

A New Affinity Network: Reaching Deaf Teenagers

By Bob Ayres

Ministry with deaf teenagers is tough! For a number of reasons, the Christian faith has almost been extinguished within the deaf community in the younger generations.

Once a youth worker is able to cross the language and cultural barriers between the hearing and deaf worlds, there awaits a microcosm of all societal ills. Deaf and hard-of-hearing teenagers face all the same temptations, dangers and sins as other teenagers, but without many of the supports available to their hearing peers. They are few in number and in most cases, scattered due to educational mainstreaming.

The great news is that God is actively working across the nation through ministries reaching the scattered population of deaf and hard of hearing teenagers. A revival in the deaf community is spreading across the country, primarily through youth ministry.

This rapidly spreading impact on a new generation of young deaf and hard-of-hearing people is happening through various ministries who are willing to work together. Many deaf teenagers across the nation are coming to Christ, maturing in faith and knowledge, and finding opportunities to develop leadership skills through service and missions.

In February 2001, DeafYouth Ministries, Inc. hosted a national symposium for connecting and co-laboring with colleagues for determining the best ways to create effective and sustainable ministry with deaf and hard-of-hearing teenagers. This Deaf Teen Ministry National Symposium has been an annual cornerstone event since that time.



In 2007, there were 55 ministry leaders representing 25 ministries in 15 states in attendance. This training and networking event is an amazing gathering of people from across the denominational and ministry spectrum who love Jesus and deaf teens. There are a number of other training opportunities, partnerships, materials and resources available through this network.

Bob Ayres is the president of DeafYouth Ministries (DTQuest®) and is serving as the Deaf Teen Ministry Affinity Network coordinator. An advisory team for this network is comprised of Chad Entinger (Deaf Missions), Jeremy Simons (D-Pact) and Todd Miller (DCC-Pastor).

If you are interested and a member of NNYM, we welcome you to join this new Affinity Network, too. If you are not yet a member, you can join and get involved with this Affinity Network. Learn more at www.deafministry.org. ↻



Bob Ayres is the president of DeafYouth Ministries (DTQuest®) and is serving as the Deaf Teen Ministry Affinity Network coordinator. He and his wife, Kathy, live in Louisville, Kentucky and have five children in their 20s, including their youngest who is deaf and a leader with DTQuest®. Bob is the author of *Deaf Diaspora: The Third Wave of Deaf Ministry* (iUniverse, 2004), along with numerous other publications. Bob and Kathy grew up in Florida and have particularly enjoyed this "Year of the Gators." More information is available at www.bobayres.com.

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 2 ©2007 NNYM

This magazine is published quarterly by the National Network of Youth Ministries
12335 World Trade Drive, Suite 16
San Diego, California 92128
Telephone: 858-451-1111
Fax: 858-451-6900
netmag@youthworkers.net
www.youthworkers.net

President	Paul Fleischmann
Chief Ministries Officer	Daryl Nuss
Managing Editor	Mark Stephens
Senior Editor	Doug Clark
Art Director	Joel Sawyer
Content Liaison	Briana Horton
National Accounts Manager	George Lawson

Regional Coordinators

Great Lakes	Keith Krueger	kkrueger@nnym.org
Great Plains	Open	
Mid Atlantic	Brian Coday	bcoday@nnym.org
New England	Mark Orr	morr@nnym.org
Northwest	Chris Renzelman	crenzelman@nnym.org
South Central	Open	
Southeast	David Grant	dgrant@nnym.org
Southwest	Mike De Vito	mdevito@nnym.org

JOIN NOW!



The **National Network of Youth Ministries** links youth workers for encouragement, spiritual growth, and sharing resources in order to expose every teenager to the gospel of Jesus Christ, establish those who respond in a local church, and disciple them to help reach the world.

Join the Network

We need each other. We are better together! The Network links people on several fronts, from individual youth workers, to denominations, ministries and organizations, as well as other Networks. At the core is the Network Covenant signed by every Network Member. Jesus' prayer in John 17 compels us to unite "that the world may believe."

If you are not already a Covenant Member, please go online to www.youthworkers.net and click the "join" button. Agree to the Network Covenant, fill out the form and send your registration today. You can also call to join at 1-800-367-6696.

JOIN FOR FREE >>