Dear Friend:

Recently our country witnessed a distinguished son eulogize his beloved father, both by the name of George Bush. As part of the eulogy, we were privileged to hear the last words shared between the two men, heartfelt words of love and affection. When someone we love has left us, their parting words are often seared into our souls, never to be forgotten.

So it was with the disciple John. He never forgot the parting words of Jesus the night before He died, a heartfelt conversation in prayer between a distinguished Son and His beloved Father. Isn’t it remarkable to discover that you and I were mentioned in that heartfelt exchange?

In John 17:20, Jesus prayed for “those who will believe” in Him in the future, “that they may be brought to complete unity.” He tells His Father, “Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

May those words be seared into our souls in Young Life. The revelation of Jesus in this world depends upon our unity with one another. “Unity” does not mean that we all think the same thoughts or agree upon every idea or opinion. Unity means we are in this mission together at the deepest level. It means we have a shared identity defined first and foremost by the Father’s love.

I hope you enjoy reading this annual report. I believe you will see signs that God is giving Jesus what He asked for through this mission, and our commitment to move forward together means more kids are meeting Jesus Christ.

It is a privilege to partner with you in Young Life.

In Christ for all kids,

Newt Crenshaw, President

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God loves unity. Before there was anything else in all creation, there was the Trinity — Father, Son and Spirit — the ultimate representation of togetherness. But God’s idea of “together” doesn’t stop there. From the first chapter of Genesis to the final words of Revelation, God proclaims His desire to welcome us into His family. To accomplish this, He gave the world His Son, Immanuel. God with us.

He also longs for us to be in relationship with one another. To Adam He gave Eve; to David He gave Jonathan; to Mary He gave Elizabeth; to Jesus He gave the 12; and to Paul He gave Timothy.

Together with God. The vertical relationship.
Together with each other. The horizontal relationship.

So the idea of “together” in Young Life is born out of Scripture. And we gladly play our part in being with Christ and each other while welcoming more and more kids into the family of God.

“YOUNG LIFE IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE COMMITTED TO THE IDEA OF WINNING A HEARING WITH KIDS FOR THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD.”
— JIM RAYBURN, FOUNDER
Starting a lifetime journey alongside your friends is one of the greatest adventures this abundant life has to offer...

**MEME GIRLS**

Olivia Swindler had a goal of deepening the friendships and Christ-centered conversations with three girls from Grenoble, France.

When Swindler suggested they study the Bible, the girls declined. She tried another tactic. “What if we write down a question or two, and each week I’ll pick one for us to discuss?” Perfect!

As soon as the girls left, Swindler read their questions:

- If I hit myself and it hurts, am I strong, or am I weak?
- What if soy milk is just milk introducing itself in Spanish?

Swindler said, “I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. All their questions had to do with memes.”

Memes are captioned photos that spread virally. An undeterred Swindler linked these to gospel truths for their weekly discussions — since “soy” means “I am” in Spanish, she asked where the girls find their identity. After one difficult week creating meaning from memes, when Swindler was feeling like a failure, one girl, named Chloe, said, “You know what I love about this time, Olivia? You’re able to relate memes and things we see every day on the internet to God!”

At once, Swindler remembered why she loved her work. “At the core of Young Life is meeting kids where they are. If my girls love memes, then it’s my job to prayerfully link those messages to Jesus.”

“YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS TIME, OLIVIA? YOU’RE ABLE TO RELATE MEMES AND THINGS WE SEE EVERY DAY ON THE INTERNET TO GOD!” — CHLOE, YOUNG LIFER IN FRANCE
THE THREE

Three boys. Even more, three sophomore boys: old enough to think they have everything figured out, too young to know they don’t. None of them had much experience with faith, but they responded to their Young Life leader, Nick. Nick took them to camp where they talked about past hurts and theological questions. In the end, they each found God.

As juniors, they showed up at the senior Campaigners meeting. What else could they do? They learned about servant leadership and about leading when it wasn’t easy.

It wasn’t easy as seniors. Nick invited them to talk about reconciliation with students from another school in the district. The three spent time with student leaders on the “other side.” They discussed race, class, culture and false narratives. They were servant leaders, representing Jesus.

The fall All-Area club was the first test. While there were no incidents, there was no unity. Students from the two schools simply co-existed. The three kept working. They talked and spent time with students from the other school. They talked some more. By spring, kids wanted to do joint clubs — the two schools together.

The three boys, now young men, are in college. All are leading others to Christ. One of them is a Young Life leader. He has his own group of boys, and he’s doing for them what the Lord used Nick to do for him.

“Discipleship is more than a curriculum; it is a relationship of friends walking with Jesus together.”
– Marty Caldwell, Executive Vice President, International Ministries

2018 ANNUAL REPORT
**A DIVERSE COMMUNITY**

Young Life in Amelia Court House, Virginia, a small town of only 13,000 people, has moved from an all-white club, Campaigners and committee, to a beautifully diverse community in its first three years.

After two years of primarily white involvement, we have as many black students at club as white, which we attribute to much prayer and intentional contact work with adults and kids. We now have two African-Americans on committee, one serving as the chair.

Perhaps the best part is that the Campaigners who helped make the change were students at a private school initially founded for white kids. We have been privileged to witness some beautiful racial reconciliation.

— Jonathan Bowman, staff associate

**MICHAEL’S MISSION**

Developing Future Leaders (DFL) training is an on-ramp to Young Life staff for people of color who are less familiar with Young Life and have not found their way into our existing staff pipelines. We expect over half of those who graduate from this two-year program will become full-time staff.

Almost two-thirds of the students in the Fort Worth, Texas, school district are Latino, and 23 percent are African-American. Alan Dunbar, a teacher and coach, was planted firmly in a highly Latino community. Alan did a great job reaching kids, but he believed a staff and volunteer base that reflected the student population would be more effective.

Michael Ramos was born and raised in Fort Worth. While working a full-time job, he started volunteering at Northside High School. It soon became clear Michael was the future of Young Life in Fort Worth, and he was invited to join DFL.

DFL was the bridge to take Michael from volunteering to full-time Young Life staff. For two years Michael attended this training focused on Young Life skills and life skills while continuing to lead. When Michael started, club averaged 15 kids per week from Northside High School and Carter-Riverside High School. Today, 100-150 kids attend club each week, and in 2017 they took 100 kids to camp.

— Nick Manos, senior vice president, South Central Division

**NORTHSIDE AND CARTER-RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL**

club growth over a two-year period

*One person represents five people.*
GARY, SASHA, SASHA AND SERGEY

My friend, Joe Kempston, had this observation as we met with Ukrainian staff: “I realized in the room were four generations of Christ-followers. I thought of 2 Timothy 2:2, ‘You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others’ (NLT). First it was Paul, then Timothy, then faithful men, then others. Here, it was four guys.”

I was the first generation. In 1994, while living in Moscow, I spoke at a camp of 99 street kids from Chernivtsi, Ukraine. Each night at club, one of the biggest hell-raisers sat in the back, distracting everyone. Sasha Utkin — the second generation — met Christ along with 93 others that week. He went on to help start the first Young Life club in Ukraine with 150 kids. Today Sasha is the regional director for Ukraine.

Ten years later, Sasha Gusakov — the third generation — finally gave in to a friend’s invitation to club. Young Life offered his first experience of real friendship and love. At camp, Sasha looked up at the sky and asked God for forgiveness. Four years later, he moved to Khmelnytskyi to start Young Life.

Here God gave Sasha a friendship with a tall, smiling kid named Sergey Shevchenko — the fourth generation. Sergey committed his life to Jesus and became a faithful leader. After graduating from the Developing Global Leaders program, Sergey started Young Life in Kaliningrad, Russia, and recently moved back to the Ukraine to begin ministry in the Vinnytsia region. Four generations, and counting!

— Gary Parsons, senior vice president, Former Soviet Union Division

A life on a life. When combined with prayer and consistency over time, the simple practice of being present in another’s day-to-day life can yield incredible dividends.
There are few experiences more rewarding than being part of a group that’s making an eternal difference in people’s lives. This story from Young Life camp illustrates the power of teamwork ...

A TRUE CREW

Reflecting on her last day on work crew at Lost Canyon in Arizona, Bennett, a high school senior, wrote on her blog what her co-workers had come to mean to her.

We worshiped together one last time. We sang about God’s Kingdom and His beauty and wonder. We sang about how He gave up His life for us. We shared what we had sacrificed and what we had gained, and everything we learned in-between.

We took communion and together we sang “In Christ Alone”; I choked out the words in-between thankful tears that tasted as the whole night felt: bittersweet. We gave tearful tight hugs, and we laughed and affirmed one another.

If you ask me to picture Jesus, I will close my eyes and see their faces. I hope if they close their eyes and think of Jesus they will catch a glimpse of my face and know how deeply I have loved them.

TOGETHER

Pamoja. Pamoja.”
– Swahili for “Together Together”
IN CHRIST FOR ALL KIDS

In Young Life, we doubled our impact from 2009 to 2016. Now a new movement has begun, birthed from our common desire to go deeper with kids, to go together to innovate and to grow. We’re simply calling this movement “Forward.”

As we are two years into a five-year movement, every area and region has a Forward plan to strategically increase their presence and impact in their communities.

Importantly, we go forward together because together reveals who God is. Our unity is a sign of God’s love – offering this world a glimpse of the life found in Jesus.

"I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

— PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14, NASB

DEEPER IN CHRIST
Seeking the Lord first and helping kids grow in their faith
300,000 Campaigners weekly, doubling our current number

TOGETHER
Building and equipping teams that reflect the worldwide body of Christ
Reflecting the communities we serve

INNOVATE
Creating and replicating new ways today to reach kids tomorrow
Create and replicate new “best practices”

GROW
Impacting kids within sight and just out of reach
600,000 kids in club weekly, doubling our current number
• Young Life leaders are building relationships in the name of Jesus with kids in **102 countries**.

• During the summer of 2018, **1,079 Young Lives teen moms** (and **1,085 little ones**) were treated to the best week of their lives at **Young Life camp** – supported by **956 volunteer childcare providers**.

• **Of the 1.1 million young people reached by Young Life in Africa**, an estimated **40 percent are orphans**.

• **In the lives of more than 22,000 young people with disabilities annually**, Young Life Capernaum is one of the largest ministries of its kind in the U.S. and has a growing presence worldwide.

> **Every kid deserves a chance to not only hear God’s good news, but to experience it. And Young Life Capernaum makes sure no kid is left out. I can’t think of a ministry that reflects the heart of Christ more than Young Life Capernaum!**

— Joni Eareckson Tada

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**FORWARD progress (2016-2018)**

- Average number of kids in club each week grew from **297,750 to 348,000**.
- Average number of Campainers weekly grew from **115,390 to 153,830**.
- Camp attendance grew from **230,000 to 260,000**.
- Total ministries worldwide grew from **7,333 to 8,176**.
- Total number of kids impacted by Young Life grew from **2.12 million to 2.67 million**.
- 220,000 donors, 80,960 volunteers and 5,454 staff join hands for the sake of young people worldwide.

$402 M

$211 M

Launched in December 2017, the Forward Campaign will add fuel to accelerate and sustain the Forward Movement. In year one of the campaign, generous supporters contributed $211 million toward the total goal of $402 million.
Young Life's surplus reflects capital gifts for multi-year camp-building campaigns, funds for major maintenance at camp properties and leadership's desire to maintain more than three months of operating reserves.
“Young Life has always been a ‘team sport’! In the early 1930s, there were the ladies in Gainesville, Texas, who gathered together to pray for the kids at their local high school. Soon after, our founder, Jim Rayburn, recruited a small band of seminarians to join him in going out to the teenagers there and in neighboring towns. They quickly realized the need for a wise board of trustees, passionate volunteer leaders and dedicated adult committees to further our mission.

Today our team is a global one—a loving army still committed to introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith.

You are part of this movement! We can’t thank God enough for our generous donors and brave staff, volunteers and committees. I look forward to another year of reaching kids … together.”

— Bill Haslam, chair, Young Life Board of Trustees
Board of Trustees 2018 - 2019

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