

## Because good youth ministry doesn't just happen

Exciting things are afoot at the Center for Youth Ministry Training. We just celebrated our fifth birthday so I wanted to share five dreams that God has made a reality through our program over the past few months:

1. Masters Degree - CYMT is expanding to a three-year program so that every CYMT student can earn a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry through Memphis Theological Seminary while they are in the program.
2. Expansion - The addition of a third year means that we will be expanding our capacity to 36 students and partner churches.
3. Second Region - With the hiring of Kris Konsowitz to serve as the Memphis Regional Director, we have broadened our ability to serve the greater Memphis region including North Mississippi and Eastern Arkansas.
4. Urban Initiative - We are hiring a summer intern to help us establish stronger relationships with communities where youth are underserved.
5. Publishing Initiative - We will be launching a publishing line that will share CYMT's practical theology training approach with the broader church.

I am especially thankful to Jason Fisher, Hank Hilliard, Crea Sielbeck, Maral Missirian-Dill, and Kris Lott for their faithful service on our board the past three years. They have been instrumental in our growth as an organization.

I hope you will note the upcoming fundraisers happening this Fall. We are having a major fundraising event to continue to ensure our long term success on October 27, 2011. Additionally, we are hosting our first 100 Hole Golf Marathon on October 17, 2011, to raise annual fund and scholarship support. We invite your participation in these events. If you would like to assist in these events, please contact our office.

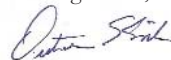
None of these things would have been possible without the support of investors like yourself. CYMT continues to see fruit from our labors. Many from our inaugural class are beginning their fifth year of ministry in their churches. Our alumni churches report continued growth in their ministries.



*CYMT students at the Youth Worker Summit in December 2010 held in Orlando, Florida.*

Finally, congratulations to Curt Gardiner, Regina Rigney, Sean Murphy, and Trey Wince who have completed the Certificate for Youth Ministry. They are moving on to pursue other ministry ventures while the rest of their class continues to complete the masters degree through MTS.

Serving Christ,



Rev. Dietrich "Deech" Kirk,  
Executive Director



### Spotlight on CYMT at Work

*CYMT was recently featured in The Cumberland Presbyterian Magazine, a denomination-wide publication. The article detailed CYMT's partnership with Memphis Theological Seminary, a Cumberland Presbyterian institution, and our program. The highlight of the article, though, was an interview with CYMT student Joanna Bellis (photo left) and the pastor at her church, Reverend Kip Rusb shared below.*

"During my senior year of college, finishing my bachelors degree in Commercial Art: Graphic Design, more strongly than ever before, God was calling me into ministry. I was scared at the thought because I didn't exactly know where God was leading me. Deep in my heart I knew that I had a strong love and passion for youth, but didn't know at what capacity God was calling me. As doors continued to open for me in that direction it was like God, Creator of the Universe, was holding down a bright neon sign that said CYMT. It's kind of crazy how it all fell into place for me. CYMT has been a perfect fit to the puzzle that I had been searching for.

"What I find to be so great about CYMT is that they placed me in a church that truly fits me best. Also, CYMT students are a community of people who support each other and can relate to the struggles and the celebrations of working in the church with youth. Being assigned a coach has truly helped me in so many aspects. My coach is there for me at any time of the day with encouragement, listening ears, support, wisdom, and of course unconditional love and grace. The clincher for me in deciding to apply to CYMT was the retreat style format and the fact that it would be through MTS. Being born into the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination, and strangely enough, with my father's interest in genealogy, I have found out that one of my ancestors was one of the

founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination, Samuel King and his son-in-law McGee. The CYMT program being connected to MTS only seemed too perfect for me to be a part of it."

*Joanna Bellis, Youth Director at Brenthaven CPC*



*Joanna Bellis (front row, far left) with students from the Brenthaven Cumberland Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry*

"When the time came to hire a youth director at Brenthaven, there was much debate as to the next step. After much research and prayer, it was clear. CYMT helped us in matching a called youth worker with our situation. We needed someone who was ready to step in and continue the work that was already started. We didn't need someone to start from scratch. Through the application process, we were able to express our need for someone who was open-minded and creative - someone who could take what was presented to them and move forward, holding to those "sacred cows" and yet creating new opportunities. Thanks to CYMT's discernment process, they took their applicants and matched gifts with needs. On our own, it would have been a very long, drawn out process with no guarantees. Since the partnership, we have been blessed with a special young lady who is talented, wise, and loves the youth. She is also going through this with the help of "old veterans" who are providing a valuable education and guidance."

*Rev. Kip Rusb, Pastor at Brenthaven CPC*



## CYMT Student Reflects on Beginnings at Founding Church

Chris Cummings grew up in Brentwood, Tennessee, and attended Brentwood United Methodist Church, one of CYMT's founding churches. We sat down with him and asked him to reflect on his experience as a youth in the BUMC program and now as a youth pastor in the CYMT program. Chris is in his third year at CYMT and is the Youth Minister at Forest Hills United Methodist Church in Brentwood.

**How did your youth group experience impact your call to ministry? How have those experiences led to how you do ministry now where you are currently serving?**

I was able to be a leader in my youth group, serving on a leadership team and also as a counselor with Junior High as I was a Senior in High School. All of this allowed me to learn how God had gifted me exactly for youth ministry. In college I was also able to come back and serve as a college counselor and help even more. I cannot tell you how much being trusted enough to allow us to be part of the ministry and not just have ministry done for us. It is something I still try to live out today in the ministry I work with.

**What one or two things did you experience in your youth group growing up that you hope your kids experience in the youth group you are serving?**

I hope that I can show my youth enough respect and trust that I will be willing to do youth ministry with them, not at them.



**Can you tell us a little more about YPA (Youth Pastors Anonymous) which you started?**

Youth Pastors Anonymous is exactly what it sounds like: a support group for youth pastors. Too often, we as youth ministers get so busy within our own ministries that we get to a point where we realize we are isolated from almost everything and anyone else

besides our ministry. Oftentimes, the ones who best understand us are our peers who are also in ministry. YPA is a monthly gathering of local youth pastors to share joys, pains, struggles, our souls, and so much more.

There is already a YPA in the South Nashville/Brentwood area, and we are looking to help create more around the country. If you are interested in starting one near you, or already meet with youth pastors and want ideas on activities, visit the YPA blog, [youthpastorsanonymous.blogspot.com](http://youthpastorsanonymous.blogspot.com) or email Chris Cummings, [Chris@foresthillsumc.org](mailto:Chris@foresthillsumc.org), for more information.



*Chris Cummings with a student from the Forest Hills UMC Youth Ministry listening to a song before praise band practice.*

**Tell us about your role as the Nashville District Youth Coordinator for the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church.**

As the NDYC, I will be coordinating gatherings and "united" events between the other United Methodist Churches in the Nashville District. I am excited about this opportunity.



*Chris Cummings and students at a recent youth retreat*



*Kris Konsowitz, CYMT Coach and Memphis Regional Director*

## CYMT Expands Regions

In May 2011, the Center for Youth Ministry Training hired Kris Konsowitz as the Memphis Regional Director. Serving in this role, Kris will be able to make better connections and stronger relationships with churches in the West Tennessee, Eastern Arkansas, and Northern Mississippi areas.

Kris has been serving as a coach for CYMT for the past two years. When she is not working for CYMT, she is the Director of Youth Ministries and Young Adults at Collierville United Methodist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. She is married to Bob, and they have three children: Melissa, Chris, and Laura.

We are excited about Kris joining our staff in a broader role!



*Adam Jones is entering his third year at CYMT*

## CYMT Student Receives Honor

Congratulations to Adam Jones for receiving the Denman Evangelism Laity Award this year. Skip Armistead, Adam's pastor at Hilldale United Methodist Church, nominated him for the award. By receiving this award, he was selected by the Evangelism Committee of the Tennessee Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church as the lay person who displayed the strongest evangelistic spirit in the conference. Adam will receive the award at the Tennessee Annual Conference on Monday, June 13. *It's a secret so don't tell him!* We are proud of Adam's work at Hilldale UMC in Clarksville and excited that others have seen his commitment to serving Christ.

## Inaugural Class 5 Years Later

### Where are they now?

On, August 1, 2006, CYMT started with seven faithful students. They were commissioned on August 8, 2008. They are all still near and dear to our hearts since they took a step of faith with us. Here is what they are doing now five years later.



Jill Sethness Altom is beginning her third year as youth minister at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Brentwood, Tennessee.



Tess Frohock is beginning her fifth year as youth minister at St. Andrews Presbyterian in conjunction with Preston Taylor Ministries in Nashville, Tennessee.



Josh Vegors continues to minister to youth through his professional music career.



Kelly Gentry is pursuing a Masters Degree in School Counseling at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee.



Ariel Givens is a student at Louisville Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, pursuing a Masters degree in Christian Counseling with Adolescents.



Harry Shaub continues to minister to youth through his work in the Christian music industry, most recently with Acquire the Fire.



Kris Lott is in his sixth year as youth minister at Calvary United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and serves on the CYMT Board of Directors.

## 5th Anniversary Financial Update

On March 1, 2011, the Center for Youth Ministry Training turned five. In five years, we have been overwhelmed by God's providential care and guidance as the CYMT has flourished from a dream into a reality that is impacting youth ministry training across the country.

CYMT is excited to announce the launch of its Graduate Residency in Youth Ministry program, which expands our two-year certificate program to a three-year Masters degree program. Students who are accepted will receive a job, stipend, housing, and full scholarship for a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry degree.

God has been faithful to work through us to multiply the gifts you have given. We are in the final year of our Lilly Grant and have been working diligently to ensure that we have a sustainable program beyond the length of the grant. To ensure CYMT's ongoing success, we need an annual income of \$100,000 from annual gifts and endowment interest. This goal represents a huge challenge for us but we know that we serve a great God who will show us how to be equal to the task.

We would like to invite you to consider giving a pledge to the CYMT annual fund to ensure the success of this vital ministry. If you would like to help us with our goal, please contact us at 615.823.7595. Again, thank you for all you have done to make CYMT a reality!

### "Imagine...the Future" Campaign Update

*Endowment Goal of \$1,500,000*  
 Pledged to Date \$949,350  
 Received to Date \$776,683

*Annual Fund Goal of \$25,000*  
 Pledged to Date '10 - '11 \$25,500  
 Received to Date '11 - '12 \$17,305

**You have invested in our program and for that we are eternally grateful. Here are some of the fruits or dividends of your investment.**

- 1 – Youth Ministry Professor** has been added to the CYMT staff. Andrew Zirschky was hired to serve as our academic director and youth ministry professor. Andrew is completing his PH. D. in Practical Theology with a focus in Youth Ministry from Princeton Theological Seminary. He will be only one of a handful of people with such a degree.
- 20 – Graduates** of the CYMT Certificate in Youth Ministry program over the first three classes
- 23 – Current Students** in the CYMT program
- 36 – Number of students** who will be in the CYMT program as we expand in 2011
- 38 – Churches** served by our students where youth ministries have grown numerically and spiritually
- 1,000's – Number of youth** being impacted by these youth ministries with the Good News of Christ

## Board Members



Mark DeVries, First Presbyterian Church

Tricia Carswell, First Presbyterian Church

Overton Colton, First Presbyterian Church

Jim Edwards, Brentwood United Methodist Church

Jason Fisher, Brentwood United Methodist Church

Hank Hilliard, At-Large Member

Kris Lott, CYMT Alumnus

Marty Martin, First Presbyterian Church

Maral Missirian-Dill, Brentwood United Methodist Church

John Padgett, Brentwood United Methodist Church

Crea Sielbeck, First Presbyterian Church

Amy Vaughn, Princeton Theological Seminary Representative

Fred Edie, Duke Divinity School Representative

*The staff at CYMT wants to express their appreciation to Maral Missirian-Dill, Jason Fisher, Hank Hilliard, Kris Lott, and Crea Sielbeck who have faithfully served on our board for the past several years and completed their terms on the CYMT Board of Directors this year.*

## 100 Hole Golf Marathon to Benefit CYMT

Mark your calendars for October 17, 2011!

CYMT will be hosting a 100 Hole Golf Marathon at Old Natchez Country Club. The event benefits CYMT's Annual Fund and Scholarship Support. To be a part of this, gather a team of four golfers by September 1, 2011. We are asking each team set a fundraising goal of \$4,000. For more information or to find out how you can help, contact Dietrich Kirk at [deech@cymt.org](mailto:deech@cymt.org) or 615.823.7597.

The Center for Youth Ministry Training works in collaboration with Memphis Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Duke Divinity School.