



Genfest 2024, Brazil



2024 Impact Report



Youth Center North America

YCNA (Youth Center for North America) fosters opportunities for young people to come together and build community. Through holistic activities and programs, YCNA helps young adults grow in both human and spiritual dimensions.

Vision: A united world where fraternity is lived among all people.

Mission: To inspire and encourage young people from diverse backgrounds to work toward and live for a more united world.

The impact remains immeasurable and real!



Genfest 2024

Genfest 2024 was an event of testimonies and entertainment in Aparecida, Brazil with 4,000 young people from 50 countries and a live streaming linking 120 nations from all over the world.

In July 2024, 30 young adults attended from various parts of North America: Texas, Florida, Montreal & Quebec & Saskatoon Canada, California, New Jersey, New York, Illinois, Maryland.

Phase 1 - Volunteering at the Fazenda da Esperanca in Guaranciquetã.

Phase 2 – 2 days of celebration: songs, experiences, mimes, proposals.

Phase 3 – United World Communities.

Comments:

“It was amazing, and I learned a lot! I heard inspiring stories of how young adults are sparking change in their communities. The workshops **challenged us to brainstorm solutions** to social, political, economical and ecological issues within our countries and around the world. Specifically, the talks on sustainability goals and the fast fashion revolution has made me **reflect on the ways I can make changes** to my personal and work life that I plan to implement when I return home.”





“Being surrounded by people who aim to make a change in the world is very inspiring. It makes me feel **empowered** to do something as well back in my city/reality. We are reminded that **there is always hope.**”

“Genfest was really important to me as it really helped me **see beyond myself and care for others.** This Genfest helped me realize how everyone wants and deserves to be loved, and **I am called to love and care for my neighbor.** The Genfest helped me understand that **simply caring for others is my daily vocation.**”

“I still talk a lot about my experiences especially about volunteering in the favelas. It deeply humbles me to this day.

I felt so lucky that we had the privilege of sitting down with these families, engaging in heartfelt conversations about their living conditions. The insights I gained into their daily struggles were profound.”

“At Mariapolis Ginetta at the Post GenFest, it was incredibly inspiring to see the impact Ginetta had on the country and the people who were still living the Focolare spirituality because she had such a profound impact on them. Her courage to go to Brazil and share the ideal with the power of the Holy Spirit keeps me **motivated to live like Ginetta.**”

Gen Unit

Two gen boys returned from Genfest 2024, came together and decided they wanted to have a gen unit group that meets regularly. Others jumped on board and a small group (from Canada & the US) started meeting. They are committed to journeying together to help them grow spiritually and humanly. They engage in discussions and reflections on spirituality and leadership, virtually and in person.

A few months later they brought their friends together locally to tell them about the Focolare spirituality. Now they too meet regularly.



Growth and Leadership

The Infinite Mindset (TIM) is a program of personal growth and leadership that encourages a broader, long-term perspective. It enables us to view life's challenges and opportunities through a more expansive lens, focusing on sustainable goals and enduring objectives rather than short-term achievements. Being open to learning and growth makes a powerful impact on the person themselves and those around them.



For example:

One person felt the desire to be **baptized** and was admitted into the process which led to the official baptism in his church.

Others have **grown in the belief that God loves them immensely** and learned to accept themselves as they are and in turn gained self-esteem. Some felt the courage to simply not give up and increase the good habits in their daily life, finding the strength to focus on taking better care of their physical health and simply fight the good battle another day.

Others decided to better themselves by attending **Focolare youth formation programs** offered in other countries.

Still, some found space for true inner **reflection about their calling from God**, unity and the importance of forgiveness.

Comments:

"Thank you for always picking me up. You're an angel on earth."

"I am so happy that we had that moment, I thank you for your experience you shared because it still helps me."

"Thank you for being understanding and supportive."

"That's what I needed to hear right now."

"You are truly a blessing from God, and I thank Him for using you to bring encouragement, strength, and love to others, including me. Your kindness and faith shine brightly, reminding me of God's immense care for all of us."

"...telling me things I don't want to hear but need to hear. That has not only provided me with wisdom and courage, but it has also reminded me of the importance of kindness and compassion in our world."

"...I hope to one day have the opportunity to pay it forward and make a difference in someone else's life."

Blessed Chiara Luce Badano prayer service

Seven young adults led the Chiara Luce Badano prayer service in October. We returned once again to reflect on Chiara's life, how she lived and the example she left behind. This year we also reflected on the life of the young blessed, Carlo Acutis.

Carlo was born in 1991 into an Italian family in London, England. He was a teenager who loved soccer and video games but had an extraordinary mission: to use the internet to spread faith. By age 15, Carlo had created a global online exhibition cataloging Eucharistic miracles, inspiring countless people worldwide. His deep devotion to the Eucharist shaped his life, attending daily Mass and Eucharistic adoration from age seven. Carlo also organized aid for the homeless at nine, embodying his belief in putting love into action. Carlo Acutis will be canonized on April 27, 2025 as the first millennial to be proclaimed a saint.



The participants of the prayer service were grateful for the chance to reflect on these 2 lives which can be models for everyone, but especially young people.

"Thank you for organizing all this! It was soooo beautiful and inspiring!!"

"Thanks for organizing that, I also learned a lot and led to lots of reflection :)"

Men's Retreat

YCNA hosted its first Men's Retreat in Mariapolis Luminosa.

The program focused on the Focolare theme "called and sent" and the Synodality Process: a changing church in a changing world.

Participants reflected on the meaning of the theme and concrete ways to put it into practice. Prayer and quiet time gave space for deepening a relationship with God while small groups enabled dialogue and an exchange of ideas.



Social Media

Some Gen have experienced the effects of social media in their lives with anxiety, a sense of wasted time, ...etc. They have also seen the effect it has on people around them and for that reason, they have decided to pause on using social media. As a result, they say they feel better in life, they can better tend to their tasks such as work, studies and building relationships. They feel freer, more at peace.



Service trip to Fazenda (Corpus Christi, TX), October 2025.

To date, more than 50 young adults have participated in the YCNA Leadership Program.

Watch:

[A Genfest reflection](#), by Nicky Piazza

[What does Leadership mean to you?](#)

[The rhetoric about migration is dehumanizing \(an experience at the Mexico & US border\)](#), by Josef Capacio & Noe Herrera

[Closeness that brings us together to work for unity and peace](#)

Partnerships

YCNA partners with...

[Lippold LLC](#) which hosts Gee Lippold as an experienced artist who focuses on teaching painting to school students and their parents.

[Movers R Us](#), a stress-free moving company that delivers quality service. "We make customer service our number one priority. We believe in treating your belongings as if they were our own. We believe in honesty and integrity."

[Landscape Media](#) which enables clearer vision, fosters deeper connection, and helps clients grow better and live fuller. "We exist to serve those around us as called by Jesus our savior. He is our passion and our purpose. We continually seek for a deeper vision of His unimaginably beautiful kingdom."

YCNA links - <https://linktr.ee/ycna>

We don't want finances to get in the way of a meaningful experience!