



Networks

National Evangelization Teams of Canada

Summer
2004



They eat my food & take up space

So why do I host NET teams?

By Rob Chamberlain

We've hosted many travelling teams, including the parish team that was at our parish this past year. We've been doing this for many years, I'm not sure how many. But I can tell you my family started this when I had more hair!

The Netters are typical young people. They are sometimes refrigerator raiders, couch floppers and occasionally television watchers, and that's all normal stuff. We've helped them through some jack-knifed trailers in many icy driveways, and spent hours with them at emergency clinics for sprained ankles and such. They take up space and cost us money in food, water, etc. So why do we host so many times?

We do it because they are on a mission and we want to be part of that mission. It's not "Mission Impossible", or like Star Trek, boldly going where no one has gone before. It's the mission of spreading



"Host dad" Rob Chamberlain and his family with NET Team #3, stationed at Divine Infant Parish in Orleans, ON.

the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it's so important for our young people today. We believe strongly in this mission and this is our way of supporting the ministry.

Being a host family means having the team members in your home — but they are by no means a burden. Their presence in our home is life-giving. They are great people

to have around. They are kind, loving, trustworthy, caring, thoughtful and they are fun, too! They've been a positive influence on my children. They have daily prayer and we participate in that, and most of them like hockey, which is a bonus in my books!

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NET Ministries aims to touch as many hearts as possible, from the youth in the parishes and schools in which we work, the families that house the teams as they travel, and even the hearts of the team members themselves. This newsletter focuses on stories from three different sources: host family, team member, and parish priest. Like the waves that spread from a pebble dropped in a pond, God takes the teams' efforts to serve Him and multiplies the fruit. Read on ...

Cont'd from page 1: Hosting NET teams

Not too long ago it was my birthday and my family organized a party. Of course we included the whole NET team among our guests. We had a great time and when it was over the team helped clean up and then the four men from the team who were staying with us settled down for the night in the basement. I went down to say good-night and they invited me to join them for night prayers. Praying with those men that evening capped off my birthday for sure.

I have to remind myself every day that I'm here by the grace of God and any successes I may have are far more His successes than my own. So it is with our experience with the NET teams. They are a gift from God and a real joy to have in our lives. We have two children, but we also consider all the team members we've hosted as our children as well. Thanks be to God for NET Ministries and thanks be to God for the NET teams. ✠

Rob Chamberlain is a NET "host dad" and hockey fan living in Ottawa, ON. He and his family have been hosting NET teams in their home for the last seven years. This is an excerpt from a speech he delivered at NET's "Reasons for Hope" event in May. Hundreds of host families across the country generously open their homes to house the teams as they travel coast to coast spreading the Gospel.



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NET Canada sends out Catholic young adult teams who share their faith with over 20,000 youth in dioceses across Canada each year. We are a non-profit organization and rely on your donations to help us bring Christ to young Canadians. Come partner with us!

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Parish priest explains the impact of NET

Fr. Gerard Monaghan is pastor of Divine Infant Parish in Ottawa, ON and recounts below the impact NET's parish team has had in his parish. The team was stationed at his parish from October 2003 until May 2004 and implemented the Life Teen program.

Our parish is very fortunate in that we've had a youth Mass for years with about 500 people attending, young and old alike. But our youth ministry was definitely waning. We had about 10 people coming to our youth group. Then last year, we found out that our youth minister was going back to school. Soon after that, I had heard about NET's parish teams and began putting the wheels in motion to have a team in our parish.

Since the NET team began working with our parish, the youth program has been growing beautifully. One mother came into my office at the beginning of the school year and said, "Father, the first night of the program I had to force my son to go. The next week, he didn't complain about going. The week after that he came home and said to me, 'Okay, mom, I don't want to admit this, but I really like it.'"

From then on I knew that all I had to do was get the teens to attend the NET program once and they would like it. This is because the NET team communicates the truth of

“...(The youth) feel that the parish is their home and ... now, wherever they go they can feel that the Church is home.”

the Gospel. If there is one thing that every teen has, it's a built-in lie detector. If they're not receiving the truth in a youth program — they walk. But when you communicate the truth of the Gospel it touches their hearts and they respond in powerful ways.

Their lives are transformed. The Life Teen program has indeed transformed the youth and the parish community.

What happens next is this: you not only have a NET team working in the community to spread the Gospel, but you have 100 youth living their lives according to the Gospel thereby evangelizing everyone with whom they come in contact. Now that's a success story, in my opinion!

It's a joy for anyone who gets to experience the faith of the NET team — simple, honest, true and most certainly authentic. There's nothing fake about them.

The wonderful thing about NET's work in our parish is that the active young people in the youth group are the ones I didn't know before the team came. They were the ones who came to Mass but slipped out quietly afterward. But now I know them and they know me. They even feel comfortable coming to me to discuss things. They feel that the parish is their community and their home. That's wonderful because now *wherever* they go they can feel that the *Church is home*. So well done, NET Ministries and well done NET team!

From retreatant to NET team member



Katie Lawson was a teen attending a parish youth program organized by NET last year, and will be a NET team member herself this fall. This is her story, in her words.

I was baptized Catholic but never practiced while growing up. I went to Catholic school all my life but never had an understanding of what it meant to *know* God and to have a faith. Later, when I switched to a public

school, I really began to question my faith. I was questioned on a regular basis about my religion, but I had no answers. I realized that although I believed in God, I didn't know Him.

So as a high school student I began to go to church every Sunday and pray when I thought I needed to. I thought that would be enough to give me that "feeling" I was looking for, but it still wasn't there and I didn't know why. I started searching for that feeling by throwing myself into extra-curricular activities, but I still didn't find any fulfillment. I became discouraged and just wanted to quit everything. I even began to stop trying in school.

In February of 2003 I heard about a youth conference in Ottawa that involved the NET team. I wasn't too sure about it, but my Dad and a few parishioners were pushing me to go, so I went. When I walked in there, I was blown away. I had never seen so many youth who were "on fire" for God. Right away I recognized that it was this passion, this "fire" inside of them, that I was searching for. I was introduced to the NET team and it seemed that they were a source of this fire that everyone was experiencing. I know now that what I was sensing in them was God's love. Well that night, during Adoration, I was introduced

Cont'd on back page (Katie's story)

Cont'd ...Katie's story

to Jesus for the first time and my heart began to fill with His love.

I wanted that feeling to last but I knew it wouldn't if my faith wasn't nurtured. That's when I heard about the LIFETEEN program run by NET in Annunciation parish in Ottawa. I wanted to grow in my faith and love for God and that is exactly what NET helped me to do. The team showed me the importance of prayer, and how to sustain my prayer life even when those feelings are gone.

The team showed me my value, which for a long time I had thought was based on my abilities and successes, when really it is based on the plain fact that God loves me and I am His child. They gave me and so many other youth a chance to know God on a deeper level, to grow in faith and love with the support of a community.

The support I received from NET's program led me to apply to serve on a NET team next year. The NET team gave me a gift — their service. It challenged me to know God, it nurtured my faith and changed the direction of my life. I will be forever thankful to God for NET Ministries. I am very excited to challenge and serve other youth the way I was served.

News & Notes

WHAT YOU HELPED US ACCOMPLISH!

Thanks to your prayers and support, the four NET teams were able to accomplish some amazing things for the Lord this past school year. The teams finished their year of ministry in mid-June and returned home to continue with their careers and schooling. Some have gone home only to begin preparing to return again! We are excited to be welcoming back 23 team members from previous years who will be serving on teams next fall .

Together, the two travelling teams and the two parish teams led 237 retreats and 56 parish 'Lifenights' from coast to coast in 28 dioceses. This allowed the teams to proclaim the Gospel to 18,500 Canadian Catholic youth. Praise God!

CALLING ALL ALUMNI

We are updating our records on our 240 NET alumni. Can you send your mailing address, phone number, and most importantly, your email address to Jennifer at jen@netcanada.ca. This will keep you in touch with NET news and also help us cut costs by emailing updates like this newsletter instead of using regular mail.

WE NEED NEW VANS!

We believe that God provides, using us all as His hands and feet. As we expand, so do our needs. Over the next year, we need to replace the 15-passenger vans for the travelling teams, and we need two 8-passenger vans for the parish teams. We also have many office needs, such as computers, filing cabinets, office chairs, etc. in good condition. Perhaps you can help!

HERE WE GROW AGAIN

NET Ministries is expanding once again, as we include our first ever mission team which will be sent to Ireland for 3 months this coming fall 2004. We are also adding another parish-based team, due to overwhelming demand from parishes across the country and also a highly successful recruiting season. We will be sending out 3 parish teams, 2 travelling teams, and the Irish mission team next fall.

THANK YOU

Our fundraising goal for 2003-04 was \$320,000. Because of our generous donors and the hard work of the team members, we reached our goal, and now we've begun fundraising to be able to send out the teams this fall. God bless all of you who have been our partners in evangelization.



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