

# Ministry News

FROM **Len & Tonia**

## Serving Youth Workers



I often joke that I suffer from vocational whiplash on the days that I work my three jobs.

My heart is with the National Network of Youth Ministries. But as we continue raising support, I work part-time at Sears in their electronics department. And this month, I started working as a very part-time chaplain for a local hospice.

It's a new hospice and as it grows, I'll be able to work there part-time as my only side job. Sears is retail and it is a good side job for what it is, but it is what it is.

The highlight of working at Sears happened recently when a co-worker asked me to perform her wedding. I agreed because it gave me an opportunity to show this couple the grace they have not experienced much from the churches they've been a part of over the years. As believers, we should take every opportunity to show grace to others. It was an honor to be asked to perform their wedding in August.

Another honor that I have this month is helping coordinate The Shelter for the Simply Youth Ministry Conference in Chicago, March 3-7. The Shelter is a safe place for youth workers to share things with veteran youth workers who serve as spiritual directors, pastors or consultants.

Patti Gibbons and I will meet with youth workers for a brief assessment and then assign them to the member of our Shelter team whom we believe will best meet their needs.

How important is that? Youth workers are often hurting, discouraged, and isolated. We learned that last year, 10 SYMC conference attendees (youth workers) were suicidal enough – at the conference – that intervention was needed by a professional team of counselors. Please pray for the Shelter team as we encourage and equip youth workers so they can return to their ministry refreshed and continue to reach students for Jesus.

At SYMC we'll also be doing a comprehensive survey of attendees to find out how many are involved in local networking on a regular basis. SYMC leadership has asked us to help people there connect to networks while on site, so that "they are doing youth ministry in the context of relationship" when they go back home. Please pray we can direct people to networks, and help others form new ones on site by taking leadership.

### "One...as We are one"

Jesus prayed in John 17 that believers "would be one," reflecting the nature of the Trinity in their unity. Scripture is filled with references and exhortations that deal with unity and cooperation.

That sounds good in theory. But where the rubber meets the road, collaboration can be hard work. It involves hard things like sacrifice, time, money and other resources, and often an emotional investment.

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The Network believes that the investment of time, talent, and treasure are essential to accomplishing the mission God gave us while on Earth. Jesus said as much in His prayer when talking about unity: “I ask...that they may all be one...in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” (John 17:21)

One way we are involved right now in partnering to reach teenagers and assist youth workers in their ministries is by developing **Communities for Hope (C4H)...nationwide.**

We are continuing to collaborate with a team of almost 40 people representing nearly 20 communities in 12 different states. The collaborators have met in Georgia, are conferencing on the phone, sharing on a Facebook page, and met in San Diego in January.

I’m happy to share that Lubbock is one of the pilot cities for C4H.

## “Prayer Updates”

1. New Monthly Supporters – last month three people said they wanted to become a monthly supporter, so please keep on praying for others to partner with us.
2. I have been asked to write a chapter for a book. Please pray for insight as I share principles for youth workers. I’ll share more about the book once everything is finalized.
3. The hospice chaplain position is shaping up. For now, it is very part time but the hope is that it’ll become a consistent part-time job. When it does, I’d actually be able to get more done with the Network.
4. Thanks for your continued encouragement and prayer support. Because of your investment, this is our ministry and I’m blessed to be ministering on your behalf.

PS: Please note: As we noted here last month, the Network has a **new mailing address** (bottom left, front side). If you do “auto pay” for donations, please make the change. Thank you!

**the Evans family**

### Communities 4 Hope

**Community Network:** This diagram illustrates which “chairs” can be set around the “table” for a Community Network. Committed believers are being invited who represent the different groups within the community.



**A team of believers:** We are seeking to build community action teams that would include “concerned adults” who love Jesus, not just paid youth workers or those who are responsible for a church youth group