



YW18

Greetings!

The first Youth Week (YW) was in the summer of 2012 and had 70 students participate. This was an exciting turn out for a brand new ministry initiative! Little did the group from that first year know that God was stirring up something that would continue to grow and evolve. This past June marked the sixth year of Youth Week. There were 275 students and over 200 adult volunteers. Praise God!

Always asking “what’s next?”

As YW has continued to grow, it became clear that a key to its growth is to keep innovating and asking God “what’s next?” for Youth Week. The continued numerical growth of Youth Week has led us to evaluate how to accommodate hundreds of students and leaders for the week. Our team has begun to ask “what’s next” for Youth Week?

A new location- the HUDSONVILLE FAIRGROUNDS!

The need to change the location of YW is more than just a logistical decision. The YW team has a vision to engage more and more students every year in mission across all of Harbor Churches and West Michigan. Although there was not an official strategic search for a new location, an opportunity has been made available that we feel led to enter into. This year, Youth Week will be located entirely at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds! We have the opportunity to literally take over the entire fairgrounds for the week! Isn’t that amazing! This change feels like “what’s next” for YW for the following reasons:

- Students who may never enter a church building may be willing to participate in YW if it is at a different type of location other than a church. A neutral location will also encourage the engagement of more students and volunteers from all Harbor Churches campuses.
- If YW is not linked directly to a single Harbor Church facility, it will be easier for students and volunteers to conceive of the idea of multiplying YW beyond West Michigan...because the mission, not the physical location, has always defined the heart of Youth Week. Maybe our entire country needs Youth Week...
- Housing at a location outside of a Harbor Church campus will open up new and exciting possibilities for strategic partnerships in the community. This will multiply the volume of our impact in West Michigan, in our communities, and beyond. Perhaps more non-profits and resources could engage if the location is non-faith based.
- The facilities of the Hudsonville Fairgrounds have the capacity to hold well beyond what is currently needed. Should YW remain as one location in years to come, there is plenty of space for growth, which would engage more students to help more people find their way back to God.

With this exciting change we know you may have questions. We have compiled a FAQ on our website (see url below) along with several on the back of this page for answers for you to some of those. We hope that you are as excited about this change as we are! For now we hope that this letter will communicate the vision and considerations for this change, if you have questions outside the scope of our FAQ, contact us! Please join us in prayer as we seek to put plans into action that will help more students find their way back to God and impact our community.

The logo for Youth Week 2018 (YW18) is displayed in a stylized, multi-colored font. To the right of the logo is a photograph of a young person with their arms raised in the air, likely at a concert or event, with other people visible in the background.

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are a few questions you may be asking regarding the location change of Youth Week.

Is my student safe?

Please be assured that your student's safety is of the utmost importance to us. The Fairgrounds is actually quite safe and more contained than the Fair Haven campus. It is set inside of a neighborhood and is completely fenced in. There will be one entrance and exit throughout the week. Volunteers, visitors, and parents will be required to check in/out at the gate. Additionally, there will be a hired security company with staff on site during the evening hours.

Where will my student sleep?

Sleeping arrangements will be grade and gender specific with a volunteer staff member in the sleeping area with students throughout the evening hours. Students will be sleeping in one of the barns at the Fairgrounds that does **not** house animals. These barns have a cement floor and are very clean. There are also fans available if it is a hot week. We highly recommend that students bring an air mattress or cot similar to previous Youth Week's. A sleeping bag and sheet would also be helpful.

Where will they shower?

Similar to past years we will be continuing our partnership with Unity Christian to use their Field House facilities. There will also be limited showers on location that can be used for special circumstances.

What about weather related issues?

There will be a contingency plan made aware to students in the case of inclement weather. In the event of rain there are many spaces available to help Youth Week continue as normal. Again, we have a team of people that are considering all safety and risk management areas.

Additional questions please email youthweek@harborchurches.org

We can't wait to see your students this June!