

PARMA AREA - FEBRUARY 2013



COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Connection

Awkward Moments

by Dona Kiner, Co-Director

Have you ever asked a woman how far along she is and she reply, "I'm not pregnant!" Or how about asking that lovely couple, "How long have you two been married?" only to learn, "Um...We're not married." - Awkward moments.

A forced introduction to someone you really want to befriend but have nothing witty or interesting to say. The infamous elevator moment of "to talk or not to talk." A friendly, "Hello, Jim!" when you realize after the fact that his real name is John. - Awkward moments.

It came to my attention (by my husband) a few years ago that I am often part of awkward moments. And, most of the time, I am the one creating these "moments!"

Years ago, my husband and I, youth pastors at the time, were hosting our annual youth fall gathering, a casual event focused on the three F's (fun, food & fellowship). That night, we were graced with a number of visitors who came at the request of one of the youth in our group. It became evident that the group was there more or less as a favor to a friend, but were clearly uncomfortable with the atmosphere. One of them let us know right away that he was an atheist. Another one decided to let his presence be known by dropping to the floor and rolling across the floor, bumping into people's legs and causing quite a scene.

As a youth leader, what do you do in these situations? It was always my focus for young people to feel welcomed and comfortable to be themselves, but wasn't this crossing the line?

For this young 19 year old, whose floor-rolling seemed more a cry for attention, I did something that even I wasn't so sure about. I dropped to the floor and start rolling on the floor alongside of him. In that moment, all I wanted to do was show love, no matter how awkward or weird it felt. I also wanted my action to speak to our young people that it's okay to be different; it's okay to stand out and be a little weird. What was interesting was that my unorthodox response to this kid's obnoxious behavior caught his attention. He immediately calmed down and there was an evident awareness of respect. He knew that he was accepted.

It was after that moment that I realized that a lot of the "awkward moments" I found myself in were an opportunity for me to share the love of Christ. Mark 5 and Luke 8 tells us the story of Jesus healing the Gerasene demoniac. This was an awkward moment if there ever was one! In Luke, it describes the man as wearing no clothes. In Mark, it says that he would cry out from the tombs as he would cut himself with stones. Yet, Jesus ministered to him nonetheless.

Being Christ's disciples in today's world are we up for such a challenge? Or do these awkward moments make us so uncomfortable that we walk away, never sharing His healing power or His love.

I tell myself to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. To never allow fear to run my life, to never let fear hinder me from sharing His grace. Trying to minister over the smell of a drunk who hasn't bathed for weeks and has severely rotting teeth can be awkward. Sitting down with someone to share the love of Christ and not know if you are dealing with a full deck or not is awkward. Praying with a stranger in Costco is awkward.

God's love knows no boundaries. Sometimes awkward is just the way to go. Sometimes the right thing to do is to get down on the dirty floor and "roll" with your community in an effort to spread His Love.

February

6

PASTORS' COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE

Community Ambassadors had another Pastors' Round Table at the Parma Area Family Collaborative offices on Wednesday, February 6, at 8:30 AM. This meeting served to engage area church leaders in an effort to dialogue about the current need for local adoption/foster care and fatherhood initiatives. Your presence and input at these meetings is important and valued. If you missed this one please join us for the next one. If you have any questions, please contact us at contact@comamb.org or 216-200-7030.



A father-kid night of fun, snacks,
& a wild scavenger hunt!
Geared for kids 12 & under

Friday, February 15

7:00 - 8:30 pm

@ Parmatown Mall

(Next to Payless Shoes)

♥ COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

COMAMB.ORG 216.200.7030



The Pay It Forward Cafe is looking for volunteers to help set up, serve, and/or clean-up on Saturdays from 12pm-2pm at Parmatown Mall. If your church would like to partner with us in this program, please contact us at contact@comamb.org or 216-200-7030.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 15, Friday - 7:00 - 8:30pm

HEROES - FREE Scavenger Hunt / Father - kid Night at Parmatown Mall, next to Payless Shoes

February 28, Thursday - 8:00 - 9:30am

Parma Area Family Collab Meeting @ Parma Area Family Collaborative, 11212 Snow Rd., Parma

Call Us: 216-200-7030

www.ComAmb.org

Email Us: contact@comamb.org