

Senior Reflections

May 7, 2017

Lauren Owens

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Lauren Owens and I'm a senior at De Pere High School. Next year I'll be attending the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign to study architecture. I've been in YCA since the start of high school when Megan brought me for a fundraiser over the summer before freshman year.

Even though I've been in this group for four years now, thinking about writing this speech and moving on was harder than I imagined. All these memories of some of my favorite people flooded in. My first year was our trip to New Orleans, and I loved every minute of it. From playing foosball during downtime to setting up costumes, we all became so close through helping the community and continuing our faith. Beth and Kristie were a big part of why us YCA'ers were able to have such a blast with each other on that trip and every other Wednesday night.

Megan and I are the last from that group my freshman year, and it's been so hard to watch everyone else move on. But now that it's my turn, I know that this is much more difficult.

Next year I'm not sure how I'll handle not being able to see Megan, Kailee, Maddy and Nick on a regular basis. They're what made our mission trip to New York this past summer such an amazing experience. Seeing the city with some of my best friends is something I still miss and I hope I'll be able to continue in college.

Lastly, I'd like to thank Jeff and Linda who have been so patient with us and, at times, part of the craziness. At this point, Jeff would like me to mention that some of those grey hairs are from Megan and I, but mostly Megan. Thanks, too, to Mary Kay Bishop, and I'd also like to thank Beth and Kristie for being some amazing advisors and all the YCA'ers this year and in my past four years because they are what made this experience so memorable and hard to say goodbye to.

Megan Danen

My name is Megan Danen and I'm graduating from De Pere High School in exactly 30 days . . . but I'm not counting!

I've been planning this speech since I was seven years old and my parents were YCA advisors. But when it came time to actually writing it, I had no idea where to begin.

YCA has been such a huge part of my entire life that I couldn't even begin to describe it in one speech. Not having this in my life next year will be one of the hardest adjustments to make.

When I sat down and started writing, all of the people and amazing memories I'm leaving behind came to mind. The first memory I have of YCA was going to Point Beach with the group that my parents were advisors for. We were playing Capture the Flag and Katie Kennedy carried me around on her back for the entire night. I got to hear about all the pranks they had, and I felt like I was one super cool seven year old.

At the end of my eighth grade year, we went to Moon Beach, and it was my first official outing as a YCA'er. The whole weekend Neil complained about how weird tapioca pudding looked, so Anna and I thought it would be a really cool idea if we filled giant bags with it and stuck it in his bed while he was sleeping.

That same trip, I walked out of my cabin to see Jacob hanging out of his window in just spandex screaming – "Romeo! Romeo!" – and without hesitation Mark ran up and started singing, "Juliet where art thou Juliet?" And it was so perfect that we still laugh about it to this day.

My freshman summer we went to New Orleans and it's a trip I couldn't forget even if I wanted to. Our group planned out shower time so that we could take group showers which, to everyone else staying, was probably very obnoxious because I guarantee you we weren't quiet. That same trip we got in a pudding fight and I somehow ended up with the majority of it in my hair.

We also went on a swamp tour. After finding out that Lauren and Anna were both terrified of spiders, our tour guide proceeded to torture them by putting moss on a stick and tickling their necks with it. And it got so bad that at one point Anna was curled up in a ball on my lap crying her eyes out.

The last night of the trip, Anna and I spent the whole night in the lounge with some guys we met from Arkansas and it was interesting to say the least. Our group got so close over that trip, and Lauren and I are the last of that group to graduate. Us leaving is the end of an era in YCA, and I'm really sad to see it go.

Next year I will be attending Saint Louis University to study psychology and sociology on a premed track. I'm not ready to leave this group or this church which have both played a big role in how I was raised.

I want to thank Jeff and Linda for putting up with me for 17 years, Beth and Kristie for allowing Lauren and me to be absolutely crazy and playing along with it, and Mary Kay Bishop. I also want to thank Kitty Hauck for being my confirmation mentor and such an inspiration to me.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for choosing this church when they moved back here and raising me to the person I am today. I'm going to miss singing in church with Nick and talking about musicals with Maddy and spending every Wednesday night with them. No matter where I go, the memories I have from YCA will always be with me.

