



Newsletter

YFC-Poland,
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September 2009 - March 2010

A few words to begin with - „the New is coming...”

“For everything there is a season, a time for every activity...” There is a time for new doors to open. There is a time for the old ones to close. There is a right season for ceasing. There is also a right time for getting busy. A time comes for sowing and then for patient waiting until the right day comes for reaping. There is a time for continuing but there is also a season for a change, the time for the new to come...

For us, this new has already started. It started in the individual lives of our YFC staff, it started organizationally for our Foundation and it started in the hearts of children and youth we have a privilege to work with. New opportunities for ministry among kids and teens came within all of our programs. New ideas, new projects, new volunteers appeared too. Some of those new ideas are being already incorporated, other projects are waiting for government grants. What amazes me most is that despite the fact that there are only four of us on the team, patiently and courageously realizing the passion of our hearts- often uphill, often with the wind blowing into our faces, often in the atmosphere of weakness and lack- we can participate in the work that is much bigger than our strengths or weaknesses. We can see God’s good hand over us and how He himself, “placing the burden upon us all,” “makes everything beautiful for its own time” and does “His work from beginning to end.” With His presence we are not afraid to face the challenge of the ministry and we believe that the right time will come for reaping good fruit. With His grace upon us, we are not afraid to enter changes, enter the new challenge and new environments. So, in 2010 our goal is for Contacts 1to1 to gain a new dimension and become a more holistic work with families- the sub-project for events and activities aimed not only at children but also at their parents has been already sent to FIO and we are hoping it will get a grant from it. Another project for a youth community centre to be run within Bermuda Triangle has been sent to the City office. Since the beginning of the new school year, a new type of work started among middle-school students. The Film Discussion clubs have reached a new group of youth and manifest iii! has been also reaching a new youth generation in new places in Poland. The new may be scary. It excites and motivates us towards greater perseverance.

The new is coming for us as an organization. After my resignation as the National Director of YFC Poland, since March 2010 Bartek Jakoniuk has officially taken over my responsibilities and I will be able to assist him as the Mission Director. I am so happy Bartek decided to play this difficult leadership role and I believe that this new situation will be for both him and us, the team a turning and growing time.

The greatest joy for us, however, is to see new good changes in the lives, attitudes and choices of those we minister to. The first months of this year allowed us to see such changes in quite a few young people in whose lives our volunteers and YFC staff members had, for years, invested their care, love and prayers. We do realize it is the work of God’s truth and love in those young people. And to Him we give all the glory. We know that “whatever God does is eternal. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it.” Ecc.3:14. It is a privilege for us to be the co-workers of such God. We also thank you, our faithful volunteers, supporters, advisors and intercessors, and we pray so that every day the new, good new....comes into every aspect of your life.

Wioletta Hatak
Mission Director of YFC-Poland

PS. In the days when this newsletter was being prepared for mailing, a national tragedy took place. The whole world has heard about it by now. In one moment we lost not only our President and his wife but also 88 prominent people, so important for Polish politics, defense system and economics. The great loss. The great shock. Yet, the national awareness that such a tragedy is bringing but the challenge and necessity of the new for Poland. That is why we ask you to pray with us so that this new that has come in such a painful manner will be God’s new chapter for our nation and will work for good.



“Whatever God does is eternal. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it.”

Ecc.3:14

Project 15+ and manifest ii!



I am amazed by God's wisdom in which He sets the beginning and end of a particular season and time. He is never in a hurry nor is He late. And in each time- good or bad, pleasant or hard, joyful or sad – He is present as my strength, wisdom and safety. March 2010 is gone. Over seven months have passed since our last newsletter. Today I can say that they were the beginning of a new season that God started in my life and projects I am responsible for. After the time of hardship a time of incredible joy and rest has come. Whatever I touch, it works well, whatever door I knock at, it opens and whatever I ask for, I receive. After winter spring came. God has woken up the new....

New challenge: middle school students

Since September 2009 I have started reaching out to middle schoolers. I volunteered to teach four English conversational hours a week at one of the middle schools in Wrocław. Apart from being able to teach my students some English, I myself have a chance to learn about the mentality, passions and problems of a so-far totally 'unknown and long-avoided age group' by me. I must say I was afraid I would get too frustrated with what is called the most difficult age group to work with (13-15 yrs old). Seven months are already gone and I must say I love those kids. Each day they are becoming more and more open, honest and relational. From time to time I invite them to my house for a movie and game afternoons. They themselves are now asking when we are going to have another meeting. God allowed me to gain their respect and trust so quickly. Actually there is no topic for us that we could not talk openly about. What is wonderful about the school I teach at is the fact that some time ago some previous students started running miniature manifests for their peers on the campus. And this tradition is continued. During mini-fests students can be confronted with God's truth and love. Today I know it is not a coincidence that I started working with middle school kids. At the end of last year, I had a few phone-calls from various leaders and teachers who asked whether YFC Poland has any program or regular event run for this age group. It sounded like there is very little offered for those teenagers across the country. Quite a few adults ask us for a leadership training for those who are brave enough to work with age 13-15. I am very happy that I can discover this age group and I pray for God's idea on how to support and equip those who also have a passionate heart for middle school students and would like to do something more for them.



Central European YFC Directors Conference

In December I traveled to Czech Republic for a two day conference for Central European YFC directors. It was the time when I got encouraged in a new way not to give up when difficult times come, not to give up but persevere in the vision God gave me for my life and ministry and not to be afraid of high costs of it. I was moved by the personal life and ministry story of YFCI President Jean-Jacques Weiler, speaking at the conference.

manifest ii! conference in Wrocław

Imagine...a Saturday morning, -16°C outside, pinching frost, trains being late for enormous amount of time (some manifest participants who came from distant towns, traveled all night), trams not moving in some places because the low temperature made some tracks crack. The manifest conference starts at 9 am. I hope to see 20-30 people at most in the morning. We registered over 120 people by 10.30am and the evening manifest attracted over 400 people. I looked at the crowd, saw some faces I had not seen for quite a few years, saw my middle school students, saw totally new faces, people from all over the region, from different churches or no churches. It was quite a mystery how some of them found out about manifest. Big numbers of course is great. But I was most grateful to God for what He was doing on that day. The group of speakers that we had was just the best set ever for the topic that we dealt with: relationships. Incredible stories, incredible testimonies of Jesus' love, power and forgiveness. We were all absolutely speechless when we heard the testimony of a young couple from Warsaw, who went through such an ordeal in their relationship and how Jesus came to heal and restore their marriage. I personally had also a privilege to share my testimony of a single woman and of how my faith has allowed me not to end up like a lot of single people- frustrated, lonely and hopeless but as a woman who lives a most satisfying life anchored to God's love and truth. The manifest is over, but the echo of what happened then and what touched the participants was still resounding for weeks after the event. I received a few thank-you emails with the stories of people whose relational decisions changed radically after the manifest. Up to now I come across people who say that the conference was a turning point for them. One more thing was my great joy during the manifest- our volunteers and how God put

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all of them together to work as a team. There were those who traveled a few hours on the train in order to come and help run the event. Incredible. I thank God so much for each volunteer, for each participant and speaker and each who prayed and supported financially the manifest.

3 days of manifest ii! in Krotoszyn



5th-7th March we ran the second edition of manifest ii! youth conference in Krotoszyn. The number of participants doubled since last year. There were 90 young people. 2/3 of the youth who came from different villages and towns were new to us. The topic of the manifest was "Against pretence!" and what we wanted to talk about was how to avoid life that is just a religious act, an illusion of godliness, a pretence of power and light, but in reality filled with darkness. The main speakers of the weekend were Bogdan Olechnowicz i Paweł Wieja. Bogdan said that there is no other way for us to experience God's power in our lives but through the process of brokenness. We need to realize that we are weak and we can only be strong in God's strength. Paweł talked about broken heart of David and how this heart is what God loves in David and how this heart, free from pretence, religiousness, and pride can come before God in prayer and ask courageously for certain God's promises to be fulfilled. I would not like it to sound as some kind of mantra – that this conference was a turning point for many of its participants. But I must say this anyway because it is true and confirmed by many manifest participants. There were people present who had never before took part in any christen event. At first they felt as if they landed on a different planet. But then, as they said themselves, they experienced something unusual, something incredible – the touch of God's hand. They did not only feel bored by worship and talks but they did not want to go back home. They say today that something changed inside them in a way that they struggle being back in their old routine. They realized how much of a religious and pretence spirit was in them and they do not want to live like this any more. They want to have an every day authentic relationship with Christ.



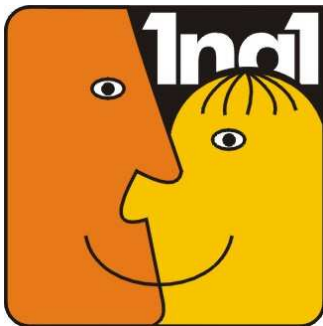
So this is it what took place in project 15+ and manifest ii! up to the end of March. I am now busy with preparations for another manifest conference. This time – near seaside. From 30th April till 2nd May young people from all over the country will come to Koszalin to worship God together and to talk about His dreams and desires for their lives. I would like to ask all of you my friends to pray so that this coming conference will be the time of the new... coming into the lives of many young people.

Wioletta Hatak

Project 15+ & manifest ii! coordinator

Contact 1to1

Be madly calm



From September to December time flies madly. I always think how in those few months only I will manage to run so many events for volunteers, children and other people. Days are hard to seize and to stop from passing. One cannot prolong them either. Yet, we often prefer a particular day to pass quickly because we got tired by this or that thing and we need to rest and stand aback to take a new look and see a bigger perspective. I realized that the calmer I stay in my heart, the more good thoughts I think and the more hope for God's presence and intervention is in me, then I can do my work much better and more effectively. Every time I get nervous that certain things will not work or worried that I will not do things on time, I lose more energy and suddenly my life and ministry become so difficult. So I know that each day turned over to God as soon as I open my eyes has a chance to be a day of victory despite my weaknesses. Even if firing arrows of our enemy are shot in our direction, we can face them with the strength "from above" We have more courage and can control negative thoughts which then lead us to negative emotions. We know then that we are wonderfully totally dependent on the Father. And we can stay madly calm...

From October to December



We organized a children's retreat. We took the group to the Indian Village, where we tried to catch the last sun beams, play in an Indian style, and eat sausage. All these activities outside did us good. Some of us could feel the consequences of all the activities in their bodies (e.g. the 1to1 coordinator ☺). Most of October and December was the time of the preparation to the big charity action called "Precious Parcel" run in cooperation with the Association "Spring" from Cracow. We got involved in it for the third time. The main aim of the action is to reach the most needy families and help meet their urgent needs before Christmas. In 2009 we

had a lot of volunteers involved in the project- 29 people. We reached 32 families (including the families of our children from Contacts 1to1). Our volunteers interviewed those families to find out what their biggest material needs were. We then found supporters for all those families so by the 11th-12th December all those families had received "precious parcels" and we could accompany them in their joy and happiness. After the project was over, we all were tired yet so happy. Here is what one of our volunteers wrote:

The grain of hope

During visits at the home of the most needy families, we felt various emotions. Every family brought out our different reaction to their life, ways of surviving poverty and misfortune. Yet, in all those homes we tried to sow grains of hope. Our first interview- on the faces of the people we could see sorrow, despair, tiredness. We listen to them talking about their problems, poverty, sicknesses and lack of hope. In the background we heard the words: "I have no strength left". We left the flat overwhelmed by human unhappiness, hopelessness and sorrow. We went to meet another family, not knowing what we would see this time. The mother of the house smiled when she saw us. She asked: "Who is going to prepare a parcel for us?" "Some stranger? Impossible! Why would a stranger want to help us? Do such good people exist yet?" On our leaving, we felt like the messengers of hope to this family. Then the day came when we could go back to the families and share great news with them about the supporters who would buy all they asked for. In the voice of the lady we heard the sound of joy mixed with unbelief. They will believe when they see it. We came back with the parcels. All the family helped us carry heavy boxes upstairs. We heard children's voices: "Wow, so heavy, what is inside? Is it really all for us?" Joy, joy among all of them. They did not open the parcels yet, but they were already happy. The thought appeared in their heads: "so those volunteers did not lie to us! There are good people in this world who want to help such families as ours." The time of opening big boxes came. In each of them, there were big surprises, so many useful things. Joy, smile, content- all of this appeared on the faces of the adults, and in the eyes of the little girl- the sparks of hope. I looked at her holding on to the box of hot chocolate. So there is hope for a cup of warm and sweet drink now. There is hope for a better tomorrow, for sweet Christmas, for...a change.

Magda

1 to 1 as the school of life - anyone welcomed

Our urgent need is to find new volunteers, so that we could have more children and teenagers under our care and mentoring program. I am very glad that two new people joined us. For me as the coordinator, it is always a great joy. A new person comes with enthusiasm and another child gains a friend. But what makes me sad is that we say good-bye to someone every year. Although I should have got used to it after four years of working in the project, yet it is hard to lose precious volunteers. There are different reasons of their resignation: life situations, or the challenge of the relationships with the child they mentor, or there comes the official end to the contact when the young person reaches the age of 18 and the relationship changes into more informal one. It is always a big sadness for me when our "1to1" group of volunteers loses its members. What makes me happy is the fact that most of our present volunteers stay in relationship with a child or a teenager for more than a contracted year. It is not easy to find new people to do the project. I can see that people are very busy nowadays. And it is getting more and more difficult to find somebody for long-term commitment. Much easier it is to find helpers for short-term events. The "Contacts 1to1" project is for people who love children, who are patient and persistent who are eager to grow themselves and are ready to face a variety of challenge and hardship that can occur while building a relationship with a child from a dysfunctional family. Is the level too high? Well, if we consider what qualities we need in all relationships in our life (as mothers, wives, sisters, brothers, husbands, co-workers, leaders) we realize that being a volunteer in 1to1 Project becomes a real school of life. The School where one can learn a lot if one does not give up too soon. To build from scratch a relationship with a child who has lots of difficulties in this matter is a very challenging work. That is why I am very thankful to all the volunteers who in their perseverance and love try hard to build strong relationships with needy children. And they do not give up although often they give much more than they will ever receive in return. I know what joy it brings to our volunteers to see even the smallest change in their children's behaviors. It may be difficult for somebody else to understand how much joy it brings when our volunteer hears the word "Thank you" spoken by a girl who did not say it for almost two years. It may sound funny, but in moments like those we all feel like throwing a party. Because we have just saw a sweet fruit grow and we hope for it to multiply.

Thank you

Thank you for all your prayers and all your financial support. Such ministry partnership is priceless to us. It gives us strength and opens new opportunities to minister to children through our project. Please remember us in your prayers as we will continue our work in the



coming months –ministering to children and to their parents through hopefully a new workshops-for-parents program, and to our volunteers so that they could be assisted in their personal growth and service by me, as their coordinator. My desire is not only the growing number of volunteers and children in the program, but also the co-operation with another organization with whom we could develop ministry for a whole family. Actually as I write this, this kind of partnership has been already set up with SLOT Association. We have just written with them a project which aims at holistic work with families, not only children and youth, and sent it to FIO. Now we are waiting for a good answer from this organization about a grant. We are hoping and waiting for the new... ☺

Ewa Leszczyńska
One to One Contact coordinator

FDC (Film Discussion Clubs)



What we have learnt during the last six month is that God is very faithful and He cares for us despite our human weaknesses.

Time passes relentlessly. Not so long ago, it was just August 2009. I described then what happened in our FDC project during the summer holidays and our plans for the new school year. When I write this, it is already April 2010. I must say the last months were very intense for Bartek and me. A lot happened as far as our ministry and personal life is concerned. What we have learnt during the last six month is that God is very faithful and He cares for us despite our human weaknesses. The time was very difficult for me(Aga) because in December my father died. It was the time of saying goodbye to him and caring for him till the last minutes of his life. So we both, Bartek and I were mostly concentrated on looking after my dad. I am so grateful to God for the gift of those last moments I could share with my father. Despite that difficult yet precious to me, challenge, we did not quit the school project. In October we were back at schools that we had the Film Discussion clubs at in the previous school year. It was very encouraging to see young people we had already met and now have the chance to get to know better. We can see the difference in the way they treat us this year and how they did it last year. No longer are we outsiders to them but we have become those they know and trust more now. My personal impression is that they do not come only to watch an interesting movie and have a conversation afterwards, but, most of all, to see us. And what we wish most is that they could see in us the One we keep telling them about. It is very interesting that although they listen to us as if we were aliens when we talk about Jesus Christ, they keep coming back wanting to ask more questions. So 2009 finished and 2010 has come so quickly. New plans, new ideas and new changes were growing up in our heads for the new year. In January we helped Wiola to prepare manifest which was a day-long conference on relationships. We could share our testimony about our marriage. We were happy to have some very good conversations with young people during that conference. Then the winter break came. Right after the break, we continued FDC meetings at schools and started a new series in one of the churches. In March we had FDC during another manifest youth conference in Krotoszyn. As always we would like to ask you to remember us in your prayers. We need a lot of wisdom in order to know how to talk and spend time with the young people that come to our clubs. There is also a new possibility for us to start our project in another school in Wrocław. So we'd like to ask you to pray so that we could run the project there, if God's willing. We are very thankful for your faithful prayer and financial support thanks to which we are able to do what is our greatest passion.

Agnieszka & Bartek Jakoniuk
Film Discussion Clubs coordinators

Big THANK YOU

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We would like to thank all of you who have not ceased to be part of our ministry by praying for us, volunteering to help with some of our projects and by giving financially to us. We would have not been able to do all that we did and be where we were if it hadn't been for you. We would also like to thank all of our new supporters who joined our team. May God bless you richly as He blesses us richly through you.

with love,
YFC Poland team

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