



BMA of Arkansas Youth Department

By Dan Carson, Director



The 2019-2020 associational year has been one full of twists and turns for all of us. We went into 2020 hopeful and with goals in light of a 2020 vision. Reality has been altogether different. However, we are happy to report that the work of the BMA of Arkansas Youth Department has continued in our mission to invest in those that are seeking to impact the next generation for Jesus Christ. Our mission remains the same — we exist to provide connections, continuing education and coaching for student ministry pastors and leaders.

One of the most exciting things that happened for your Youth Department this year was the addition of a podcast aimed at student ministry workers. Since February 2020, listeners have been able to download weekly episodes as hosts Dan Carson, Chris Vines and Micah Powell discuss student ministry topics for full-time, part-time, bi-vocational and volunteer student ministry workers. The podcast has featured interviews from a number of leaders in student ministry in addition to leaders in the Baptist Missionary Association. The podcast can be found at studentministrymatters.podbean.com or through all major podcasting apps. At the time of this report, 40 episodes have been released, with a total of 2,117 downloads. While Arkansas is where the bulk of listeners are found, the Student Ministry Matters podcast has downloads from France, Romania, Russia and all parts of the United States.

The BMA of Arkansas Youth Department is also continuing to bring student ministry leaders together through digital means. During the heavy pandemic months, we hosted Student Ministry Workers Digital Hangouts through Zoom. It provided an opportunity for us to gather and share some of our worries, frustrations and fears. During this year, the BMA of Arkansas Youth Department Facebook group became the Student Ministry Matters Community group. This tied more directly into our Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/StudentMinistryMatters) and website (www.StudentMinistryMatters.com). In our group, we grew from 213 members to 242

members. Our page is now followed by 321, compared to 227 in 2019. Our Twitter and Instagram accounts also saw growth. Twitter went from 73 to 81 followers and Instagram went from 131 to 166. We still have a small footprint on social media, but we continue to look for ways to see that grow. In 2020, we also established a YouTube channel to share the podcast, announcements from Student Ministry Matters and teaching videos. With only 24 subscribers, it is only in the beginning stages.

This year's Student Ministry Workers Retreat was heavily impacted by COVID-19. Due to a large amount of uncertainty, our leadership decided to host the event online. Those that participated had the opportunity to hear and interact with Chris Swain of Replicate ministries as he shared about discipleship in student ministry and worship with Riley Carson and Stuart Sowerbutts of Ouachita Baptist University. In addition, we had four breakout groups led by Joel Young, Chris Vines, Michael Schalk and Heidi Sorrells. I am so thankful for our people and their flexibility. While we didn't have the number of attendees from previous years, our featured speaker's talks are now available on YouTube.

We also had the opportunity to partner again with the Central Baptist College Youth Group Day in February. They have grown every year, and it is exciting to see the work that Justin Moore and his staff are doing with this event. They simply invite youth groups to come in for a time of fun, lunch and a basketball game. It isn't complicated, but the students attending are having a great time. I encourage you to have your student ministries participate. Contact the CBC admissions office for more information.

We continue to seek out ways to fulfill our mission to help student ministry pastors and leaders impact the next generation for Jesus. When gathering becomes more acceptable after COVID-19, we hope to push forward on more ways to provide connection, education and encouragement for our student ministry workers.

You can help us fulfill our mission by doing the following:

- **Pray for us.**
- **Give monthly to the BMA of Arkansas Youth Department.** We want to continue to expand our reach and ministry, but we can't do that alone. I am so appreciative of the churches that give on a regular basis to our ministry. They allow us to do all that we do. Consider joining our team. You can do that by mailing a check to BMA of Ark. Youth Department c/o Calvary Baptist Church, 1410 North Porter Road, Fayetteville, Ark. 72703.
- **Give a one-time gift.** If your church is unable to give monthly, consider sharing a one-time gift with the Youth Department. It was a one-time gift that gave us the courage to start our annual Student Ministry Workers Retreat.

- **Share about our ministry with your student ministry workers.** They may not know about our podcast, social media accounts or annual conference. We want to help them. It doesn't matter if they are paid or volunteer. Our heart beats to help them.