

## Michael Otto

Hi, my name is Michael Otto. I'm the Overland Park Student Ministries director and welcome to Student Sunday. So excited that you guys are here with us. I'm really, really excited for this service because my my daughter is here right now. And she said that it was going to be boring. So, sweetie, I'm going to try really, really hard. My heart is to not make it so boring. Well, like I said, good morning and welcome to Student Sunday. And we hope that you've been blessed so far to to be greeted and to be ushered into service to hear from our amazing worship team in choir. It was such a blessing to see this unfold and to hear how amazing they sounded. Today was such a blessing. And for you guys all out here today, thank you so much for being student Strong. That's one of our one of our values here. And so thank you so much. So like I said, it would not this this service, this worship service would not be possible here today without so many people being here and for behind the scenes making things happen from from Steve and to from Austin to to Jason up here to Christy to all of the all of the students being here showing up and being ready and really, truly and honestly, we, me and Riley, we wouldn't want to do it and couldn't do it on our own. Like if you saw me behind the drums trying to do what what NOAA does every single every single day. It would just it would just not be good. So we're just so thankful for for them and for everyone coming together to make this happen and living out one of our other values, which is better together. Honestly, we can we can accomplish so much more when we're together through Christ and when we work alone. And I'm sure you all know this. This past month we had an amazing godly parenting series led by Pastor Tammy that talked about just how how it takes several caring adults that pray for students, that lift

them up, encourage them on a on a daily basis. And honestly, that's what 00:01:54  
I'm going to be talking about more of today. And for us to be plain and 00:01:57  
simply a a village of people, it takes a village of people. So that's what our 00:02:03  
sermon is titled today. And maybe you guys have heard that phrase 00:02:06  
before. Maybe you've heard that phrase thrown around, you know, at a 00:02:09  
baseball game or at practice, or when you're sitting around with another  
parent at a, you know, at a playground or even at a parent teacher  
conference, maybe you've maybe you've heard that before. But really, 00:02:22  
when it gets down to it, it shouldn't stop. Stop there. It should say it takes 00:02:26  
a village to raise up a child or pointed person to Christ. So in traditional 00:02:32  
colonial fashion, I do have three points today. Don't be worried about that. 00:02:36  
We do have three points. Those being being a village of people means 00:02:37  
sacrificing. It means being intentional and it means being driven by the 00:02:44  
Holy Spirit to impact a person's life forever. So you're probably wondering 00:02:52  
maybe why Why is this so important to talk about on a Sunday morning?  
Why is this such an important message to discuss? Well, because now 00:02:57  
more than ever, church now more than ever, we are in an era where  
people seemingly are at their loneliest. We are at an era right now in our 00:03:09  
lives where people are so disconnected but also so connected than we've  
ever been before. The UCLA loneliness scale is a widely used survey 00:03:17  
that's actually been given insight into how often a person feels  
disconnected. This study, performed in January 2020, right before our 00:03:26  
lives changed forever. Found that 73% of Generation Z sometimes or very 00:03:31  
often feels feels alone, followed up by 71% of millennials and 51% of baby  
boomers feeling disconnected. And I'm sure if we were to to continue to 00:03:45  
survey other generations prior, they would there were the numbers would

also be close to that. But not only that, I want to share another statistic 00:03:54  
with you. Another stat is that 46.1% of men and 45.3% of women overall 00:03:57  
report some sort of disconnection in their lives. So now more than ever. 00:04:08  
Church now more than ever. Colonial, we must respond to this loneliness 00:04:09  
epidemic going on in our in our in our midst and to live out our mission  
statement of being the light of Christ in a hurting culture. So before there 00:04:23  
was Colonial, long before Colonial was here, Jesus walked the earth. And 00:04:29  
there is an amazing account of four friends who risked, who sacrificed  
much to help their paralyzed friend meet Jesus and was changed forever.  
So I would ask now that if you can rise for the reading of Scripture. On 00:04:39  
one of those days as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law  
were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea  
and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heel. And 00:05:04  
behold, the men were bringing on a bed, a man who was paralyzed, and  
they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no  
way to bring him in because of the crowd. They went up on the roof and 00:05:24  
let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.  
And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven you. And 00:05:32  
the scribes and the Pharisees began to question saying, Who is this? Who 00:05:44  
speaks these blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? When 00:05:47  
Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them. Why do you question 00:05:54  
in your hearts? Which is easier to say. Your sins are forgiven you or to say 00:05:57  
rise and walk, but that you may know that the son of man has authority on  
earth to forgive sins? He said to the man who is paralyzed, I say to you, 00:06:10  
Rise, pick up your bed and go home. And immediately he rose up before 00:06:19  
them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home glorifying

## Michael Otto (continued)

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God in amazement, seized them all, and they glorify God and were filled with awe, saying We have seen extraordinary things today (Luke 5:17-26).

Thank you. You may be seated. So just like with any scripture that we go 00:06:38

through on a Sunday or any scripture that we go through with our students, it's important to know what was happening around the time of this story and to know and to even answer the question, why were these

four men risking it all that day for this person? So first off, we have to 00:06:59

know that at the time or that at the time that Jesus was teaching, we can read at the beginning of the section that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee,

Judea and from Jerusalem. In verse 19, we can read that those that were 00:07:14

there or that were present, they brought a paralyzed man that but they

could not actually enter the home. They couldn't enter the home because 00:07:23

of the crowd. All right. So I want to ask one question here. Who here? And 00:07:27

show of hands, who here likes hosting parties or large gatherings at your

home? Anyone? Actually more than last service Last. Okay. I see some 00:07:34

some hands creeping up there. Okay. So your gift is hospitality. Your gift 00:07:41

is hospitality. You'll throw a gathering or get together on a whim. Right. 00:07:45

And there's always there's always the spouse sometimes that is ready to 00:07:49

pack things up and to usher people out after dinner. Okay. Now, in our 00:07:56

family, my wife loves hosting things. I'm a little bit more hesitant, but 00:08:01

afterwards, I really, really love it. Okay. And so and I also love it because 00:08:04

I'm usually the one I go along with it because I love her cooking. Okay? I 00:08:11

love it. And so but and going back to the story of the of the the house and 00:08:12

the people there, the homeowners, wouldn't you wouldn't someone be

like enough is enough? Like there's enough people here. We don't have 00:08:22

enough room. But whoever the homeowners were, they were more than 00:08:25  
likely people that would have felt honored to have such an important folks  
that were there at this time. They would have felt honored to have the 00:08:34  
Pharisees from every surrounding village at this place. And at this point, 00:08:39  
more than likely the teachers of the law. They were curious about who 00:08:41  
this Jesus was. They wanted to look him in the eyes and understand who 00:08:44  
he was as a person and what he was about. But this begs the question, 00:08:50  
though, what happened to the people that truly needed Jesus, to the  
people that needed healing and that didn't have the ability to be inside  
that home that day? So those that needed Jesus the most were unable to 00:09:01  
get through to him. And despite their needs in the middle of a large crowd 00:09:05  
outside the home, there lay a paralyzed man with no way of getting  
through on his own. That is. So what happens next? Let's read on and 00:09:15  
behold, some men were bringing on a bed, a man who was paralyzed and  
they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no  
way to bring him in because of the crowd. They went up on the roof and 00:09:29  
let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.  
So I think the main point here is that sometimes we have to get really 00:09:37  
creative and reaching people for Christ. Isn't that right? Church. So for 00:09:43  
these four men, they refuse to take no for an answer with their paralyzed  
friend. And they took up his bed on top of the house. And instead of 00:09:50  
going through the front door, which would be very customary, even today,  
they decided to go up the stairs and lower him down through the roof. So 00:10:01  
I don't know I don't know if you guys know this, but houses and roofs  
especially are constructed a little bit differently than they were back then.  
All right. Here's actually a photo of an everyday home in Capernaum 00:10:08

## Michael Otto (continued)

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during the time of Jesus. All right. So you can see, you know, no stucco, 00:10:13  
no building materials. A little bit different. Right. But it's actually been 00:10:18  
suggested that the Greek word for tile might have also meant packed  
clay. Many roofs of the Galilean villages were overlain with clay. So much 00:10:26  
so that if reports of of of leaking of a hard rain were pretty common and  
sometimes grass even sprouted from the people's rooftops. And so the 00:10:39  
construction of homes were just a little bit different, obviously, than they  
were now. So you can imagine now the men, they were carrying their 00:10:44  
friend by the corner of his bed, they were they were hoisting them up  
there. And then they have this this job now of scraping, of digging 00:10:51  
through the roof. They're sweating probably like I am right now with all 00:10:56  
these lights up here. They're sweating. It's tiresome work, probably. But 00:11:00  
then it happens like people are starting to stare. Something's going on. 00:11:06  
The homeowners are probably like, what is happening on top of my 00:11:07  
home? Everyone there was probably shocked. And then the roof starts to 00:11:10  
crumble. They've made a hole in the roof. They've started to make a 00:11:14  
bigger hole in the roof. And you can imagine, like the Pharisees, they're 00:11:19  
trying to shield their eyes. They're they're probably questioning what's 00:11:22  
going on. The the homeowners, they're probably like, well, where's what 00:11:24  
am I going to do? I don't have insurance. Like, what's going on with that? 00:11:28  
And then, you know, I imagine Jesus, though, all those people are 00:11:30  
shocked and he's just grinning from from ear to ear because he gets to  
meet meet this person and and to be in their presence. So these men, 00:11:42  
they defy the odds and they burst into the scene and lower him at the  
feet of Jesus. So you're like, what does this have to do with being a 00:11:49  
village of people? Because these men, first and foremost, they were they 00:11:53

## Michael Otto (continued)

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were sacrificing much. So my first point is to truly be a village. It takes	00:11:58
sacrifice. To truly be a village, it takes sacrifice. It took sacrifice for these	00:12:03
men to give their time, probably some some dignity, you know, maybe a	
day's wages, a lot of courage to go up against how things should have	
been done and and to lower their friend down to meet Jesus. But isn't it.	00:12:22
Isn't that what faith is all about, though? It's about doing something that	00:12:22
is maybe against the order of how things are done and just hoping and	
putting your trust in someone. And in this instance, it being Jesus. And	00:12:32
here's Christ's reply. It says, And when he saw their faith, he said, Man,	00:12:37
your sins are forgiven you. Notice that it doesn't say when he saw his	00:12:42
faith that he forgave his sins. But but when he saw the faith of the four	00:12:47
men and the paralyzed man together collectively, did he forgive his sins?	
We can read that. This stirred up trouble. This stirred up trouble within	00:12:54
the Pharisees and and the teachers of the law there. But Jesus knew what	00:13:01
was happening. He he sensed in their hearts and he knew that they did	00:13:03
not see the faith of this village there. He was not there to just forgive the	00:13:10
man sins that day. But he was to. He was there. Jesus was there to heal	00:13:12
him physically as well. So it takes sacrifice to lead those to Jesus. And as	00:13:17
we know, he calls us to do the same as well. And so maybe that sacrifice	00:13:23
looks different for all of you guys. Maybe that's giving up a base of time	00:13:26
or or maybe that means giving up some energy, you know, that you could	
be scrolling Netflix or even just being uncomfortable, right? It's so hard	00:13:37
for us to want to be uncomfortable, but that's what it takes and that's	
what it takes to to be a village of people. So moving on, my second point	00:13:45
from this story is that it takes consistency to be a village. It takes	00:13:50
consistency to be a village. So another show of hands, who here realized	00:13:53

that after they, you know, graduated college and all that, that it actually takes quite a bit of effort to find community and to find friendships.

Anyone else feel that? Like I know I feel that fills out there. He feels that 00:14:03

that's that's what it's all about is that it's hard sometimes for us to connect with people. And I'm kind of jealous of our students sometimes 00:14:12

because they're in this bubble of time right now where they're surrounded by friendships, they're surrounded by bye relationships. But it 00:14:22

takes hard work for us to do that. But if you look to the book of Hebrews, 00:14:25

and if you look to the to the author of Hebrews, we can actually read that it's not something that's you know, it's an obligation. So here's what it 00:14:34

says here. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward 00:14:35

love and good deeds. Not giving up meeting together as some are in the 00:14:41

habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching. And that's Hebrews 10 24 through 25. So here's 00:14:49

something that we can really glean from this, is that even people back then it was common for them to lose momentum. It was common for them 00:14:59

to isolate themselves and to go against the community that that God has orchestrated for us. Something that I've learned recently is that this this 00:15:06

ideal for community and fellowship doesn't just come from us. It's 00:15:13

something that's been written on our hearts from the Trinity, from the very beginning, from the fellowship that God has with each with the 00:15:24

Trinity, God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that community. Out of that came us and our desire for that. And so we shouldn't be surprised that 00:15:27

we're wanting that. But we should. We we also shouldn't be surprised that 00:15:30

sometimes it's also difficult for us to attain that, right? So when we want 00:15:37

to shut ourselves away, it takes consistency to be a village. And that 00:15:42



## Michael Otto (continued)

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means showing up. Showing up when even when we don't want to. So 00:15:44

here's a quote from one of my favorite authors named Jenny Allen in her  
book Find Your People about Consistency. And here's the quote. Here's 00:15:54

what we do. We spend hours alone in our crowded, noisy screen lit 00:15:56

worlds. We invest only sporadic time with acquaintances, and then we 00:16:00

expect close friends to somehow appear in our busy lives. All right. And 00:16:09

so that's a real quote that I even struggle with today, Sunday. I don't know 00:16:14

if you guys know this, but it's the day that if any iPhone users out there  
on Sunday mornings what comes out it's the the screen usage or the  
phone usage report and I'm actually I'm proud to say I checked my you  
know, a little bit ago I'm down 10%. So I'm really I'm really proud of 00:16:28

myself. Thank you, Alan. But I know that sometimes when we look to this, 00:16:30

we can honestly, we feel so connected. But right now in our worlds, if we 00:16:37

think about it, we're so disconnected. It takes so much time and it takes 00:16:42

so much effort for us to like these men, for us to to give up and to to give  
things away, sacrifice and to be consistent with those around us. All right. 00:16:54

It takes consistency to to be in each other's lives. And for so many times, 00:16:55

you know, I'll look down on my calendar and I'll see that, you know, we're  
going to have a dinner at this person's house. We're going to be meeting 00:17:03

these folks at the zoo. But it means getting out of our comfort zones and 00:17:05

to be consistent in people's lives and to to speak about that, too. We have 00:17:14

amazing volunteers, some of which are here right now that gives so much  
of their time. They give so much of their talents, their finances, their 00:17:19

energy. They give so much on a day to day basis to go to students events, 00:17:25

to go to their plays, to show up in their lives when it's even more even  
difficult. Right? They do that on a weekly basis. And we are so, so 00:17:34

## Michael Otto (continued)

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thankful for them. But none of this, though none of this would even be possible. All church without the Holy Spirit. As as I hope you guys know. You see, like if we were to try to put this thing on every single week and our students and on our own efforts, it just wouldn't be possible. And so my third and final point is it takes the work of the Holy Spirit to be a village. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit to be a village. Let's go back to our main passage one final time. Later on in Luke five, it says, When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them. Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier to say your sins are forgiven you or to say rise and walk? But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the man who was paralyzed. I say to you, Go pick up your bed and go home. So you see. So Jesus, that day he'd been proving to the Pharisees who he truly was, that he was more than just a carpenter, that he was more than just Mary and Joseph son, that he was more than just a good teacher, but that he had the authority to heal and to even forgive people sins right there and right in their midst. The faith of these men led them to Christ, and we have the same opportunity, Colonial, to lead others close to our Redeemer in the same way. But it doesn't come from us, though. And it honestly, it shouldn't because, you know, we you know, we are sinful people and have a sinful nature. But, you know, I'll never remember reading in the Book of Acts what he said, what Jesus said to his apostles right before he ascended to heaven. And this is what he said to them in Acts one eight. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the Earth. You see, we have not been given a spirit of timidity. We have

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## Michael Otto (continued)

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not been given a spirit of fear and of hopelessness, but one where we are directly tied to the father. We are directly tied to a mission, a mission of mission that has come from God from the very beginning, throughout the Bible, throughout Scripture, and it's still residing with us today. God is still on the move in our in our city, in our in our right where we're at. We're making a big deal right now about a 2 to 3 mile radius and why how we can reach out to those around us and what that looks like, because the mission of God is still alive and well, even to this day. But really, what does that look like for you and for me and for us today in 2023, in Overland Park? What does that look like for for us to live out this mission, to be a village of people that that cares, that is consistent and sacrifices and all that? Maybe you don't have the strength or, you know, I don't either to carry someone to Jesus like these four men did. But I know that every single person here, you have gifts, you have abilities, you have gifts that God has given you to help bring the kingdom of God even closer today. And again, two weeks ago, Tammy, she preached on and I mentioned it earlier, that every student needs at least one adult in their lives to flourish and grow in their faith. I would say it takes not only adults, but it takes peers and student leaders to spur each other on in their faith as well. So this past January, I was tasked to come up with a strategy of reaching our our students in a 2 to 3 mile radius. And for here at Colonial, that would not only create opportunities for students to serve and to grow in their knowledge of the Lord, but to be reached by parents, student leaders and staff that just like these four men, were a village that sacrificed so much, even sleep sometimes so that they can be discipled. And in turn, these students can disciple other people. So here So I came

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## Michael Otto (continued)

up with this graphic that's going to be up here on the screen. That one 00:21:32  
that it's so important in the life of our of the of our student ministry. And 00:21:36  
here's the strategy and it comes from this story here. And you can read 00:21:39  
this up here. So coming straight from this this story that by having each 00:21:41  
of these four corners representing people in our student ministry, that we  
will be able to more effectively reach students and disciple them in our  
community. And but you know, this morning I didn't want to highlight 00:21:55  
those on my own. I actually want to bring up some special people here to 00:21:58  
the stage to talk about their involvement in our student ministry. I'm going 00:22:04  
to be bringing up Hannah, Mabie who's on our parent team, Tim Oliphant,  
who's one of our volunteers, Signe Boan, who's a student leader and Riley  
Roberts, who's on staff. So they're going to be chatting with you guys for 00:22:13  
a few minutes about this. Hello. Good morning. My name is Hannah Mabie 00:22:17  
And I'm up here this morning representing the parent portion of the  
graphic that Michael just showed you. I'm also a mother of three 00:22:28  
teenagers that are involved in our youth ministry. This fall, I will have two 00:22:34  
high schoolers and one middle schooler. And so it was only natural that 00:22:37  
we, my husband and I both felt led to engage ourselves in a volunteer role  
in our youth ministry. So the first group I'd like to talk about is the parent 00:22:46  
steering team, and that is an advisory council where a group of parents  
come together. We maybe meet quarterly at the lighthouse with our youth 00:22:56  
staff. We discuss policies or new concepts that are going to be rolling out 00:23:01  
for our youth as well as bring ideas to the table. And so one example of 00:23:09  
that was the beautiful choir that was here this morning worshiping. That 00:23:16  
was a parent led engagement where we had parents, a part of that  
steering team that said, Hey, the Holy Spirit has really put it on our hearts

## Michael Otto (continued)

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that we want to see our young people not only participating in worship at the lighthouse, but here on our stage in a more formal manner in our adult service. And so out of that steering council came something like this 00:23:33

Youth Sunday. That is a large table of people and there is room for more of you to join if you have served on our parent steering team this year. 00:23:39

Last, if you want to wave your hand up, we have lots of us in the room. 00:23:50

Come find us later if you'd like to find a way to engage with that further. 00:23:54

The second group I'd like to talk about is the Parent Connection class. 00:23:59

That's a new group here at Colonial that started last semester. Last semester, Christie West and Krista Bowen felt led to create that group. 00:24:03

Michael has talked this morning a lot about this generation being the loneliest generation. Well, who is raising that generation, right? It's us, the parents of all of these teenagers that are struggling with that. And so the parent connection class, if you have a middle schooler or a high schooler, we intentionally set that class at the 10:40 five hour because we know most likely you're dropping your kids off there and we'd love to see you upstairs. We're a friendly group. Come make a new friend. It's we're not an ownership group, so you can pop in a Sunday, pop out. It's a busy season for all of us, but we need to model to our middle schooler and high schoolers that making new friends, building relationships, building community is also on our radar as parents and feel free again to if you'd like to connect more with that it's on our group's page on our website of course, and feel free to ask any of us for further information. All right. 00:24:43

Hey, y'all. I am Signe Boan and I will be a junior at Heritage Christian Academy this year. I've attended for Colonial for about ten years, so I've grown up here at this church. I went to Sunday School with Mr. Menke 00:24:51

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## Michael Otto (continued)

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and I did with Adam Reck in Room 120 and I'm at the Lighthouse with Michael and Riley. Colonial Student Ministry has impacted my life 00:25:43

profoundly. I've been able to do so many cool things through this 00:25:46

church's youth programs such as Youth front camps, retreats, a canoe trip. And I recently just went on a mission trip to Colorado Springs. When 00:25:54

talking with my friends from other churches, I am constantly reminded how blessed I am to have such an amazing youth program here. A couple 00:26:07

of weeks ago I went to camp and was able to talk to a younger camper who shared with me that he's always wanted to go to church, but he didn't know where to go because his parents had never attended church. I immediately recommended Colonial to him because all of the people in 00:26:17

the youth group at the Lighthouse are just so welcoming and friendly and they just push you in your walk in faith. So well. Another one of the things 00:26:25

I have loved about Colonial is that they've always offered leadership programs. Some of these have been in serving in the nursery and pursue 00:26:32

team at the Lighthouse. For those of you that don't know, Pursuit Team is 00:26:37

a leadership program offered to the upperclassmen of the high school at the Lighthouse. We're able to do a lot of cool stuff. One of them being 00:26:44

planning fun events for the youth groups such as Fall Palooza and Bees. Another thing that they do is that they equip us with zero hour training, 00:26:52

which is taught me how to practically disciple in communities outside of my church. Proverbs 27:17 says that iron sharpens iron just as one man 00:27:01

sharpens another. I feel that Colonial student ministry has truly embodied 00:27:06

this first perfectly as they poured out into me and countless other students. So thank you for making colonial students strong. Howdy all. 00:27:14

I'm Tim Oliphant, and I'm up here to represent some of the youth 00:27:25

## Michael Otto (continued)

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volunteers that meet with the kids on Sundays and Wednesday nights.

Consistency is one of the things that I was asked to talk about, and 00:27:35

consistency is one of the things that Colonial Student Program offers

volunteers. We get to not only be with the kids and help minister to them, 00:27:44

but we also get to kind of follow them throughout the years. The seniors 00:27:53

that are here now, a lot of these seniors are here in the audience. Here 00:27:58

were sixth graders when I started working with them, and now they're

going on to be seniors and we'll be graduating soon. And I have seen 00:28:05

them grow from the little runts that they were to being young adults now.

And I can say that with authority because I was a sixth grader once and I 00:28:13

had my own shenanigans that I put my leaders through. For example, I 00:28:20

went on a youth activity, went to a house of one of our youth leaders and

found a cat that I wasn't so fond of. And as I was chasing it around the 00:28:30

house, I found this can of mace and I proceeded to trap the cat under the

bed and then unload the entire canister on that unfortunate creature,

which in effect, actually. In effect, it caused the entire house to have to be 00:28:47

evacuated and we could not go back in the house. And from what the 00:28:52

youth director told me many years later that, I mean, they couldn't go

back in for days. And so this was the kind of thing that my leaders had to 00:28:57

endure. And I think the Lord that they were consistent with me and that 00:29:02

they continued to pour their lives into me and not just tell me how to live,

but to show me how Christ lived and how it makes a difference in your

life. And so working with these kids or young adults now, students and 00:29:16

and having them show up on a regular basis on Sundays, on Wednesdays,

and going through the small group stuff and hearing their questions,

hearing their concerns, hearing their doubts, their their highs and their

## Michael Otto (continued)

lows and their buffalos is just an amazing thing to see. And the neat thing 00:29:42  
about it for me as a volunteer is I get to benefit from that too, because  
they asked me questions that sometimes I don't know the answer to. And 00:29:50  
so I've got to go home, dig into the word and figure out what to tell them  
next time when we meet. And so then I go and I divulge all the information 00:29:56  
that I get. And so they challenge me. I grow as a result, and then I, in turn, 00:30:01  
can challenge them to grow as well. And so it's a neat little cycle that we 00:30:08  
have. And then not only that, speaking of consistency, I've got to give 00:30:12  
props to the seniors who have consistently showed up over the years.  
They don't have to come on Wednesday nights. Now, I know when your 00:30:19  
parents and you're bringing your kids when they're younger, that's thank  
you for doing that. But now they show up on their own and they bring 00:30:26  
their friends and they're growing and they are leading now in the youth  
group. And to be a part of that, to see that is an absolute privilege of 00:30:34  
mine. And I wouldn't change it for the world. And my only regret, my only 00:30:38  
regret is that I wish I had more time to spend with them. I totally 00:30:58  
recommend it if you guys have a heart for for youth and to see them grow  
into to follow Jesus the rest of their lives. I mean, invest some time in 00:31:07  
their lives so did I. Oh, hi, everyone. My name is Riley Roberts, and I have 00:31:24  
the great joy of being the high school leader here at Overland Park  
Campus. And before that, actually, I date back all the way back to 1998. I 00:31:30  
just gave away my age. That's okay. And it's fine. I'm young and I grew up 00:31:36  
at Colonial and I was a student in the program. I did pursue a team like 00:31:44  
Sydney. I was a summer staffer and then became a volunteer when I 00:31:46  
graduated and then from college and now I am on youth staff. So I have 00:31:54  
almost fulfilled all of the roles yet to be the parent role. Don't worry, not 00:31:58



## Michael Otto (continued)

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coming anytime soon. And through all of these roles, just the Lord has 00:32:01  
taught me just different things about ministry and in particular ministry  
with youth. And when I entered on staff, like the thing on my heart was 00:32:09  
just like, okay, like, here's my roster students here who's who I am  
serving. And what I've come to find out is that it goes way beyond like the 00:32:18  
students that are on your roster, like I am partnering with the parents and  
making sure that they're equipped to lead their students as well as with  
the volunteers and empowering our students to then be discipling our  
students so then they can disciple their peers and then me reaching out  
to their friends. And so through throughout all of these different roles, I 00:32:41  
guess what I've just found out is that you just got to meet students where  
they're at. Michael Like nailed it on the head. Like this generation is so, so 00:32:49  
lonely and just battling depression and anxiety and identity is huge. Just 00:32:58  
trying to figure out who they are. And if they themselves aren't struggling 00:32:59  
with those things, I guarantee you, if I asked right now, every student  
would know at least one friend who's struggling with any one of those  
things. And so it's just like it is hard to be a believer in these schools. And 00:33:08  
so any time that I get together with a student, I'm just they're asking  
some of the tough questions about like, hey, like, tell me what this is like.  
Like I want to, like, come and meet you where you're at and hear your 00:33:21  
experiences. And then through that, just loving them with a lot of 00:33:26  
compassion, but then also bringing in the biblical truth of like, Hey, this is  
what the Bible has to say about this. And like, what does it look like to be 00:33:34  
a generation who's rooted in holiness rather than happiness? And in 00:33:39  
particular, like me and this girl who just graduated Sweet Libby LeBlanc.  
Like, we would get together every other week and just talk about stuff like 00:33:44

## Michael Otto (continued)

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this and just I would really get to know her and what it's like being a student at Spring Hill. And so it's just been such a joy and I'm just so 00:33:52  
thankful. And I will try to not cry too. But I think you go into this whether 00:33:55  
it's being a student leader or a parent or a volunteer, you go in expecting,  
okay, like what can I do for this ministry? But you realize like this ministry 00:34:08  
is doing just as much, if not more for you, Like the Lord is really growing  
you through it. And so it's just, yeah, it's such a treat to be here at 00:34:14  
Colonial and just be a part of a church where Student Strong is definitely  
a value that they that we embody. Thank you all so much. So wasn't 00:34:30  
wasn't that amazing? It warms my heart to see and hear so many of their 00:34:38  
stories and for you guys to hear them as well. But it truly does. It takes it 00:34:44  
takes Christ followers, sacrificing their time and talents and treasures and  
showing up and and being consistent, like they said, and and being  
influenced and spurred on by the Holy Spirit to further his kingdom. And 00:34:58  
and my prayer for all of us today is that we would look to the example of  
these four men. We would look to their example and their friend, because 00:35:03  
it really does truly take a village of people to not only to not only raise a  
child, but but to develop them spiritually as well. And and next week I'm 00:35:13  
excited. Pastor Mark, he's going to be going through a series and trying 00:35:15  
to unpack how to even be that in our neighborhood and what that looks  
like. So like I said this morning, you've wanted to or you've thought about 00:35:21  
it for a while and you're like, Well, I want to volunteer in some way. You 00:35:29  
know, there's so many different avenues for you to volunteer in our  
ministries and the children's ministry as well. And and that looks like, you 00:35:35  
know, a Friday night volunteer at the Lighthouse Wednesday night,  
Sunday mornings mentors, if you guys have any sort of gift or ability and

**Michael Otto (continued)**

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which I know as all of you guys you are able to to reach a young person  
for Christ and reach and reach those around you. So let me let me 00:35:52  
actually before that, I'll plug my email because it's got to have that so  
motto@ colonial. kc.org talk to me, talk to Riley, talk to any of us. We 00:35:58  
would love to direct you in that way. So let me pray. And then we're 00:36:03  
actually going to bring up the choir for one last song. Dear Heavenly 00:36:09  
Father, we thank you so much for how you have met us, how you have  
loved us, how you have equipped us to further your kingdom, Father. And 00:36:20  
we're thankful for the example of the four men of the friend Lord, as we  
seek to continue that and to live that out on a daily basis with people that  
we know. Lord was thankful so much and we thank you for this service. 00:36:31  
We thank you for those for the so many people that put this together 00:36:34  
today. And God, we know that you're working. We know that you're 00:36:39  
moving and continue to do so in the lives of our students. It's your name 00:36:44  
we pray. Amen. 00:36:45