

Holy Spirit Youth Ministry

“Take up the Shield of Faith”

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Dear Disciple,

Imagine descending 175 feet into the heart of Niagara Fall’s fury. Standing on what is called the Hurricane Deck, with Niagara Falls completely engulfing and electrifying you, all your senses are kicked into high gear to process what you are experiencing! The roar of the falls is deafening and relentless. The air is thick with so much mist its hard to open your eyes; your poncho clings to your skin in a miniscule effort to keep you dry; your feet grip the slick boards and your hands cling to the railing as the winds howl at hurricane force. You open your mouth to share a thought with your friend only to find your voice is no match for thousands of gallons of water rushing past you in that one second. The smell is fresh and invigorating and the taste is clean and pure. You are not just watching the falls- you are inside of it, a part of it for a moment in time. It’s a force that is humbling.

76 youth and adults had the chance to experience Niagara Falls on our free day during this past summer’s Catholic Heart Workcamp Mission Trip. It is an understatement to say we were awestruck as we stood under the pulse of the plant.

And yet this is the reaction we heard: “It looks just like Virtual Reality!”

Ahem... or *actual reality*.

The world our young people are growing up in is unlike anything we have experienced before. Their perspectives are shaped by a different lens through which they interpret reality—even something as concrete as Niagara Falls.

This shift in perception matters deeply when we share the truths of our Catholic faith and seek to make way for the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. Take, for example, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist—a cornerstone of our faith, yet a profound mystery that is difficult for our young people to understand in reality.

A way forward still exists. We must meet them where they are, understanding the context in which they seek meaning. And to do that we must rely on the power of *relational presence*, the heartbeat of Holy Spirit Youth Ministry.

The number one factor in fostering a Catholic identity and belief system past high school is lived relationships with those who practice their faith- parents, catechists/core team, youth high school leaders, coaches, youth ministers- those who listen, learn and speak into their reality so as to break open the Kingdom of Heaven today! Holy Spirit Youth Ministry, with its 150 volunteers this past year alone, capitalizes on this lived relationship! We send out CYO basketball coaches, adult mission trip leaders, Chazoo Warrior Peer Leaders, and passionate youth ministers all with the mission of Christ!

HSP Family, please help us continue to speak our Catholic faith into the lived reality of our young people by contributing to our Take Stock in Our Youth Program. It truly is an investment, a legacy you leave on the souls of our young people. Our budgeted goal is \$15,000. Each dollar will go directly towards programs that share God’s grace with all who walk through our doors as well as on the streets of our community. Thank you for allowing us to walk with you, as we break open the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

Sarah Elmer

Sarah Elmer
Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Fr. Carl Schmitt

Fr. Carl Schmitt
Pastor

