in the spring of 2010, he initiated conversations that resulted in Youth Ministry Architects coming to Highland UMC and assessing the youth ministry.

In October 2010, Youth Ministry Architects came to do an initial assessment of the youth ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. We met with 61 individuals in twelve focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations. The recommendations in this report are based on the information shared in those focus groups set against a backdrop of what we know about building sustainable youth ministries. Also included is a proposed timeline for the future.



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YOUTH MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens we like to use for understanding youth ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” These three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, but they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff and the congregation at large.

Youth ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing and discouragement.

Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church’s ministry. It will be important for a target number of participation level to be clearly agreed on by the Church Council, youth ministry leadership and staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, youth ministries are typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

Rent #2: PROGRAMS—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, youth leadership will need to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give youth, parents, leaders and staff “something to talk about.”

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—It will be necessary to establish a joyful, expectant culture among the active youth and parents for the benefit of the rest of the youth and congregation. A climate of enthusiasm will be essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and the parents.

As the leadership of this ministry develops its long-range vision, it will simultaneously need to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the Highland UMC Youth Ministry faces parallel challenges:



1. Laying the Foundation: Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the ministries’ *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,
2. Continuing to Worship on Stilts: Maintaining the *current* ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of youth, families, staff and the church at large.



As the youth ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, five rules of thumb – or what we call “ministry norms” – will be helpful to keep in mind:

- 1) **\$1200 a Kid**—With approximately \$67,000 dedicated to the youth ministry and a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 40 youth in some aspect of the church’s life, the church has made a sound investment in the youth program. According to this rule of thumb, the youth ministry has the potential to grow to 56 youth involved weekly.
- 2) **1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—In the current configuration there is 1 full time employee and three part time interns working to support the youth ministry. With the equivalent of 1.4 full time employees in the youth ministry, Highland UMC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 70 youth on a weekly basis. It is currently engaging 40 youth. According to this rule of thumb, with the current staffing structure, the youth ministry at Highland is poised for some growth.
- 3) **1 Adult for Every 5 Youth**— We like to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five youth on an ongoing basis. With 6 volunteers serving at least twice per month, Highland UMC currently has the bandwidth to minister to 30 youth weekly. The current volunteer to leader ratio is 1 leader for every 7 youth. In order to effectively disciple youth currently attending as well as position for growth, more adult volunteers will be required.
- 4) **10% of the Worshipping Congregation**—In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshipping congregation. With an average worship attendance of 410, the 40 youth involved each week is right at the norm.
- 5) **20% Ceiling**—We have also discovered that in many churches, the youth ministry has difficulty growing beyond a level that equals 20% of the weekly worshipping congregation. Only those youth ministries that are “relentlessly simple” seem to be able to break beyond this 20% level. Highland might keep in mind, then, that the expected ceiling for this youth ministry is 80 youth. The road to that level of participation is dependent on maintaining staff as well as growing volunteers and budget.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. We have found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three different kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The Construction Foreman:** A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, or particular skills in planning and managing events, or particular skills in teaching.

Many churches hire, as their lead youth director, someone who may have gifts in a single area--for example, working with youth, managing a facility--but who simply don't have the experience base or the skill set to oversee the complex components of a ministry of 50 or more youth. The result in these situations can be a pattern of unrealistic expectations for the staff which can lead to "scapegoating," particularly in settings in which a sustainable infrastructure for ministry has not been established.

THE ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current youth ministry

We are Family: There is a love and investment by both parents and students for the youth ministry at Highland. For the most part, those involved in the youth group enjoy the friendships, programming, and community at Highland.

- We are like an awkward family.
- We love being together and we are really tight.
- I have been at this church since I was born and these people are like my family.

Mission Work: Across the board, it was agreed that the most powerful youth ministry programs for Highland have been those that have focused on missions and trips. Highland Service Project, the Pumpkin Patch, and retreats seem to be a part of the healthy DNA of this church's youth ministry. There are long-standing traditions that youth undeniably look forward to year after year. One student said, “When people think about Highland they think about Pumpkins.” “The



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Highland Service Project really gives us a chance to get to know people of different ages in the church.” One key to the youth ministry’s successful navigation through its current evolution will be for its leaders to capitalize on this strength and find more ways of engaging youth through trips and missions.

Youth Director: Across the board, the youth director is held in high esteem by the youth, the parents, the staff and the volunteers. When we asked the youth about adults they loved and appreciated in the church, the first answer was almost always the youth director. The depth of his faith, his immense organizational skills and his ability to learn and grow with every youth were all qualities that were praised repeatedly by participants in focus groups. He is “creative,” “energetic,” and has “strong passion.” The fact that the church is filled with fans of the youth director is a huge asset for the youth ministry.

Contagious Enthusiasm: There has been a core group of youth that have developed strong relationships and memories with one another. Their contagious enthusiasm and potential for leadership could serve as a spring board into a new era of youth ministry. Parents are also hopeful and excited about the new direction for the youth ministry. When asked to describe the youth ministry now, youth said:

- Very awesome
- Enthusiastic
- Insane
- Fun
- Hungry

Parents commented that the youth ministry is currently:

- Energetic
- Hopeful
- Improving
- Struggling to find an identity

Willingness to Step to the Plate: Many in focus groups spoke with confidence about the parents’ ability and willingness to support the youth and the youth ministry. Repeatedly, we heard that the church members are willing to contribute their time, talents and resources in any way possible. One participant said, “We would love to make Sunday School more meaningful, and we would be willing to volunteer more time.” And many of the church staff members affirmed that having enough resources was not the problem facing the youth ministry. Parents were clear in their desire to “put time, effort and energy” with the youth. Most, it seems, are waiting for a clear vision they can get behind and a plan for its implementation.



Untapped Volunteers: Almost all focus group participants were able to quickly identify persons in the church who should/could be involved in the youth ministry. A surprising number of parents indicated that they would be willing to be more involved in the youth ministry in the future if a vision were in place and if asked. We heard things like:

- As a church we need to take more ownership.
- Our church is old and if the church doesn't understand that the youth are the future then we're going to lose them.
- We have lots of talented people, maybe serving where they aren't gifted.
- Our church isn't looking outside the box and if we don't look outside the box we're going to be in trouble.

Home Sweet Home: From focus group participants, it was common to hear "I've been at this church my entire life," or "I've been at this church for 20, 30, 40 even 50+ years." Many of the youth parents who are active in the church today carry significant memories from their experiences in the Highland UMC youth group. Church members have watched decades of youth through the program and therefore have a very strong sense of where the ministry has come from.

The fact that "a good number" of the youth that grew up as active members of Highland UMC youth ministry have gone into youth ministry in their twenties speaks positively towards the church's tradition and ministry. One church member said, "We have to be doing something right."

Upcoming Numbers: There is a groundswell of older elementary students about to enter the youth ministry. The children's ministry seems to have cultivated a great relationship within the elementary aged children. The staff and parents invest heavily in the children's ministry and are active in incorporating rising 4th and 5th graders into Sunday night traditions. These students should be well primed to join the ranks of the youth ministry and provide leadership as they grow. There are also a good number of 8th graders set to enter the high school ministry and their enthusiasm is a real plus.

Music as Ministry: In many focus groups the gift of music was mentioned and the potential to continue to create a vibrant ministry down this path should be explored. A vision for the direction of the ministry is varied among focus group participants. We heard things like:

- We should have a youth choir
- Youth choirs are outdated
- We don't have a youth choir so kid's musical opportunities stop in the sixth grade.
- I like being in the praise band, but I don't go much.
- Chris has been a real plus to the program.



CHALLENGES

Clarity of Need: There seemed to be an across-the-board consensus that the youth ministry is not all that the youth, the parents, the volunteers and the staff would like it to be. Though the theories as to the causes of this situation were varied, there was little disagreement that the youth ministry is lacking sustainable structure to be what it could be. It was generally acknowledged that though there are some wonderful “components” to the youth ministry, these components lack the kind of integration to allow them to work together smoothly.

One person said, “There is absolutely no consistency.” Others spoke of capacity issues; that the current structure does not “have room” to fit many kids. Other comments included, “We need to have new people come in and feel included so everyone feels like they have a common cause,” “We need a game plan,” “There is such a variety of the type of kids that come in. You can’t do just basketball.”

Another parent said, “We need to intentionally find what we want.”

As youth families see their children more connected to the church, their enthusiasm predictably results in higher levels of support, both financially and in volunteer capacities.

Proactive Responsiveness; Not Reactive Crisis: It is clear that Highland UMC is not in a state of “panic” in its youth ministry. Some parents and staff have reasonable concerns about the youth ministry, concerns which, if left un-addressed, could threaten the long-term stability of the group. Instead of waiting for a squeaky wheel to demand attention, the staff of the church has chosen to seek outside counsel, while the youth ministry is still operating in a state of relative health. One staff member summed it up well: “We’re okay but could use some help creating a vision and establishing a direction for our youth group.”

Facilities: Many indicated a desire to see the church provide a more dedicated meeting space for the youth ministry. It will be important, though, to avoid focusing too quickly on facilities before a clear vision, goals, and direction for the youth ministry have been established. We heard things like:

- The game room feels like our own, but when we are up here [current meeting space] it feels just like another room.
- If new people aren’t seeing an effort to make the place welcoming, they won’t come back.
- The game room smells like a locker room.



The Longing for Youth Engaged in Worship: Though a number of teenagers said that they came to worship because they enjoyed the pastor's messages, some students and adults voiced the concern that the style of worship service does not attract young people. A number of parents were enthusiastic about the idea of a periodic youth worship service that engaged the kids in a creative and different way. The youth do have a praise band, but it has not developed a cohesive spot within the congregation.

Everybody's Got a Great Idea: Though no one was clear exactly how to build a sustainable youth ministry at Highland, there was no shortage of ideas for what needs to happen next. Though it is clear that none of these ideas will have the power to create long-term sustainability for the program, we thought we would include a sampling of the often-contradictory ideas we heard from focus groups:

- Hire more interns
- Get more volunteers
- Keep Charlie
- Don't let parents be leaders
- Use more parents as leaders
- Be more mission oriented
- Be more fun
- Grow and have more youth
- Don't grow anymore
- Try a midweek activity
- Take more trips and overnights
- Stay close to the church and spend time here
- We need a lot of activities to reach a lot of children
- We need to make an effort to make really good the things we do now before starting new things.

Since there are so many in the church that have a high investment in the youth ministry, there are quite a few different ideas about what the vision of the youth ministry ought to be. Not surprisingly, most people evaluate the youth ministry based on their own vision of where the youth ministry needs to go. When a ministry lacks a clearly stated vision, anxiousness is often a predictable result. In anxious settings, there is typically a good bit of triangulating happening, in which people don't talk directly to each other but instead talk to a third party about their concerns.

Until this picture is developed, agreed on, and pursued, the future leadership of the youth ministry will remain mired in programmatic confusion. Without a clear target, parents and students will become confused and frustrated about what actually is expected of them.



Invisible Youth: Many indicated a desire to have the youth more visible in the life of the church. There is a disconnect between youth and adult involvement in the church. There seems to be a feeling by many focus group participants that the youth ministry operates in isolation from the rest of the church. Parents and leaders expressed the desire for integration and unity and eliminating the generational disconnect by saying things like:

- The only time you see youth is if you come to dinner on Sunday nights.
- I don't know what they [the youth] do.
- The only time there is an intergenerational event is Highland Service Project.
- There are lots of people in the congregation who have amazing stories to tell.
- I think it would be great if students graduated and wanted to come back to the church.
- I can't remember the last time I saw the youth in front of the church.

What about the Parents?: A number of focus group participants spoke about the incomparable power that parents have in the faith formation of their children and in their participation in the youth ministry. Many voiced a concern that youth don't want their parents involved. Others recognized the need for a family based investment in the ministry.

Where's the Welcome Mat?: While there is a sense that the youth group is a warm and welcoming environment there is concern that the group is not extending the same hospitality to newcomers, visitors, and other age groups. One parent reported, "If someone doesn't fit in, they still need to be reached out to." And another participant reported, "Some students have been coming to youth group for a year and still do not feel a sense of belonging." We heard the term "family feel" mentioned many times to describe the youth program. But it was clear that not all youth in the life of the church connect in the youth ministry. One student said, "The reason I really don't come is because of the people."

Don't Look Back – Look Ahead!: It is widely recognized that inconsistency in leadership has deeply affected the youth ministry and church as a whole. If it is hoped that the current and future staff will thrive in the church, it is imperative that a clear, sustainable structure be established. Without such a foundation in place, the youth staff is guaranteed always to have minimal protection from the demands that will come from competing, unspoken expectations. The revolving door of staff leads youth to feel "frustrated" and "abandoned."

- The bad thing about interns is that you get close to them and they leave.
- Every staff that comes in has their own way of doing things.
- I don't know what we want.
- We have always dumped on our youth pastor the responsibility of the teens, but it is not a part of the mission of the church.

A Clear Model for Staff and Volunteer Needs: The congregation and volunteers, even those who do not regularly interface with the youth of the church, expressed a strong desire and interest in being involved and seeing the program be as effective as it could be in retaining youth



through high school and beyond. This desire was also met with reservation by the staff about ‘putting more on their plate.’ As the youth program grows a core of volunteers will need to grow with it. One staff member said, “The youth ministry has been very youth director driven. A new youth director means a totally new direction. All of the changes in the direction was kind of like whiplash.” If the ministry hopes to engage students at an early age and keep them involved through high school and beyond, more volunteers are needed to serve alongside the youth director.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Reframe the next 13 months (through December 2011) as a time of direction setting and infrastructure building for the youth ministry. Target January 2012 as the date for a sustainable structure for youth ministry that will have been laid over the previous 13 months.
- 2) Present this report to the Church Council, requesting they approve the 13-month strategic renovation process outlined in this document.
- 3) Establish a two-year, five-person Youth Ministry Renovation Team, made up of the Director of Youth Ministry and four volunteer stakeholders in the church, who report regularly to the Senior Pastor and are charged with three overarching responsibilities:
 - I. Work with the youth ministry staff to address the immediate pressure points facing the youth ministry’s transition toward sustainability.
 - II. Evaluate Internship Program and work towards a strategic plan that compliments the ministry and interns’ talents.
 - III. Establish a consensus for the direction of the youth ministry and oversee the development of its long-term infrastructure.

TASK #1: Addressing the immediate Pressure Points facing the youth ministry

(to be accomplished before any major changes in weekly programming)

Pressure Point 1: Create a Sustainable Model that will utilize current staff in their giftedness, provide for long-term leadership of the ministry, and develop programs and traditions that compliment the church as a whole.

Pressure Point 2: Establish a Prayer Team who will undergird the strategic renovation process with prayer over the next 13 months.

Pressure Point 3: Recruit volunteers for weekly programming and major event coordinators for events such as mission trips, retreats, etc.



Pressure Point 4: Develop a Leader/Teacher Training Plan that includes sufficient training and support for all volunteers in the youth ministry as well as regular meetings for celebration and training.

Pressure Point 5: Communicate to the church as a whole, leaders, parents, and students a 13-month calendar of major youth ministry events and programs that incorporate both youth and greater church wide events.

Pressure Point 6: Establish Target Participation Numbers for the coming year for each program of the youth ministry, as well as a target number for total weekly participation.

TASK #2: Establishing a consensus for the direction of the youth ministry and the creation of its infrastructure, including the completion of the following tasks:

INFRASTRUCTURE TASKS THAT BUILD STABILITY

- **Visioning:** Discuss how the youth ministry can interweave into the church's Mission Statement and Values. Develop a set of Three-Year Revolving Goals, as well as a clear structure for the youth ministry.
- **Control Document Development:** Complete a Youth Directory, an 18-Month Calendar, volunteer application processes, Major Event Notebooks, and Preventative Maintenance Calendar.
- **7-Year Intentional Curriculum Plan:** Create an integrated template for curriculum, including a design for youth group, Sunday School and Confirmation.
- **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, that an application and screening process for volunteers is in place and Safe Sanctuary is affirmed by all adults working with youth.
- **Facilities:** Develop a long-term strategy for facilities that will increase the exposure of the youth ministry on the church campus and the capacity for youth participation.
- **Attendance:** Create an attendance database and begin entering attendance weekly for all Highland UMC youth activities, including Sunday School.
- **Marketing:**
 - Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, leaders and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the youth ministry.
 - Develop processes for communicating about upcoming events and weekly programs that allows participation targets to be regularly reached in the youth ministry.



- **Communication:** Establish normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, youth, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the youth page of the church’s website, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Youth Ministry Manual:** Develop a Highland UMC Youth Ministry Manual, including the most recent Youth Directory, an 12-Month Calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar and notes for every major youth ministry event.

DEVELOPING AND NURTURING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan for the youth ministry that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth.
- **Staff Development:** Continue to provide mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff.
- **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- **Event Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of whom will do relational ministry with youth while others work behind the scenes. Create a “fishing pond” list of at least 50 possible volunteers to call on.
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer youth workers at the beginning of each school year.

DEVELOPING CLEAR STRATEGIES

- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new youth to the church and visitors (such as friends) so that they feel warmly welcomed at Highland UMC. Develop a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the youth programs.
- **Friendship Epidemic:** Begin to build a friendly environment for the youth group, charging the leadership students to develop a “friendship epidemic.” Train and support them as they create a climate of “radical hospitality” and friendship for the youth ministry, a climate that is effectively focused beyond comfortable friendship clusters and reaches outside the Highland UMC youth community. (*Thriving Youth Groups: Secrets for Growing Your Ministry* by Jeanne Mayo would be a good “cookbook” for this group)



- **Keeping Seniors:** Determine a strategy and process for engaging seniors in the ministry through their high school graduation and beyond
- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through December 2011 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- **Discipleship Plan:** Create and publicize a deliberate plan that allows youth and parents to understand where students are in their spiritual lives and determine what programs and ministries will meet their individual needs where they are.
- **Program Cohesion:** Develop consistency with the Sunday night program allowing students and parents to understand the goals and environment for fellowship and growth.
- **Missions:** Continue to build off the desire of youth and parents to make a difference in the world as well as their local community. Develop a clear, focused calendar for youth involvement in local, national, and international missions, evaluating the current mission trips, and creating a plan for promoting and exposing the congregation to youth missions throughout the year
- **Spiritual Depth:** Develop a plan to intentionally take students deeper in their faith through teaching and discipleship in varied environments.
- **Facilities:** Evaluate the use of the facility by the youth ministry and develop a plan for better, more attractive, dedicated space for the youth ministry.
- **Incorporating the Youth and the Whole Church:** Evaluate strategies to give more visibility to the youth through church wide programs and worship.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides Highland United Methodist Church with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a sustainable, long-term youth ministry.

Many churches choose to use the services of Youth Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Youth Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 13-month transition, we are available to help.

November 2010

Focus: Preparing and Planning

Outcomes:

- The Youth Ministry Renovation Team is in place and they have presented the Church with the strategic plan for “renovating” the Highland UMC youth ministry.
- The prayer team is in place and is charged with praying for the youth ministry at Highland UMC.



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- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has been calendared for January.
- Plans have begun for a creative & fun event to kick off the new year for the parents and youth.

YMA Option: 2 days off site

December 2010

Focus: Beginning the Process

Outcomes:

- The Youth Ministry Renovation Team has met once and been oriented to their unique roles and personal responsibilities over the coming 13 months and recruited a Prayer Team to begin meeting regularly.
- Invitations have been sent for the January volunteer training event.
- A list of all volunteer needs has been created and a master list of 50 potential adult leaders has been developed, including people from a variety of age groups.
- A written, relational volunteer recruitment process has been developed, outlining when and how volunteers in the youth ministry will be recruited, with the goal of having all key positions in the youth ministry filled at least 2 months before those leaders are to begin serving.
- The Staff-Parish Relations Committee has reviewed the YMA Assessment and has made recommendations.

YMA Option: 2 days off site

January 2011

Focus: Starting the Structure

Outcomes:

- Processes for tracking attendance for all youth ministry events are in place.
- Most of the hands-on volunteers needed for the 2011 year have been recruited.-yep
- Written job descriptions have been revised and approved for paid staff serving in the Highland UMC youth ministry.
- A long term strategic staffing plan has been created and sent to the Church Council for approval.
- 50% of Major Event Coordinators for 2011 have been recruited.
- A date is set for a March Visioning Retreat and the event is publicized to leaders and parents.
- A game plan has been written for creating a welcoming environment including recruiting a team of youth to create a welcoming environment in the youth programs and are oriented to their specific role.
- A youth ministry major event calendar through December 2011 has begun to be created.

YMA Option: 2 days off site

February 2011

Focus: Volunteer Development & Vision Planning

Outcomes:

- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has taken place, leaving volunteers with the sense that they have clarity about their roles, their importance, and the plans for the upcoming year.



15

- The dates of all major youth ministry events and trips have been determined through 2011 and the youth ministry calendar has been published in print, on the website and through all means of media accessed by the wider church.
- Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.
- All Major Event Coordinators for 2011 have been recruited.
- Establish a process for *possible* summer interns.
- The appropriate number of volunteers for summer trips has been recruited.
- Visioning Retreat Details are complete and invitations have been extended.

YMA Option: 2 days off site

March 2011

Focus: Infrastructure and Visioning Retreat

Outcomes:

- Summer programming is in place and volunteers have been recruited
- Processes are in place for the timely and personal follow up for any first-time visitors to the youth ministry.
- Results-based, written job descriptions for all volunteer positions in the youth ministry have been developed.
- A list of all volunteer needs for the 2011-2012 school year has been created and the recruiting of hands-on leaders and major event coordinators for the 2011-2012 youth ministry has begun.
- Visioning Retreat with all major stakeholders has occurred producing Visioning documents for the Youth Ministry (Mission Statement, Values, Goals, and Structure).
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.

YMA Option: 3 days on site and 1 day off site

April 2011

Focus: Summer Final Details

Outcomes:

- A template for Major Event notebooks has been created and notebooks have begun to be filled with information.
- A draft of the youth and volunteer directory has been distributed to youth and their families in order for them to update their contact information.
- All major event coordinators through December 2011 have been given an overview of their responsibilities, including how to create a notebook for the event to pass along to future coordinators.
- Compliance documents for music and video licensing are in place as well as a screening process of hands-on, weekly youth ministry volunteers that includes background checks and/or fingerprinting.

YMA Option: 1 day on site and 2 days off site



May 2011

Focus: Evaluation and Moving Forward

Outcomes:

- The Youth Ministry Renovation Team has completed a half-year course evaluation of the renovation process and makes corrective action to address those components of the strategic plan that may have gotten off course.
- Unexpected challenges (which are to be expected!) in the youth ministry have been addressed with playfulness and proactive creativity.
- The chair of the Youth Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff have received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support.
- The majority of the pressure points from the assessment have been addressed.

YMA Option: 1 day on site and 1 day off site

June 2011

Focus: Behind the Scenes, Curriculum Retreat Planning

Outcomes:

- A Preventative Maintenance Calendar has been created for the youth ministry which will help it regularly deal with on-going “behind the scene” ministry maintenance.
- Mechanisms for incorporating a whole church event that intentionally highlights the youth and families ministry has been addressed.
- Ongoing communication mechanisms are in place to communicate youth events and activities to parents and the church at large.
- All volunteers for the 2011-2012 school year have been recruited.
- Plans in place for a July Curriculum Retreat and invitations extended.
- Invitations have been sent for the July volunteer training event.

YMA Option: 2 days off site

July 2011

Focus: Support, Training, and Building a Curriculum

Outcomes:

- A second youth ministry volunteer training event has taken place helping leaders to clarify their roles, inspiring them to grow in their own faith, and equipping them to serve the youth of the church and community. All weekly, hands-on youth ministry volunteers understand the Safe Sanctuary policies of the United Methodist Church.
- Structures are in place to provide on-going support for the staff and volunteers of the youth ministry to ensure sustainable, intentional, effective ministry.
- Ongoing training for the welcoming environment team has taken place and initiatives created by the teens are put in place.
- A Curriculum Retreat has taken place and a 7-year, integrated template for curriculum, including a design for small groups, Sunday School and Confirmation has been created.



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- Create and publicize a deliberate discipleship plan that allows youth and parents to understand where students are in their spiritual lives and determine what programs and ministries will meet their individual needs where they are.
- Screening and background checks are complete for all hands-on volunteers for the upcoming school year.

YMA Option: 3 days on site and 1 day off site

August 2011

Focus: Ongoing Structure

Outcomes:

- A manual for the youth ministry has been completed, including
 - Visioning Documents
 - Youth Directory
 - Volunteer Directory
 - Annual Calendar
 - Job Descriptions
 - Game Plans
 - Curriculum Template and Record of Curriculum Resources Used for the Current Year
 - Budget
 - Recruiting Template, with a Record of All the Volunteer Needs for the Year
 - Compliance Documents
- Final details are in place for a fall kick off event designed to welcome youth into a program they can get excited about, to introduce parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about, and to provide a forum for receiving information from youth families (sign up forms, surveys, etc.).
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- A facilities evaluation and long term plan has been established.
- The chair of the Youth Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff have received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support from the YMA staff.

YMA Option: 1 day off site

September/October 2011

Focus: Family Ministry & Facilities & Long-term Staffing

Outcomes:

- Major event coordinators for all major youth ministry events from the previous year have completed Major Event Notebooks.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- Child Protection policies and volunteer application processes have been reviewed and updated by the Youth Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff.

YMA Option: 1 day off site



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November 2011

Focus: Strategy Development & Missions

Outcomes:

- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- An appreciation event has been held for all volunteers in the ministry.
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- A list of all volunteer needs for the 2012-2013 school year has been created and the recruiting of hands-on leaders and major event coordinators for the 2012-2013 youth ministry has begun.
- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has been calendared for January.

YMA Option: 1 day off site

December 2011

Focus: More Strategy Development

Outcomes:

- A youth ministry major event calendar through December 2012 has been finalized and 75% of the plans are complete.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- Curriculum resources for the 2012-2013 school year have been selected.
- Written game plans (including implementation timetables) have been developed to reach out strategically to youth who are not currently a part of the youth ministry.

YMA Option: 1 day off site

January 2012

Focus: Planning for next year & Re-upping of Goals

Outcomes:

- The processes put in place in 2011 repeat themselves for the youth staff and the Youth Ministry Renovation Team plan for the upcoming school year.
- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has taken place, leaving volunteers with the sense that they have clarity about their roles, their importance, and the plans for the upcoming year.
- The dates of all major youth ministry events and trips have been determined through August 2013 and the youth ministry calendar has been published in print, on the website and through all means of media accessed by the wider church. Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.



19

- Compliance documents are renewed and in place (volunteer applications, music and video copyright licensing, etc.).
- Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.
- A game plan is in place for transitioning from the 13-month interim structure for the youth ministry to a structure that can sustain the youth ministry for the long haul. - ? yep
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.

YMA Option: 3 days on site and 1 day off site



