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**A TEAM OF 20 YOUTH SAID YES! TO THE POOR OF KANSAS CITY THROUGH  
FOCUS NORTH AMERICA**

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This past weekend, a team of 20 youth participated in FOCUS North America's YES Program (formerly known as OYO), serving our most needy neighbors in Kansas City.

They arrived from parishes in Wichita, KS, Oklahoma City, OK, and Kansas City, eager to be used by God to meet the fundamental needs of His people. They did not expect, however, that they would receive much more from the experience than they would give. After three intense days, the youth gained a new perspective on the poor and homeless: they came expecting to serve them, but, instead, found their own lives forever changed by the encounter.

"They are just like us," one participant said. Another said, "I don't know how anyone can come on a FOCUS North America YES trip and not be changed."

Living out Matthew 25, the youth engaged in several social action projects throughout the weekend. They served and ate dinner with many homeless and working poor in the city, listening to their stories and enjoying fellowship with them. They distributed clothing to mothers who had no means to clothe their children. They walked around the famous outdoor Country Club Plaza in Kansas City with newly opened eyes, looking beyond the glamour to perceive and meet the needs of the homeless on the streets. But, as the youth realized, they themselves were fed and clothed by the face-to-face encounter with real living icons of Christ, with the poor of the city. As one participant said, "They really open themselves to you; they'll sit and talk to you forever, when most people in school will never give their time to you like that."

Staying at the Reconciliation Services building, a partner ministry of FOCUS North America, in the heart of inner city, proved to be a further blessing for the group. The experience of living in humble circumstances shed new light on God's bounty in their lives and fostered their desire to share their resources and love for Christ with those in need.

The youth are now excited to return home and make consistent commitments to the poor in their own communities. This FOCUS North America YES trip not only equipped them with necessary tools to actively become living icons of Christ, but also to truly encounter Him in the poor they meet in their daily lives.

*“I am constantly amazed at how God transforms those who have a pure desire to serve Him. It is through seeing themselves in reference to their Creator that these young people grew in their knowledge of who they truly are in God’s eyes. Instead of building their identity from unhealthy influences, the YES program of FOCUS North America provides them the opportunity to allow Christ to live through them and to experience the joy of being their true selves.”*

*–Katrina Bitar, YES Program Director*

To bring the YES Program to your community, please contact Katrina Bitar-  
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**Mission:** *As an expression of Christ’s love, FOCUS North America serves the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick and imprisoned by providing Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter.*

*FOCUS North America is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Donations can be made online at **www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org** or checks can be made out to “FOCUS North America” and sent to:  
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