

Sarah Unrau– Nov 7, 2021

When I was in youth group I always remember just showing up after a long day at school and hanging out with awesome people. But thinking back on it I realize how much time and preparation Sarah put into the activities that were planned for each week, which I am truly thankful for.

In the beginning when Sarah first started as the youth leader, my friend Rachel and I, made it our goal to do weird things to see if we could shock or just test the limits. We soon realized that no matter what we did, Sarah would just laugh and roll her eyes at us. I remember we made a game at our Tuesday night bible studies of “what was in Rachels purse?” Because one times, she had a potato and another time a light bulb. One week Sarah had planned a Mennonite feast for us, and we all helped make the food, Rachel and I were in charge of making the cream gravy, so we thought it was hilarious to add food coloring. Sarah was completely stumped why it had turned green... we did eventually tell her. And after all these times of testing her she still invited us all over to her house for a sleepover for girls’ night.

Sarah took us on many adventures, I remember camping trips (the few I went on as I’m not much of a camper) the Winnipeg trip to the Fat Calf Festival youth conference, and my last trip with youth to Mennonite World Conference in Pennsylvania, which was defiantly my favorite.

We had so much fun with Sarah whether it be at Tuesday night bible study or Saturday evening events, from painting the youth room or forever attempting to carve our names into the bricks In the youth room, which I don’t think I ever finished.

Sarah was always willing to pick me up from school to go for coffee, which I really enjoyed being able to tell her all about my life and hearing her advice, which I didn’t necessarily take, but I still really appreciated it and learned a lot. She was always ready to come to sports games (not mine, because I don’t do sports) or attend events at RJC that we were participating in, I loved when she would stop by RJC and bring us care packages or Timbits

Then after all we put Sarah through in youth, after Rachel and I had graduated she didn’t use her better judgement and let the two of us run a youth night...alone... I am sad to see that no other youth will get to experience the care and dedication Sarah had for us as youth, but I know that she will be a wonderful teacher as she did teach me how to drive standard in her own car in the Prairie land parking lot!

Good morning everyone,

My name is Kirsten Hamm-Epp, I serve as Regional Church Minister for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, and it is my true honour to be here today on behalf of the wider church family to acknowledge Sarah’s many contributions to youth and ministry beyond Nutana Park Mennonite Church.

Before plans were in place for today’s service, I had reached out to Susanne to invite myself to be part of whatever was bring planned, because as much as we know Sarah means a lot to all of you here at Nutana Park, she means a lot to the wider youth ministry family as well.

Thinking back, it was easy to come up with a list of the many different ways Sarah has been part of youth ministry programming in MC Sask.

It takes a special kind of person to be willing to travel on a bus full of teenagers for over 35 hours, even more so to oversee the trip, but that's exactly what Sarah did for MC Sask in 2015, supervising the trip to the Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and giving 40 MC Sask youth memories and experiences that last a lifetime.

And when it was our turn here in Saskatchewan to host the nationwide MC Canada youth community at Shekinah in 2019, Sarah was there again, helping coordinate and lead evening activities, along with anything else I could get her to say yes to! As plans are in the works now for the next MC Canada youth gathering in 2022, I don't think it's a coincidence that many of the things people talk about wanting to make sure we repeat are the things Sarah was part of planning.

Thinking about the regular MC Sask calendar of SMYO retreats and Mega Menno events, similar things could be said. We're a pretty tight knit crew where all the youth get to know all the sponsors quite well, and it says a lot when you can tell a youth, "Oh don't worry Sarah's planning it" and they say "Oh, good, then I'll come."

Spending time on RJC campus interacting with students and leading Bible studies has also been part of Sarah's time working with youth, and Alex Tiessen is here today to represent that community and say thank you to Sarah for her time there. And Alex and I have also had the pleasure of being part of the MC Sask youth ministry team with Sarah and several others over the years.

Working with youth comes with its own very unique set of challenges and rewards, and this group has become a safe place to share with one another as we experience the highs, lows, and uncertainties that come with this line of work. When we held our final meeting with Sarah earlier this Fall, it was clear that Sarah has impacted not just the youth she works with, but that her honesty, creativity, and integrity will have a lasting impact on each of us well.

I'd like to close with a blessing from the book of Common Prayer:

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;

May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;

May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

All the best.

Words of thanks to Sarah Unrau

Sarah, on behalf of the NPMC Board of Deacons and our church family, I want to thank you for what has turned out to be over ten years of service and commitment to our youth and congregation. From the start, you were diligent in your efforts to get to know each of our youth and then adapt programming to engage a vast array of interests. You listened to our youth and planned

discussions on issues they considered important. You saw youth numbers rise and fall and always stayed dedicated and optimistic about the future of our youth and our youth program. Your humble and thoughtful leadership went beyond the walls of the youth room as your talents contributed to enhanced programming for our young families, the development of a more modern and engaging website and more recently the development of the Peace Club which supports our children. You did all this as we watched your family grow and the intensity of your life increase as you came to care for three active boys (not to mention McKenzie).

We sincerely thank you for the contributions you have made to the life of NPMC, we wish you success in your studies as you return to school and we look forward to worshipping and serving with you and your family in the years to come.

Bob Neufeldt
On Behalf of the Board of Deacons