

The  
**NEW** and  
the  
**NEXT**

**YOUNG LIFE**  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT

 **younglife**



“God can do **anything**, you know — far more than **you could ever imagine** or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but **by working within us**, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!  
 Glory to God in the Messiah,  
 in Jesus! Glory down all  
 the generations! Glory  
 through all millennia!  
 Oh, yes!”

— Ephesians 3:20-21  
*(The Message)*



Dear Friend:

There is a passage we love to call to mind and sing together in worship: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his mercies never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” It might surprise some to discover that these words are found in a book dedicated to grief, sorrow and suffering. We find these verses in Lamentations 3:22-23!

Context is critical in the life of faith, however, and I am grateful for the context of this passage. Most of us are familiar with trial and tribulation, yet we move ahead in faith “because of the Lord’s great love.” His mercies are new every morning, and we are a living testament of that truth in Young Life.

In a world saturated with suffering and hardship, the Lord continues to clear a path for us to bring His good news to others. He continues to offer Himself to young people through our staff and leaders and transform lives. He continues to keep His promise from Isaiah 43:19, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

It is our pleasure to present to you a glimpse of the new things the Lord is doing through the Forward movement in this mission. He is raising up new people, creating new opportunities, providing new resources and making new creations of all who call upon His name. He is making a way for us where there has previously been no way, and He is causing streams of living water to well up in kids’ lives. In a world where bad news floods the headlines daily, I hope you will take time to enjoy the good news contained in this report.

With all the new things God is doing in this mission, we wait with eager expectation to see what is next! It is a privilege to partner with you in the “new and next” adventure we call Young Life.

In Christ for all kids,

Newt Crenshaw, President

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# NEW LEADERS, NEW ROLES!

## NEWT CRENSHAW'S FIRST YEAR AS PRESIDENT

July 2017 marked the completion of Newt's first 12 months in office. The year saw Newt travel the globe from Nicaragua to Israel; throughout his explorations he met quality men and women who lead well and reach out to kids in every kind of life situation.

Another important part of this first year was proactively placing the right people in the right places and looking for ways to increase our diversity in all levels of the mission. What follows is a list of many of the recent leadership transitions:

Young Life CREATED AND FILLED

## FIVE NEW LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



**Alberto Cuellar**

Vice President of  
Multiethnic Initiatives



**Lashanna Farley**

Chief Human Resources  
Officer



**John Wagner**

Senior Vice President of  
Global Cities Initiative



**BeBe Hobson**

Vice President of  
Multiethnic Ministries and  
Chief Diversity Officer



**Ken Tankersley**

Senior Vice President  
of Global Innovation  
and Training

## WE ALSO REJOICED OVER THESE NEW FACES IN NEW PLACES



**Dave Avramovich**

Los Angeles  
Regional Director



**Karil Connor**

Vice President  
YoungLives



**Brent Cunningham**

Senior Vice President  
Southwestern Division



**Carolyn Harrison**

Bronx Regional Director and  
the Director of Discipleship  
Initiatives for New York City



**Alison McCauley**

Camp Manager at  
Crooked Creek Ranch



**Aswan Morris**

Manhattan  
Regional Director



**Lindsey Patchell**

Senior Vice President  
Northwestern Division

**"God is on the MOVE** as we look Forward! I've been fortunate to be a part of many new hires — people of color and women — since beginning my role as CDO. It's amazing to witness the caliber of people God is lifting up into new positions within Young Life or bringing from the outside. I'm thrilled **the landscape of Young Life is becoming more diverse**, starting with mission leadership."

— Bebe Hobson  
Chief Diversity Officer

# NEW PLACES

Young Life has a presence in all **50 states** and **more than 100 countries** around the globe, and we're pressing on so more kids in more places can hear of God's love.

## DAKOTA RESERVATIONS

Young Life and the Episcopal Church will collaborate to launch four new Young Life areas on reservations in North and South Dakota using the same model we've used in Standing Rock, North Dakota.



While each plan is being initially funded by the Episcopal Church, the hope is for each model to be ecumenical in nature. The Spirit Lake model in northeast North Dakota, for example, will be a collaboration between many denominations, including Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic and Lutheran churches.

## BOLIVIA

Jose Luis in Cochabamba, Bolivia, has been nurturing the relationship and laying the groundwork for a new ministry in Bolivia for three years. This June he took **32 kids** along with **16 new leaders** on a Campaigners camp experience — the very first Young Life event in the country. Jose Luis and Enrique Vargas, regional director for the Amazon Region, led the time, encouraging kids in their relationship with Jesus and the basics of the mission.



*"For me, it is good and interesting to watch the Young Life leaders and **learn from their attitude**, because when I become a leader one day, I would like to be like them. They are incredible people that **really encourage me.**"*

— Ale, 15-year-old girl in Bolivia

## LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg is a small Western European country with a population of **65,869 young people** between the ages of 15-21. Businessman Tom Itle has been called to take a six-month sabbatical from his job to start work in this country:



*"The **Lion of Judah is already out there** fighting our battles for the teens. The near-term goal is to form a committee of caring adults with **a heart for teenagers** who would love to participate in something brand new in the history of Luxembourg — Young Life!"*

— Tom Itle



# NEW TOOLS

Innovation is an important mission strategy within our Forward movement. **Many of our greatest tools, of course, are relational** in nature: training sessions, discipleship times and more. But **we're also excited about the practical tools God has provided** us with in the past year.



## Engaging the Heart and Mind

The Young Life Podcast is our newest offering intended to catalyze Forward (see page 14). We launched in September, and will produce 36 episodes over the next year. Content ranges from ministry advice to devotional messages, includes voices from around the globe and covers all four of the Forward mission priorities. With more than 17,000 listens in the first month, we see this as a big part of creating a



common language and vision among our team during the Forward season.



## Growing the Tree

Over the past year we've seen the rapid growth of "The Leadership Tree" model. This powerful discipleship tool originated with Young Life staff in Africa and is now sweeping across Young Life.

The idea is that each leader has their own "tree," where they each train and develop three leaders through intentional Bible study and mentoring; those three will, in turn, do the same with three more. As each leader's tree grows, so grows the Kingdom, full of "transformed, and transforming, Jesus-followers"!



## Bringing Our Mission Together Through Technology

YL Connect is the name for a systems project designed to create a single database of records for all Young Life constituents. With a goal of "securing relationships for life," YL Connect will ensure Young Life is able to meet the highest standards of security for the data we collect, provide busy field staff with a "mobile office" for managing their many Young Life tasks, and provide a platform for inviting old friends and new into deeper levels of engagement with the mission.



## Giving "Swords" to Military Teens

Young Life Military Campaigners groups worldwide are going Deeper in Christ with the help of the new Military Teen "I AM" Bible. The creation of this Bible was led by Young Life Military staff, and these Bibles contain specific content and devotions for military teens. Please pray as we expect the Lord to quadruple military teens in Campaigners as we go Forward!

# NEW CAMPS

A growth in the number of kids we're reaching has led us to **continue building camps in strategic places**, whether that's on a canyon rim in West Virginia or along the Marmarik River of Armenia. We're also **continuing to look for ways to bring camp to kids**; through our Camp On Wheels program we're rolling into locations throughout Europe, Africa and soon, Siberia!



**Pioneer Opening**  
(Armenia)



**Wild Ridge Adventure Camp**  
(West Virginia)



**Rocky Creek Ranch**  
(WyldLife camp in Colorado)



**Camp On Wheels coming to Siberia in 2018**



Work crew enjoying the opening day of Young Life's camp in Armenia.



Kids at La Finca, Young Life's camp in Nicaragua.



Polish boys at WyldLife camp.



Girls from Young Life's Siberian orphanage outreach.

## OTHER CAMPING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Every week of camping full at Cairn Brae in Scotland and Camp On Wheels Europe.
- Camp On Wheels Africa and another record-breaking camping season in Africa/Middle East Division with 69,103 kids going to camp.
- First all-Polish-led WyldLife camp.
- Record numbers of campers attend Pico Escondido (Dominican Republic), La Finca (Nicaragua) and Maissade (Haiti).
- Intentionally diversifying assignment teams at Windy Gap.
- First Capernaum week at Wilderness Ranch, our adventure camp located in Colorado's San Juan Mountains.

# NEW LIVES IN CHRIST

Each year brings many new items of note, of course, but **our favorite stories** are the ones that **proclaim how God uses Young Life to change the lives of kids!**

## Miracle

Miracle, a Capernaum camper, was really shy when she arrived at Rockbridge this summer. As the week went on, however, she truly came alive. She tried everything camp had to offer: horseback riding, the zip line, ropes course and more. Miracle also opened up during cabin time. She recalled the club talks where she learned she's God's creation and how much He loves her. At the end of the week, Miracle began a relationship with Jesus! Even though Miracle enjoyed the fun, her face lit up the most when she was given her first Bible.



## Abraham and Anthony



"I'm worthless," said Abraham, Anthony's bully. "I'm a terrible person ... and I know it. God could never forgive me for what I've done to people. I don't even know why I'm like this."

Anthony felt his heart stir with a mix of anger, sadness and, finally, courage. He was shocked to hear himself begin to speak to Abraham for the first time all week. "You're right, dude. God should be mad at you. You threw food at me in the cafeteria on my first day of school while I was sitting alone. You called me names in front of everyone so they could all laugh at me. You made me hate school and you almost made me miss this trip. When I saw you get on the bus, I tried to get off and stay home." Anthony continued ...

"But **I'm no better than you**. And I know that now. I had no idea what you've been through and I know I'm **just as broken as you are**. I don't deserve **God's forgiveness** either. But He's giving it to both of us. And I think we should take it."

Anthony walked across the circle, reaching his hand down toward Abraham. In the next moment they both stood, hugging and in tears, embracing in friendship. Here they were: the bully and the target, the new kid and the popular athlete, the victim and the villain. Reconciled. Restored. Rescued. They arrived at Young Life camp as enemies, but Abraham and Anthony came home as brothers. Is there anything God cannot do?

## Darren and Christie

Darren came from a tough home in a small town in West Virginia. His father figure abused alcohol and beat him. His older sister, Christie, took care of him. Darren was a little guy, who couldn't defend himself. In elementary school his sister tied sheets together to lower Darren out the window at night so he could run away to escape. A few years later both Christie (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and Darren (ninth grade) went to Rockbridge. Until that week at camp neither had ever heard of the cross. That week both came to faith in Christ. Now besides just having each other, they also have a common Savior and Defender in Jesus.

## Emilee

Emilee had never been to WyldLife, but Holly Zabloski, a WyldLife leader and Emilee's English teacher, spent hours investing in the eighth grader. One day a friend invited Emilee and her mom to the Rocky Mount, Virginia, Young Life banquet, an event usually attended by adults.

At the banquet, WyldLife leader Ben told his story of a broken home, years of drugs, drinking and partying in high school, and feeling he didn't deserve Christ; but his leader never gave up on him. At Rockbridge, he shared, he had surrendered his life to Christ.

"After that," he said, "the weight of everything I've done and been through, came off of me."

Ben's story struck Emilee. "The cutting, his family issues, everything — it seemed like my past. It surprised me how much God had changed his life. That's what I wanted. Monday, I told Holly I was ready to give my life to Jesus. We prayed that morning."

"I used to be really stressed," Emilee said, "but I feel like now I can talk to Jesus and He can help a lot."

"I used to be really stressed," Emilee said, "but I feel like now I can talk to Jesus and He can help a lot."

"We are not in the battle for lost kids because Young Life is a job; **we are here because for us it is a calling.** We go because others went before us. We go because we get to go together. We go because the Lord is with us every step of the way. **We go because He said, 'Follow me.'**"

— Chad Edwards  
Senior Vice President, Europe



# AND THE NEXT!

## A YEAR OF MOVING FORWARD

Following a missionwide process of discussion, listening, planning and prayer, Young Life launched the Forward movement in January 2017. With a rallying cry of “In Christ for All Kids,” Young Life Forward focuses on four mission strategies:



### DEEPER IN CHRIST

Seeking the Lord first and helping kids grow in their faith



### TOGETHER

Building and equipping teams that reflect the worldwide body of Christ



### INNOVATION

Creating new ways today to reach kids tomorrow



### GROWTH

Impacting all kids — within sight and just out of reach

Throughout 2017, Young Life divisions, regions and areas created specific ministry plans and funding needs around each of these mission strategies.

In November, the Young Life Board of Trustees approved the launch of the Forward Campaign, with the goal of raising \$402 million to fuel initiatives within each of the four strategic areas at all levels of the ministry.

“**We’re not at a loss for new ideas** — Young Life has thousands of incubators around the globe. If we see something that has traction or a ripple effect, **it’s our job to scale that idea** and roll it out so it will bless staff and volunteers in their work across the U.S. and around the world.”

— Ken Tankersley

Senior Vice President, Global Innovation and Training



# 2017 MINISTRY VITALS

**OUR GOAL:** To double the number of kids we reach around the world, as we implement our Forward measures of Deeper in Christ, Together, Innovation and Growth.

MINISTRY	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	% Growth in past 5 years	5 Year CAGR
<b>Kids Involved Weekly</b> <sup>1</sup>								
U.S.	135,600	138,300	145,300	153,300	157,100	149,000	8%	2%
International	60,300	78,200	102,500	114,000	141,100	171,900	120%	23%
<b>Total</b>	195,900	216,500	247,800	267,300	298,200	320,900	48%	10%
<b>Total Club Attendance</b> <sup>2</sup>								
U.S.	293,800	328,800	361,600	378,800	390,300	382,500	16%	5%
<b>Kids Impacted</b> <sup>3</sup>								
U.S.	958,000	1,056,000	1,175,000	1,252,000	1,293,000	1,273,000	21%	6%
International	270,000	379,000	511,000	612,000	829,000	1,139,000	201%	33%
<b>Total</b>	1,228,000	1,435,000	1,686,000	1,864,000	2,122,000	2,412,000	68%	14%
<b>Campaigners</b> <sup>4</sup>								
U.S.	53,100	57,000	61,500	66,800	69,500	71,700	26%	6%
International	15,000	22,000	30,000	33,300	45,900	64,600	193%	34%
<b>Total</b>	68,100	79,000	91,500	100,100	115,400	136,300	73%	15%
<b>Senior High Outreach Campers</b>								
U.S. <sup>5</sup>	40,027	41,163	43,352	45,110	44,032	43,801	7%	2%
International <sup>6</sup>	45,343	55,327	62,362	75,637	85,735	100,566	82%	17%
<b>Total</b>	85,370	96,490	105,714	120,747	129,767	144,367	50%	11%
<b>WyldLife Outreach Campers</b>								
U.S.	12,793	13,723	14,929	15,885	15,687	16,293	19%	5%
International <sup>6</sup>	2,877	2,717	4,797	6,662	4,992	5,832	115%	15%
<b>Total</b>	15,670	16,440	19,726	22,547	20,679	22,125	35%	7%
<b>Summer Camp Guests</b>	78,615	80,581	85,021	90,445	90,057	90,010	12%	3%
<b>Schools/Ministries</b>								
U.S.	4,297	4,500	4,787	5,040	5,217	5,259	17%	4%
International	1,171	1,437	1,627	1,896	2,117	2,521	75%	17%
<b>Total</b>	5,468	5,937	6,414	6,936	7,334	7,780	31%	7%

PERSONNEL	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	% Growth in past 5 years	5 Year CAGR
Full-time U.S. and Int'l Field Staff	1,280	1,328	1,409	1,495	1,557	1,625	22%	5%
Student Staff	242	277	325	279	282	321	16%	6%
Young Life Staff Associate	222	287	280	305	347	349	22%	9%
Property Staff	768	713	784	817	841	839	18%	2%
Service Center Staff	171	185	202	214	231	245	32%	8%
iStaff	493	528	585	678	707	834	58%	11%
<b>Total Staff</b>	3,908	4,005	4,377	4,771	4,912	5,255	31%	6%

VOLUNTEERS	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	% Growth in past 5 years	5 Year CAGR
Volunteer Leaders (U.S.)	25,452	28,050	30,197	31,805	32,480	33,589	20%	6%
Volunteer Leaders (International)	6,254	8,425	9,554	10,786	12,215	14,642	74%	19%
Committee and Ministry Support	13,793	16,364	18,008	19,193	20,356	20,640	26%	8%
Adult Helpers (U.S.)	4,261	5,456	6,048	6,601	6,949	7,197	32%	11%
<b>Total All Volunteers</b>	49,760	58,295	63,807	68,385	72,000	76,068	30%	9%

U.S. AREAS	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	% Growth in past 5 years	5 Year CAGR
Active U.S. Areas	1,073	1,114	1,166	1,203	1,243	1,279	15%	4%

- The average number (rounded) of kids from all ministries meeting in a weekly (or otherwise scheduled) club or similar outreach meeting that includes a gospel proclamation.
- The total number (rounded) of kids who have attended club at least one time during the current school year (e.g., September through May).
- The estimated total number (rounded) of kids known by name and impacted by the Young Life ministry through a relationship built by a Young Life staff or volunteer leader.

- The average number (rounded) of kids meeting regularly in a Young Life Campaigners, small group or discipleship context.
- As of FY2016, Capernaum is retroactively included in senior high outreach. Does not include Capernaum buddies.
- International camping is conducted year-round. Excludes mixed camps.

# 2017 FINANCIALS



● Donations to Local Ministry	\$261 million	67%
● Camp Fees	\$79 million	21%
● Donations to Future Camps	\$34 million	9%
● Investment Gains	\$9 million	2%
● Other	\$4 million	1%



● Salaries and Benefits	\$202 million	58%
● Club and Camping Activities	\$66 million	19%
● Property Expenses	\$41 million	12%
● Travel, Training and Professional Svcs.	\$21 million	6%
● Events and Other	\$16 million	5%

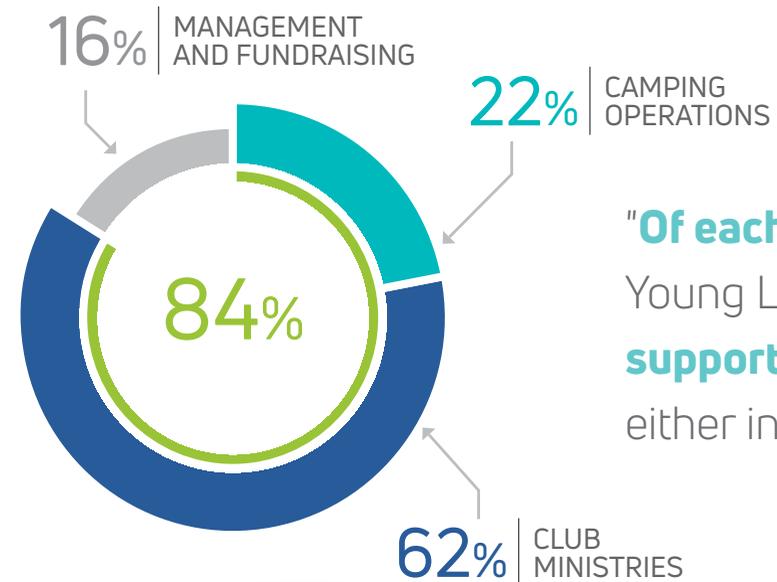
Young Life's surplus reflects capital gifts for multi-year camp-building campaigns, funds for major maintenance at camp properties and leadership's desire to maintain more than three months of operating reserves.

## Net Assets \$451 million



- Land, Building and Equipment \$271 million
- Cash for Operations\* \$94 million
- Pledges, Cash and Investments for Camp \$50 million
- Insurance and Other Reserves \$31 million
- Other Assets \$5 million

\*Distributed across 2,200 area ministries and 27 camp properties, worldwide.



"Of each dollar spent by Young Life, **84 cents directly supports ministry with kids**, either in the field or at camp."

— Cynthia Koerner  
Chief Financial Officer



**Comment:** Our complete audited financial statements, along with the Independent Auditors' Reports, are available at [younglife.org](http://younglife.org) under About/Financial Integrity.



Young Life takes seriously its obligation to steward resources with the utmost integrity. We are pleased to report, once again, Charity Navigator has awarded us their highest rating for financial health, accountability and transparency.

Thank you to our 216,000 donors who have trusted us to invest their gifts to ensure the Forward movement of the gospel in the lives of kids worldwide.

“As we anticipate and work toward where Young Life can grow and improve as a mission, we’d be remiss if we didn’t point out our **absolute commitment** to the essence of our message. Jesus, to paraphrase our founder Jim Rayburn, is still all that Young Life’s about. And in an effort to introduce Him to even more adolescents, we’re still about the time-honored principles of **earning the right to be heard, walking with those who are without and reaching every kid.**

It’s exciting to know we can maintain our **biblical foundation**, while **innovating** and **improving** upon our methods of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

We’re thankful to Him for our generous donors as well as our fearless, committed staff, leaders and committees.

**Here’s to what’s next!”**

— John Brandon, Chair  
Board of Trustees



2017-2018

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