

## **The History of the Watertown Recreation & Outreach Center**

**Connecting Teens to the ROCK through the ROC**

CH3031: Senior Church History  
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You can't miss it. It dominates the Northeast corner of the main room in the small building. The several feet high and even longer painting strikes the onlooker with contrast. Dark and dreary hues swirl and plummet in confusion on the borders and left side. As the eyes scan to the right, the darkness and haze give way into bright and pleasant yellow light. The painting, entitled *Hope*, has an alternate name: *Passageway Into Heaven*. Karl Ylvisaker, a member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown, painted this work at the time of his mother's death. Thankful for his Savior God, the gift of eternal life, and for his mother, he crafted this picture that looks past the gloom and sorrow toward the sure and certain hope of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The picture *Hope* may also serve as a metaphor for the building where it hangs, because of the mission that takes place within the walls of the **ROC**, the Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center. Teenagers who walk through the doors of the ROC live in an often dark, stormy and confusing world filled with troubles and threats to both their physical and spiritual well being. Troubled home life, depression, bullying, ridicule, loneliness, drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, violence, suicide, not fitting in, sex, guilt, and pain (the list of the effects of sin and Satan's attacks could go on) are very real words to youths. The ROC offers bright and hope-filled contrast to the confusion and darkness teens often face.

The ROC is not the "bright side" of the picture because it is a safe environment, or because it is filled with recreational activities for teens to loose themselves in for a few hours, or because someone asks "how are you doing?" and really means it. All of these are true about the ROC, but the real reason it shines as a light of hope is because of the

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Mueller, Informal Interview at the ROC during operating hours, directed question, December 9, 2004.

ROC's purpose for existence, its mission. That mission is "to tell youth that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior from sins<sup>2</sup>," and "to lead them to their Savior and help them live for Him<sup>3</sup>." The Word of God, the good news about Christ unashamedly proclaimed is what makes the ROC a place of hope, offering the light of salvation.

Youth activity and gathering centers, both community-organized and even church-run are not uncommon. However, there is nothing else like the ROC in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. At the time of its origin in the minds of a few called workers from Watertown congregations and at its opening, the Watertown WELS Youth Center (the official name of the ROC according to its constitution)<sup>4</sup> was completely new and unique in the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>5</sup>

Three factors especially earn the ROC a reputation as new way to minister to teens. The first is the cooperation between (and one might add: the dedication of) the four Watertown WELS congregations (St. Mark's, St. John's, St. Luke's and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Churches) that has turned the idea of the Watertown WELS Youth Center into a reality. The second is that the ROC employs a full-time called worker who is able to dedicate his time solely to running the organization and ministering to the teens who attend it. The third factor unique to the ROC is that its facility is not adjoined to or located in direct proximity of any congregation's physical plant. The separate ROC building serves as a headquarters for the unique youth outreach that has developed through the vision of these four congregations and their leadership. These three

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<sup>2</sup> Youth Task Force, *Proposal to Congregations*, June 2, 2002, page 1.

<sup>3</sup> Joel Nelson and Tim Mueller, *The ROC: Making Connections to Christ* [article on line] (Living Bold A WELS Teen E-zine, accessed December 4, 2004); available from <http://www.wels.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?22617&collectionID=831&contentID=9835&shortcutID=7835>; Internet.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution Watertown WELS Youth Center, page 1.

<sup>5</sup> Mueller, interview, directed question, October 9, 2004.

distinctive facets provide a basic outline useful for tracing the events that led to the ROC and categorizing the many various components that combine to carry out the ROC's mission to proclaim Christ to youth:

- I. **The joint effort of the four Watertown WELS congregations.**  
(A synopsis of the early history of the ROC)
- II. **The full-time called director of the ROC.**  
(An overview of the administration of the ROC)
- III. **The ROC located at 321 South Water Street.**  
(An overview of the ministry that takes place at the ROC)



## I. The joint effort of the four Watertown WELS congregations.

Pinning down the dates and details for origins of the ROC is not an exact science. This statement is one that the men actually involved in the process that led to the formation of the Watertown WELS Youth Center will readily admit<sup>to</sup> when nearly six years separate the start of the ground work from the first anniversary of the ROC.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Jerry Kastens, Staff Minister at Trinity, credits the initial brainstorm of a youth center to Pastor Mike Jensen (St. Mark's).<sup>7</sup> Pastor Jensen strongly hesitates to claim any credit for the idea, because as he stresses, the ROC was truly the product of joint effort and cooperation between the congregations and their leadership.<sup>8</sup>

When pressed, Pastor Jensen will disclose that shortly after he arrived in Watertown, sometime in January or February 1999, he noticed the need and opportunity for a youth center with outreach. Driving around town he noticed the lack of a community youth center and the large groups of teens congregated about on Main Street. One event that sticks out to him was when he witnessed how teens were quickly kicked out of a fast food restaurant located on Main Street as soon as they were done eating.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that each one of the four churches had called additional ministers facilitated the sharing of the idea of a jointly operated youth center. Pastors Mark Gartner (St. Luke's), Mike Jensen (St. Mark's), Rodney Warnecke (St. John's), Richard Warnecke (WELS Kingdom Workers) and Staff Minister Jerry Kastens (Trinity) all arrived in Watertown about within a year of each other. Since they were all new to

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<sup>6</sup> Mike Jensen, phone interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Jerry Kastens, phone interview, directed question, December 11, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Jensen, interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

-serving their respective churches, there wasn't the opportunity for the devil wrought stigma of "we can't work with *them*."<sup>10</sup>

Jerry Kastens especially recalls talking about the concept of a youth center with Pastor Jensen and the others after the Masonic Temple building was vacated. The idea was brought up more formally while walking down Main Street on the way to dinner during a Pastor's conference in the spring of 2000. The Every list of major events found in the documents produced by men laying the ground work for the center simply lists the origins of the ROC in a manner similar to this: "1999—Ministers and members of four Lutheran churches, St. John, St. Luke, St. Mark, and Trinity, begin informally discussing the concept of a youth center."<sup>11</sup>

Eventually these informal discussions culminated in Pastor Jensen drafting a proposal ~~of~~ behalf of the congregations for a grant from the Wisconsin Synod to explore the feasibility of such a project. On September 28, 2000, he filed the proposal. By November, the congregations were awarded a Synodical Council Outreach Opportunity grant in the amount of \$40,000.<sup>12</sup> The grant was meant for seed money to fund the "feasibility and developmental study of such a youth ministry center." The grant came with no strings attached, not even requiring the congregations to actually found or operate a center.<sup>13</sup>

The Outreach grant led to formal action on the part of the congregations that would result in the formation of a committee to carry out the feasibility study of a youth

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Jerry Kastens and Tim Mueller, *The History of the Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center*, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Jensen, interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Jensen, *Proposal for formal feasibility study of a WELS Youth Ministry Center presented to the congregations of St. Luke, St. John, St. Mark and Trinity*, (St. Mark's version) January 2001, page 1.

ministry center. The establishment of a committee constituted the first phase of working towards a youth center. Due to the nature of the joint effort of the congregations, each separate voters' assembly of the four churches had to authorize the authority to form a committee (as was the case with all other actions that would be taken in establishing the youth center). The proposal also stated one of the goals is for the task force to bring a youth center pilot project proposal before the voters of the congregations at a later date. The formation of a task force did not commit the congregations to any action.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of January of 2001, all four congregations passed the proposal and officially formed the Watertown WELS Youth Ministry Task Force. Each congregation contributed one called worker and one layperson to the task force. The authority of the committee was limited to receiving and dispersing grant money and bringing regular reports to the congregations.<sup>15</sup> The task force's charge was to address questions "about the purpose, mission, philosophy, feasibility and initial funding of such a center for high school age youth."<sup>16</sup>

The initial task force consisted of Pastor Rodney Warnecke and Mr. Don Bartz from St. John's, Pastor Mike Jensen and Mr. Jim Huhn from St. Mark's, Pastor Mark Gartner from St. Luke's and Staff Minister Jerry Kastens and Mr. Stan Tonn from Trinity. The group met monthly, and at times bi-monthly. In April of 2001, the task force hired Mr. Rick Bates, a member of St. Paul's Lake Mills as a consultant. Mr. Bates helped the task force gather demographic, survey information from teens, and input from the Watertown Chief of Police regarding the current trends for juvenile arrest. During the spring and summer months the task force worked on developing a mission statement with

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Kastens, *Siebert Lutheran Foundation Grant Application*, page 2.

objectives, an operation and funding plan, a staffing plan, budget and time table for the implementation of a youth center.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 2001, the task force presented to the congregations the information they had gathered and what the committee had accomplished. The report presented the need and rationale for the youth center. The following excerpts are noteworthy:

Our area WELS congregations spend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to provide an excellent preK to grade 8 Christian education to our youth. There is a huge gap for the teenagers during the high school years. As many as 40% of our teenagers become inactive when they become teenagers. Until recently, very little has been done to assist the teenagers who attend Watertown Public High School. There is a need to do more work in the area of teen ministry.

Anyone who has visited Watertown will tell you that there is a need for a place where the teenagers can gather. They just “hang” on Main Street. For the love of Christ and the love of the souls of these young people, Christian adults need to reach out and minister to these young people. The WELS congregations which are so predominant in this community, need to let the Gospel be a dominate force, especially among this city’s teenagers.

A teen center can provide the platform for outreach so that youth are able to hear the Gospel through Bible study, counseling, interaction with called and volunteer staff.<sup>18</sup>

As the quote above indicates, the primary focus of the center was for the retention of youth from the four WELS congregations, although the idea that the center serve for outreach was always present.<sup>19</sup>

In order to meet the needs they outlined, the task force presented this mission statement and objectives:

The Watertown Lutheran Youth Center exists to tell teenagers that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior from sins.

To accomplish this the Watertown Youth Center will—

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<sup>17</sup> Youth Center Task Force, *Report—Watertown Area Lutheran Youth Center*, October 31, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> Kastens, phone interview, directed question, December 11, 2004.



1. Offer all teenagers in Watertown a place where youth can gather to socialize and interact with other teenagers and counsel with Christian adults.
2. Offer teenagers a positive environment for recreation, Bible study, worship, service opportunities, and fellowship.
3. Provide avenues for connecting teenagers to active membership in a WELS congregation.

A result of the report of the committee, the congregations approved a recommendation to move forward with *the planning* for implementing the youth center.

In October of 2001, the Local Living Water chapter of WELS Kingdom Workers was organized in the Watertown area.<sup>20</sup> At the December meeting of the Watertown WELS Youth Ministry Task Force, Mr. Don Bartz reported that the Living Water chapter had agreed to support the center for two years.<sup>21</sup> The support of WELS Kingdom Workers has been important in the funding of the ROC. All donations to the ROC are funneled through WELS Kingdom Workers, where they are matched 25 cents on the dollar. In October of 2002, the Watertown WELS Youth Center Task Force asked the Living Water chapter to appoint a representative to the task force meetings.<sup>22</sup>

In January, 2002, the Watertown WELS Youth Ministry Task Force presented another report to the congregations along with two proposed resolutions. The committee reported that Chairman Don Bartz was leading an effort to search for a suitable rental property in the downtown area that could serve as a center. The task force also announced that “Attorney Andy Griggs has agreed to assist in developing a charter for governing and ownership of the youth center.” The report included two assumptions for developing a charter and running a youth center as a federation. These consisted of a

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<sup>20</sup> Kastens and Mueller, *History*, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Watertown WELS Youth Ministry Task Force (Secretary Absent, author not listed), *Minutes of meeting held Thursda, Dec. 20, 2001*.

<sup>22</sup> Kastens and Mueller, *History*, p.1.

governing board consisting of two delegates from each congregation (with a called worker from each congregation allowed to attend in an ex officio capacity) and a formula for determining congregational budgetary amounts.<sup>23</sup>

The two resolutions asked that the committee be granted “permission to apply for non profit status (501-c-3)” and that the committee “develop a constitution and by-laws for congregation approval at a later date.” The non profit tax status was especially an item of importance since it would allow the committee to pursue grants from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, Aid Association for Lutherans, and Lutheran Brotherhood to provide funding for the youth center.<sup>24</sup> Although these recommendations were significant moves toward the establishment of a youth center, there was still a long way to go as the report carefully stated:

This request is another step toward establishing a youth center. The committee is not seeking permission to spend money. Final approval for the project is still several months away. Once the questions about grant availability have been resolved, a proposal that includes an operating budget, plan of operation, and site will be presented for approval to each congregation.<sup>25</sup>

The resolutions of the January 2002 report were passed by Trinity, St. Luke’s and St. John’s by the end of the month.<sup>26</sup> However, St. Mark’s was not able to pass the proposals until their annual meeting on February 18, 2002. Although the joint effort of the congregations brought great blessings, the process of needing to wait for each voters’ assembly to meet could certainly also provide frustrations. In the case of the January 2002 resolutions, the committee missed

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<sup>23</sup> Watertown WELS Ministry Task Force, *January 2002 Progress Report and Recommendation*, January 7, 2002, pages 1-2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, page 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, page 1.

<sup>26</sup> Stan Tonn, Secretary, *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, January 28, 2002.

the Siebert Lutheran foundation grant deadline of March 1<sup>st</sup> and had to wait until June 1<sup>st</sup> for the next grant cycle.<sup>27</sup>

Through the next months of 2002 and for the remainder of its existence, the Watertown WELS Youth Center Committee would (among other things) especially focus on two areas. The first was searching for and applying for grants to help with the establishing of the youth center program and minimize congregational budgetary allotments initially. The second was the ongoing search for a workable and reasonably priced site to rent in the downtown area. Chairman Don Bartz continued to lead the search for the site, contacting owners of buildings the committee had viewed.<sup>28</sup>

During January and February a number of options for a promotional name for the center were discussed. Possibilities included: “Edge, Rock, Youth Center, C-Squared, with an official business name of Watertown Lutheran Youth Center.”<sup>29</sup> At the February 25, 2002, meeting, the task force decided on the name: “ROC (*Youth Recreation and Outreach Center*).<sup>30</sup> At the end of June, Pastor Jensen contacted Bruce Tieves at the Synod Administration Building in order to develop a logo. In July, the committee agreed to field test the logo options among congregation youth.<sup>31</sup> The final logo as it now appears was approved and purchased for \$250.00.<sup>32</sup>

The Watertown WELS Youth Center now had the name that rolls <sup>on</sup> of the tongues of scores of teenagers in Watertown. The committee provided its rationale for choosing the ROC during the final report of the task force to the congregations: “The ROC, short

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<sup>27</sup> Tonn, , *Minutes*, February 25, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

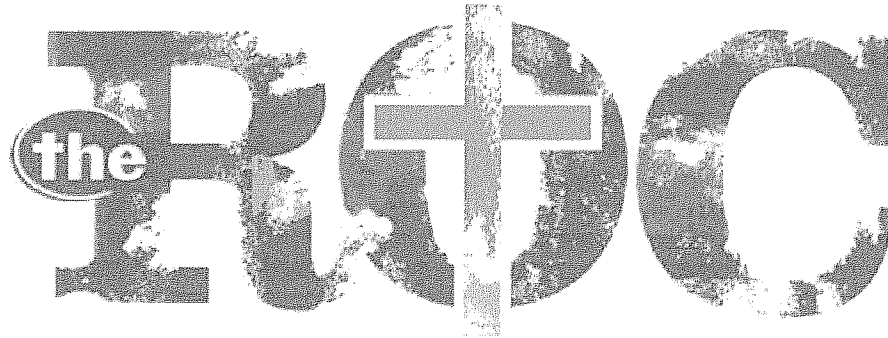
<sup>29</sup> Tonn, , *Minutes*, January 2, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Tonn, , *Minutes*, February 25, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, July 22, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, September 4, 2002.

for Recreational Outreach Center. The name was chosen for its connection to our community (The Rock River), its obvious Scriptural connection (God is our rock and refuge), its appeal to youth, and its brevity as a tool for promotion and recognition.”<sup>33</sup> Pertinent Scripture passages include: Psalms 18:2, 19:14, 71:3, 78:35, 89:26, 94:22, 95:1, Isaiah 26:4, 44:8.)<sup>34</sup> Psalm 18:2: “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”



Although the official name and logo are of interest in the development of the center, the work most essential to making the ROC a reality took place between April and September of 2002. During that period the committee worked on finalizing budget proposals, received a Siebert Lutheran foundation grant for \$25,000, and with the assistance of Attorney Andy Griggs drew up and approved the constitution and bylaws along with a joint agreement for the congregations. The Committee was nearly ready to present a proposal to the congregations to implement the plan for the ROC.<sup>35</sup>

During July and August of 2002, the Task force presented a report to the congregations. The report included the new name for the youth program, the sample logos, a tentative time table placing the dedication of the center in April 2003, and the

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<sup>33</sup> Jensen, *Youth Center Task Force Report to the Congregations*, July/August 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Mueller, *ROC slideshow presentation CD*, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, September 23, 2002.

constitution and bylaws. The report stated \$50,000 was on balance with WELS Kingdom Workers and that the Siebert grant was promising. Although they did not have a site for rental, the task force expressed their “confidence that the Lord would provide the right spot to begin at the right time.”<sup>36</sup>

By the September 4, 2002 meeting of the Watertown WELS task force, the group took the final steps to present before the congregations a proposal for a three year pilot of the ROC. Jerry Kastens was charged with gathering and updating the newly approved three year budget, amended copies of constitution and bylaws and delivering copies of the documents to the St. John’s that same week before their congregational meeting. Copies would also be sent to St. Mark’s and St. Luke’s, and given to Trinity.<sup>37</sup>

The proposal to the congregations included the updated information from the July/August report. It also included a series of questions with answers concerning commitment, budgetary commitment, benefits and purposes of the ROC. The report listed the commitments of the congregations and the formula for determining congregational support, (50% divided equal between congregations, remaining 50% divided in percentile according to communicant membership) along with the grants and a statement regarding the large amount of support given by community leaders.<sup>38</sup> The proposal also stipulated that the Watertown WELS Youth Task Force would be replaced by forming the board of directors (two delegates from each congregation).<sup>39</sup> The recommendation included these three resolutions to begin the ROC:

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<sup>36</sup> Jensen, *Youth Center Task Force Report to the Congregations*, July/August 2002.

<sup>37</sup> *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, September 4, 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Addenda for copy of St. Mark’s version of the Proposal/Recommendation to start the ROC.

<sup>39</sup> Jensen, *St. Mark’s Lutheran Church ROC Proposal/Recommendation*, November 21, December 16, 2002, p.1-4.

1. Be it resolved that (congregation name) officially join the WELS Watertown Recreational Outreach Center (The ROC).
2. Be it resolved that (congregation name) set and cap its budgetary commitment to the ROC at \$0 for 2003, \$(depending on congregation) for 2004 and \$(depending on congregation) for 2005.
3. Be it resolved that (congregation name) instruct its Church Council to appoint as its representatives two lay members to the ROC's board.

The September 23, 2002, task force minutes reported that St. John's approved the three year pilot.<sup>40</sup> By the end of October, Trinity also passed the resolution to participate in the pilot. St. Luke's however declined to join at their October meeting and although they expressed great interest, they left their intentions as "pending."<sup>41</sup> St. Luke's member and Living Water Chapter, WELS Kingdom worker representative to the task force reported at the December 23, 2002 meeting that "there was a possibility St. Luke's would reconsider supporting the ROC in the new year." The Task force directed Don Bartz to "contact St. Luke's and invite them to participate in the committee sessions as in an advisory capacity." Staff Minister Jerry Kastens would continue to supply St. Luke's with the minutes of the task force meetings. St. Mark's passed the resolution at their December 16, 2002 voters' meeting.<sup>42</sup> St. Luke's did reconsider their involvement in the ROC and at the January meeting of the transitional task force/ROC Board meeting, Pastor Mark Gartner reported St. Luke's gave the project their approval and would send delegates to the next meeting.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of Watertown WELS Youth Center Study Committee*, September 23, 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Jensen, *St. Mark's Lutheran Church ROC Proposal/Recommendation*, November 21, December 16, 2002, p.1-4.

<sup>42</sup> *Watertown Recreation Outreach Center for Youth Board Meeting Minutes*, December 23, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> *Watertown Recreation Outreach Center for Youth Committee Meeting Minutes*, January 27, 2003.

By the end of January 2003, the ROC had been approved. Although the actual center would not open until December 3, 2003, the three year pilot had begun (the pilot start date is figured from the first budgeted year 2003). By February 2003, the congregations had appointed their delegates and the Watertown Recreational and Outreach Center for Youth Board was seated. The board continued the ongoing work of the task force before it to work on securing grants.<sup>44</sup>

Their other major task was to secure a site for the pilot. Eventually the board centered its attention on a site at 208 West Main Street. The building was less than ideal. It was too small and it needed major improvements to bring it up to code. However, the board had little else to look at and so through June of 2003 they worked with the city to get permission through the Site Plan Committee, coordinated volunteer labor through Kingdom workers to clean up the site, and looked into remedial construction costs. It was during a City Planning Commission Public Hearing in May of 2003, that the Youth Task Force's confidence that the Lord would provide a site did not prove unfounded.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Larry Mistele offered the use of a building he co-owned on South Water Street for no charge. The Board would soon abandon the Main Street location and sign a working agreement with Mr. Mistele. The 321 South Water Street building (former A-Z Farm Center) would become the home of the Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center.<sup>46</sup> Only one key ingredient for the ROC to truly become a reality was still needed...

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<sup>44</sup> Jensen, *Call Cover Letter to Pastor Tim Mueller*, March 31, 2003, p.2.

<sup>45</sup> Jensen, *Youth Center Task Force Report to the Congregations*, July/August 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Kastens and Mueller, *History*, p.2.

## II. The full-time called director of the ROC.

Already at its first report to the congregations in 2001, the Watertown WELS Youth Ministry Task Force realized the need for the center to have a full-time called worker. “Staffing: One called full-time worker who will be assisted by the ministers of the four Watertown WELS congregations.”<sup>47</sup> The position of a full-time called director of the ROC sets it apart from other youth centers both church organized and community run. Most other centers rely completely on volunteer staff which often leads to problems with stability and consistency in the programs. It is extremely beneficial to have a “full-time person spearheading and operation like the ROC.”<sup>48</sup>

In January 2003, the youth task force reviewed and edited a position description for the director of the ROC in preparation to issue a divine call.<sup>49</sup> Some of the qualifications the task force and board listed include that the director be “a called minister of the gospel, a certified candidate for public ministry in the WELS.” Because the pilot consisted of ministering to youth, the document highlighted that the director “have experience and skills in providing Christian counseling to teenagers, experience and ability to organize and teach teen Bible study, and have an understanding of today’s youth and a love for teenagers who do not yet know the love of Jesus Christ.” Since the ROC was a unique joint ministry between four separate congregations, the task force also desired the director to “have a clear understanding of the mission of the church and the need for coordination and communication with the member congregations” and that “he

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<sup>47</sup> Youth Center Task Force, *Report—Watertown Area Lutheran Youth Center*, October 31, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Mueller, interview, directed question, October 9, 2004.

<sup>49</sup> *Watertown Recreation Outreach Center for Youth Committee Meeting Minutes*, January 27, 2003.



will have demonstrated skills in personal relations with teens and adults, leadership, communication, writing, and problem solving.”<sup>50</sup>

The position description also outlined the different groups with which the director would maintain relationships. In addition to his carrying out his call issued by the board and organizing, implementing, supervising and assisting the volunteer staff of the ROC, the director also serves the congregations “as a public relations director, consultant and resource person regarding programs and materials within the scope of this initiative,” and he serves “as consultant and resource person to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod regarding the initiative.”<sup>51</sup>

The position document also enumerates a number of general and specific responsibilities of the director. The director assists the volunteer staff to carry out their work, along with helping the board to manage programs, budgets, and policies. Another general responsibility of the director is to continue to place the vision of the ROC before “community, congregations, and the local chapter of WELS Kingdom Workers.” The specific responsibilities outline how some of the above responsibilities will be carried out, along with listing the different areas where the director will interact with and serve the youth.<sup>52</sup>

At the March meeting of the Watertown Recreational Outreach Center for Youth Board meeting, the Lord provided the board with the man who would fulfill the list of qualifications for a director. Pastor James Mattek presented a call list provided by Western Wisconsin District President Prah. The board added two additional names of staff ministers to the list of four pastors. “After several votes a unanimous ballot was

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<sup>50</sup> *Position Description Watertown WELS Youth Center Director.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

made for Pastor Tim Mueller from Medford.” Pastor Mike Jensen had prepared a draft of the call cover letter, which was filled in and sent to Pastor Mueller.<sup>53</sup> The call cover letter presented a background on the community, the mission of the ROC, an brief outline of the history of the initiative, a list of the different groups and grants the ROC drew support from, and a section on the present status and future prospects of the youth center.<sup>54</sup>

Mr. Don Bartz read an e-mail from Pastor Tim Mueller at the June 2, board meeting announcing that he had accepted the call. Pastor Mueller graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1984. He served for 15 years at Grace Lutheran in Waupun, Wisconsin. He then accepted a call to be an associate pastor at Immanuel Lutheran in Medford, Wisconsin, where he served for four years. Pastor Mueller and his wife Sue (Brandt) have five children, two who are still in high school.<sup>55</sup> Pastor Mueller notes that his role as father has provided a wealth of experience for interacting with teens. Pastor Mueller was installed as the director of the Watertown Recreation and Outreach center at a service held in the Luther Preparatory School chapel on September 28, 2003.<sup>56</sup>

If you ask the many youths who frequent the ROC about its director, they won't point you to the Position Description list drawn up by the task force. Instead, they will speak fondly of “PT” (short for Pastor Tim). They will tell you about a man who reflects his Savior's love, a man who welcomes them, makes it a point to speak to everyone who comes into the ROC, a man who asks them how they are doing and then asks again if

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<sup>53</sup> *Watertown Recreational Outreach Center for Youth Board Meeting*, March 31, 2003.

<sup>54</sup> Jensen, *Letter*, March 31, 2003, p.1-3.

<sup>55</sup> *The Installation Service of Pastor Tim Mueller Director of the Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center*, September 28, 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Mueller, interview, directed question, October 9, 2004.

they only answer fine. They will tell you that PT is not ashamed to speak to them about their behavior, about their sins, about their Savior in Christ Jesus, to speak to them about their spiritual life and to invite un-churched teens to church along with an offer to pick them up and take them if necessary.<sup>57</sup>

Describing a typical day at the ROC during the ROC's first annual meeting, Pastor Mueller describes some of his interaction with the teens: "As the teenagers arrive at the ROC we are sure to welcome them. I introduce myself, show any new ones around for a minute, and then let them get comfortable...Sometime during the night I make a point of talking with every teen at the ROC."<sup>58</sup> Pastor Mueller shows his concern and compassion for youth as he makes his rounds. He does certainly talk with every teen during the night. In fact, it nearly makes it impossible to interview him during operating hours of the ROC as he steps away for a moment here or there to speak with someone coming in the door, answering teens' questions or playing a game of pool or ping pong with ROC youth. The author of this paper notes the difficulty in trying to sustain a conversation with Pastor Mueller both to compliment him and illustrate the Spirit given love and concern he shows for the youth who visit the ROC.

Pastor Mueller's pastoral love and concern for souls is also something the teens take note of as well. During the Bible Study time on December 9, 2004, Pastor Mueller had read and discussed with the teens the angels' announcement of Christ's birth to the shepherds and how they responded in joy. Near the end of the discussion, one of the teens raised his hand and said: "PT, you're kind of like a shepherd, and we're your flock." This teenager didn't need to hear a word study that told him pastor means

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<sup>57</sup> Mueller, interview, December 9, 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Mueller, *2003 Annual Report*, February 23, 2004.

shepherd, he could grasp it from the way he had seen Pastor Mueller serve his Good Shepherd.

It's not just the teens who see Pastor Mueller's impact as director of the ROC. Mr. Jeff Grunholz, a volunteer who staffs the ROC about once every week, comments about changes he has seen in many of the teens: "It has so much to do with PT talking to them, sharing God's Word with them."<sup>59</sup> Mr. Randy Roeseler, Executive Director of the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce states this about the director of the Rock: "The number one success factor is the presence of a solid adult leader. This has always lacked in past teen sites. We have had very good volunteers in the community, but Pastor Tim's attitude and activity is what makes ROC a success. A teen site needs constant professional attention and he provides it."<sup>60</sup>

The Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center for Youth Board, comprised of two delegates from each congregation, one WELS Kingdom Worker representatives meets monthly at the ROC. Pastor Mueller keeps the Board informed through reports during the meetings. In addition to the Board and Pastor Mueller there are about 25 volunteers who are essential to the operation of the ROC. The volunteers are trained and organized by Pastor Mueller. One adult volunteer is always present supervising along with the director at all times the ROC is open. When the director is not able to be present, there are volunteer supervisors who staff the ROC along with a volunteer assistant.<sup>61</sup> The policy of the ROC regarding volunteers is "to have our volunteer staff come from our WELS churches. The reason for that is that an open staff policy could

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<sup>59</sup> Jeff Grunholz, informal interview, December 9, 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Randy Roeseler, E-mail answer to directed question, December 10, 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Mueller, *CD*, 2004.

open the door to many different kinds of philosophies and doctrines shared with the teens.”<sup>62</sup>

The official written rules of the ROC are very brief and to the point:

In the freedom of forgiveness,

(The ROC is) Only for Grades 7-12—Too old after summer after  
graduating from high school  
Saturday night, 6-9 p.m.—only for those in high school

No constant coming and going  
Must be in the building or gone far away  
Treat all people and equipment with great respect  
Please properly use the computers. When you chat, chat only with those  
you know, using clean language.<sup>63</sup>

“Constant coming and going” is prohibited to prevent teens from going out to smoke, or attempting to use the ROC as an alibi. The ROC carries out the policy of “in the building or gone very far away” out of a promise to the neighbors to prevent teens from congregating outside the building.<sup>64</sup> Painted on a wall at the ROC there is also a Gospel motivation, reminding that the reason for godly living is out of thanksgiving for the free forgiveness won by Christ. The statement reads:

At the ROC and Everywhere, In the freedom of forgiveness,  
through Christ, our ROCK&Redeemer, we show our faith and love:  
by using our thoughts, words and actions to please and glorify  
God, our Savior  
by being friendly and caring to everyone  
by being respectful and considerate to our neighbors around the  
ROC and everywhere  
by respecting the ROC property & keeping it neat and clean  
by sharing and also helping each other  
by respecting the ROC as smoke, drug and alcohol free.<sup>65</sup>

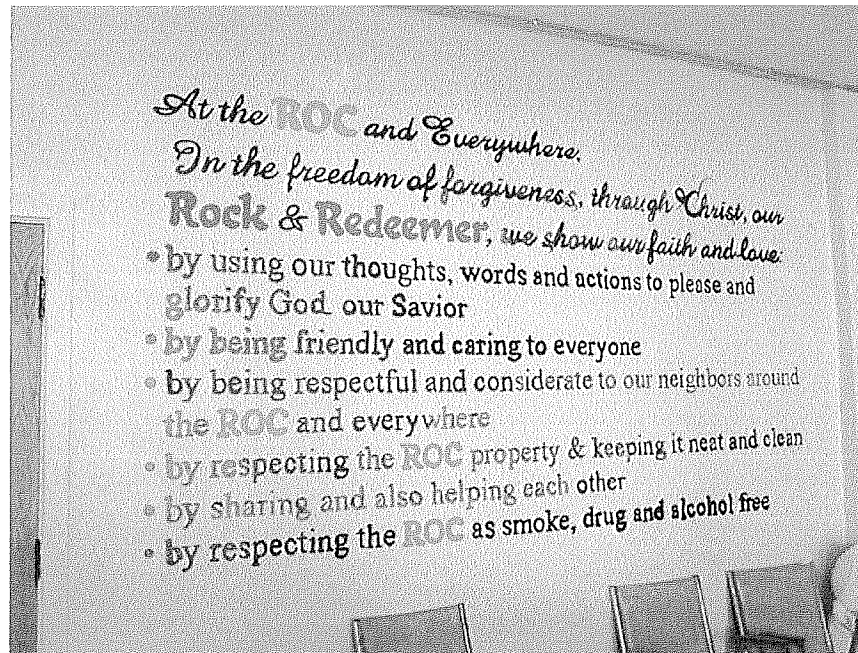
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<sup>62</sup> Mueller, *In regard to volunteer staff*, no date.

<sup>63</sup> Mueller, *RULES AT THE ROC*, no date.

<sup>64</sup> Mueller, interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Mueller, *CD*, 2004.



When someone must be disciplined, the ROC follows a three warning system. There is a warning and explanation for why the behavior is not acceptable, a second warning is issued if repeated, and then the person is asked to leave the ROC. However, before they leave, they are told that the staff of the ROC wants them to come back and talk to them. Before they are allowed to use the ROC again they need to speak with the staff. This allows an opportunity to use law and gospel, to lead the youth to repentance and share with them the good news of forgiveness through Jesus Christ and provide them with gospel motivation. This process involves being firm, yet loving at all times. It is necessary to send them away, but the staff does not want that to be the end of the relationship with the ROC.<sup>66</sup>

One final category belonging to the administration of the ROC is the area of funding the facility and ministry. The ROC draws its funding from four areas. There are

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<sup>66</sup> Mueller, interview, October 9, 2004.

special and individual gifts donated to the ROC by individuals and organizations. There are also special envelopes available at the four Watertown WELS congregations and during ROC presentations. The ROC also receives aid from grants. Examples in the history of the ROC are the Synodical Council Outreach Opportunity grant, the Siebert Lutheran Foundation grant, and grant money from the WELS Kingdom Workers. Pastor Mueller and the ROC board of directors continue to search for and apply to additional grants. The ROC also utilizes special fundraisers. These include teen run activities such as car washes at Wal-Mart, a brat booth at Glenn's Market, selling Emil's pizza and also adult fund raisers like a golf outing. The final area funding comes from the promised support of the four congregations according to the funding formula adopted by the voters' assemblies when the ROC was officially formed.<sup>67</sup> Congregational support was not needed in 2003 and 2004 due to the amount of grants and donations and may not be needed for 2005.<sup>68</sup>

### **III. The ROC located at 321 South Water Street.**

At the Watertown City Planning Commission Public hearing on May 12, 2003, (where the ROC board was seeking a conditional use permit for the possible site at 208 West Main<sup>69</sup>), Mr. Larry Mistele, part owner of the Empire Globe Corporation, offered the use of the building located at 321 South Water Street.<sup>70</sup> The building the ROC now

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Jensen, interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>69</sup> *Watertown Recreational Outreach Center for Youth Board Meeting Minutes*, March 31, 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Kastens and Mueller, *History*, p.2.

occupies was the single surviving building of the Empire Mill old yellow mill complex (later known as the Globe Mill and occupied by the A to Z Farm Center.<sup>71</sup>

Mr. Mistele offered the site rent free. By the end of July, the ROC board of directors approved a written working agreement with Mr. Larry Mistele.<sup>72</sup> The agreement reaffirms that the Empire-Globe Corporation “will allow the ROC to use the property rent free until an undetermined date.” The Empire-Globe also pledged to coordinate the outside painting of the building (a series of colorful murals painted by city volunteers) “at no expense to the ROC.” In return the ROC would bring the building up to code, pay for permits, clean the inside of the building, pay for utilities, pay for property tax, carry liability insurance, and “offer the use of the facility to all youth of the Watertown area.” The working agreement can be terminated at any time “upon mutual agreement of both parties, with 30 day notice by either party.” The agreement also allows the ROC to remove any improvements they pay for if the agreement is terminated.<sup>73</sup>

At the July 28 meeting of the ROC board, architect Mr. Don Frost presented plans for the building at 321 Water Street. (At the same meeting it was also reported the ROC board would have to go through the entire process of obtaining site permission from the city along with paying the fees again.)<sup>74</sup> The building required a large amount of work to be prepared for operation. Highlights from a list Pastor Mueller made include “build and insulating walls, fix roof leaks, replace overhanging plywood, install air and heating,

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<sup>71</sup> (Author not listed), *Globe Mill Fire 2001: 130-year-old Mill Building Burns*, [Historical Society Article on-line] (Watertown: Wisconsin: Watertown Historical Society, 2004, accessed 22 November 2004; available from <http://www.watertownhistory.org/Articles/GlobeMillFire.htm>; Internet.

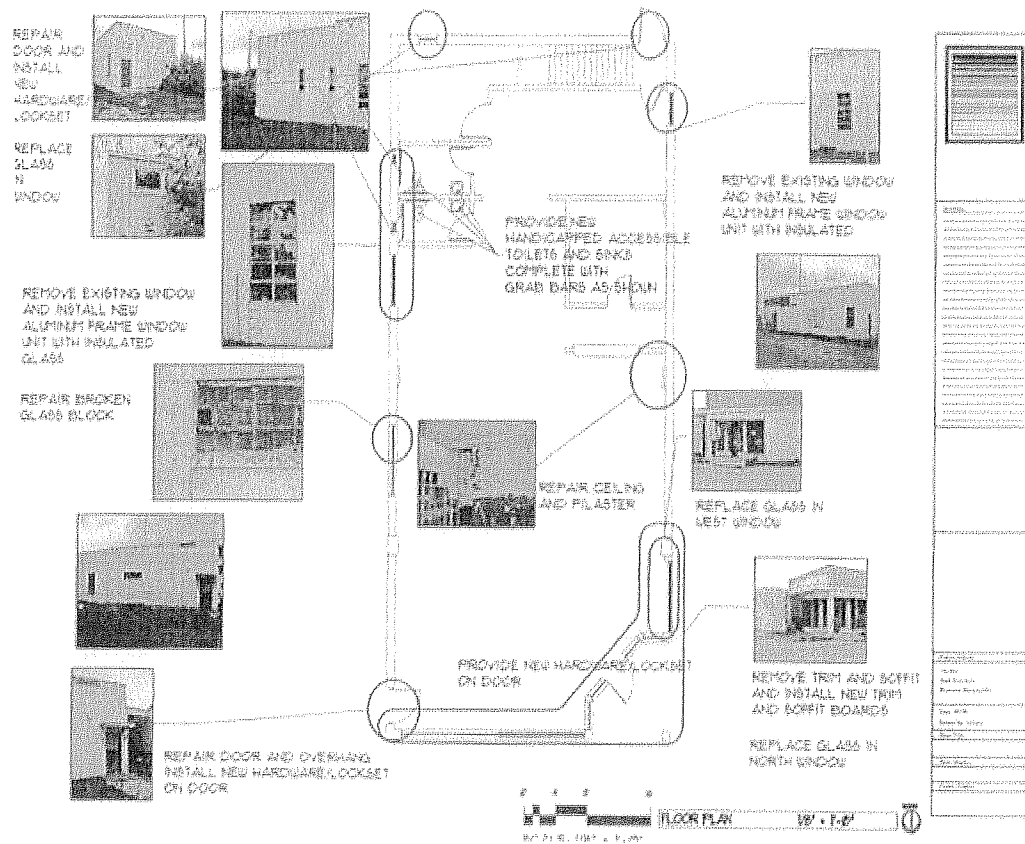
<sup>72</sup> *Watertown Recreational Outreach Center for Youth Board Meeting Minutes*, July 24, 2003.

<sup>73</sup> *Working Agreement for Property located at 321 South Water Street*, July 24, 2003.

<sup>74</sup> *Watertown Recreational Outreach Center for Youth Board Meeting Minutes*, July 24, 2003.



remove unused piping, cut window holes in office and install window, install carpet, scrape and paint walls, replace side front door, install front lighting and other lights.”<sup>75</sup> The work was all completed through donated help and materials.<sup>76</sup> The painting of the interior walls was completed by area youth through a Paint and Pizza Fest.<sup>77</sup> The floor plan with major needed improvements appears below.<sup>78</sup>



All was ready and the ROC opened its doors on December 3, 2003. On Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup> the ROC hosted a Grand Opening open house to help announce its presence in the community and allow anyone interested to get a look at what was going on at the

<sup>75</sup> Mueller, *My ROC Report*, September 29, 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Mueller, Informal Interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>77</sup> Mueller, *CD*, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

center. Several hundred people attended the Grand Opening. There were also “some dignitaries such as the mayor of Watertown – Mayor John David; Joel Nelson – WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship, Ron Meier from WELS Kingdom Workers, reporters from the Watertown Daily Times and Forward in Christ.” The ROC’s hours of operation as of December 2004 are Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday – 3-9 pm, and Friday 3-10 pm.<sup>79</sup>

There are many facets to the ministry conducted at the ROC. There are many opportunities for recreation free time at the facility. There are TVs, Computer with filtered internet, pool tables, table tennis, foosball, video games, chairs and couches for lounging, and a quiet room for study in the back. There are also weekly, monthly, and special events such as movie night, watch a movie followed by a Bible/Talk discussion critique of the movie, karaoke nights, and tournaments.<sup>80</sup>

The ROC provides a safe environment where the teens are welcomed and not threatened. This encourages teens from many different backgrounds, cultures, and appearances to attend the ROC. Many teens that do not fit the mainstream of Watertown High School find a place at the ROC. In addition to recreation, fellowship, and socializing, the youth of the ROC also participate in service projects organized by Pastor Mueller. Such projects have included planting flowers, helping with Riverfest and loading food onto trucks for the needy.<sup>81</sup>

Every night from 6-6:30, except Friday, Pastor Mueller conducts Bible/Talk Time. At that time the teens leave the computers, TVs and games to listen to announcements and participate in a discussion oriented Bible study. The teens are not forced to stay for

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<sup>79</sup> Mueller, *2003 Annual Report*, February 23, 2004.

<sup>80</sup> Mueller, Interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>81</sup> Mueller, Interview, December 9, 2004.

the study, they may leave the ROC at any time, but if they are in the building they gather for the study. Initially the Bible study time was at the end of the evening. It was moved up when it seemed many youths were leaving beforehand. Holding it during the middle of the evening the youths stay, and one can tell many enjoy this time greatly.<sup>82</sup>

The use and application of God's Word at the ROC is by no means limited to the Bible/Talk Time. Christian counseling is also offered by Pastor Mueller. Pastor Mueller finds countless opportunities to share his faith through conversations with the youth, talk while playing games with them, responding to questions about the Bible and religion and listening to their troubles. Pastor Mueller comments, "Lots of opportunities come up. You learned to not be ashamed or shy, but to just respond and bring it up, just in conversation."<sup>83</sup> One of the best times for sharing God's Word with teens comes when there is a need for discipline in a situation (for example when a teen curses or swears during a computer game). Pastor Mueller explains:

For example most of the opportunities to share solid Law and Gospel come from when we need to discipline. As we stand on the truth that forgiveness through Christ is free and is the motivation to change the heart to willingly please God, our dealing with the teens will be completely different than one who believes works is a means to salvation.<sup>84</sup>

Another opportunity for sharing God's Word with the teens of the ROC has come through Christ Connection, known as C-Squared. Originally started by St. Mark's, this is a religious release program that allows students at Watertown High School to come to a food, fellowship and Bible Study time held twice a month from 10-11:30 am. The four Watertown WELS congregations became involved in the program as a way to stay

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Mueller, informal interview, December 9, 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Mueller, *In regard to volunteer staff*, no date.

connected with the teenage members attending the high school. After the opening of the ROC, the meetings were held at the youth center. During the operation of the ROC the demographics for C-Squared have been drastically altered as un-churched ROC teens began attending the program through their connection at the center making it an excellent occasion for outreach.<sup>85</sup> In his November and December 2004, reports to the ROC board, Pastor Mueller noted that there were 17 and 20 ROC teens<sup>86 87</sup> attending C-Squared respectively. In December 2004, the pastors moved C-Squared from the ROC to a rotation of the four churches as a way to introduce the teens to the congregations in non-threatening manner.<sup>88</sup>

The ROC has not gone unnoticed in the Watertown Community. During the planning stages the downtown businesses and city authorities reacted positively toward the initiative. Mayor John David even sat in on a few of the youth task force meetings and showed support for the efforts.<sup>89</sup> In a letter of recommendation needed for the Siebert Lutheran Foundation grant application, the Mayor expressed his approval and support:

He told me about your plans for a youth center...I think that would be a great idea and I hope that you have a lot of success in trying to get this started...I think the commitment of you and your church would go a long way to making this venture a success... I think that the dedication that you have shown to this, the commitment of your church and the WELS synod is again to be applauded, and if there would be anything that I can do to help you, please let me know.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Kastens, interview, directed question, December 11, 2004.

<sup>86</sup> Mueller, *ROC Board Report by Pastor Tim Mueller*, November 22, 2004.

<sup>87</sup> Mueller, *ROC Board Report by Pastor Tim Mueller*, December 27, 2004 (draft).

<sup>88</sup> Jensen, interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Jensen, *Letter*, March 31, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> Mayor John David, letter to Don Bartz, March 6, 2002.

Mr. Randy Roeseler, Executive Director of the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce expressed similar views in his letter to Mr. Don Bartz. "The Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to know your group is looking into the matter of youth issues... A well run youth center can be a very positive factor in the lives of our young people. I wish you much success in your work to establish a youth center."<sup>91</sup>

Initially, many of the neighbors in the area of the youth center were not pleased with the idea. Some expressed their opposition very vocally both in newspaper editorials and at public hearings. However, after the ROC opened, many changed their stance. Pastor Mueller notes this in his annual report in February 2003. "All (the youth attending the ROC) have been well behaved, so much so that neighbors who were vehemently against the ROC are now for it and even drop of [sic] goodies every so often."<sup>92</sup> Even the neighbor who was the most outspoken publicly often brings treats for the teens of the ROC.<sup>93</sup>

A year after the ROC opened, voices in the community continue to praise what it is accomplishing. Mayor David says: "I believe that Pastor Mueller and his staff have done a great job... While it is a Christmas atmosphere they are not forced into it. It is also a safe place for teens... the ROC has also had a positive impact on the number of kids who could potentially be on the street."<sup>94</sup> Mr. Randy Roeseler comments,

At various meetings (and I have a lots [sic] of meetings) I have heard positive comments about the site and how it is run. Also, Business people feel that it does give young adults a good alternative to ganging

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<sup>91</sup> Randall L. Roeseler, letter to WELS Youth Center Task Force, Mr. Donovan Bartz, RE: Statement of Support, March 15, 2002.

<sup>92</sup> Mueller, *Annual*, February 23, 2004.

<sup>93</sup> Mueller, Interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>94</sup> Mayor John David, E-mail response to directed question, December 10, 2004.

out... After one year of operation, the ROC has made a positive impact on the community in many ways.<sup>95</sup>

The ROC has not only made an impression with the community and the teenagers, but also within the WELS. A number of congregations have contacted Pastor Mueller to learn more about the ROC as they explore their own youth outreach programs. As of December 2004 Pastor Mueller had spoken to pastors from King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wasilla, Alaska; St. Mark's in Green Bay, Wisconsin; Pastor Lucas Moldenhauer from Belle Plaine, Minnesota; and pastors from congregations in Milwaukee and Racine (he could not recall which pastors or churches).<sup>96</sup> Interest in pursuing a youth outreach like the ROC is not limited to only WELS congregations. First United Methodist Church of Fort Atkinson and St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Fort Atkinson are exploring a joint run youth center in Fort Atkinson.<sup>97</sup>

The ROC has certainly lived up to its name as an Outreach center. By the time of the first annual meeting in February 2004, over 200 different teens had visited the ROC.<sup>98</sup> By October 2004, that number had grown to over 500.<sup>99</sup> The ROC averages an attendance of 35-50 on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, with the Friday number even larger. On one Friday night 81 teens visited the ROC.<sup>100</sup> At least half of the teens who visit the ROC are un-churched. Pastor Mueller figures the amount is often close to 60-70%. To this point he comments: "I love the work. When else do you have the opportunity to get to know and work so many teens in so little a time. I have gotten to

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<sup>95</sup> Randy Roeseler, E-mail response to directed question, December 10, 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Mueller, E-mail response to directed question, December 10, 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Jackie Arndt, conversation, December 9, 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Mueller, *2003 Annual Report*, February 23, 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Mueller, Tim Mueller, Informal interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>100</sup> Mueller, *ROC slideshow presentation CD*, 2004.

know more teens and un-churched teens in a few months than as a (parish) pastor in five years.”<sup>101</sup>

The Lord has greatly blessed the ROC, its ministry is not without challenges. One of the challenges the ROC faces is connecting those un-churched teens to a congregation. This is especially difficult when there is little or no parental support. One ROC teen has commented to Pastor Mueller that she considers the ROC her church, where she gets God’s Word. Pastor Mueller evaluates this comment as both good and bad. It is good because it means the ROC is doing job of proclaiming the gospel. However, it presents a problem since the teens can only attend the ROC for 4-6 years. Therefore, Pastor Mueller is constantly inviting the un-churched teens to church, offering rides.<sup>102</sup> The goal of connecting the teens to a congregation to receive the means of grace has been the motivating factor in moving the C-Squared meetings from the ROC to the four congregations.<sup>103</sup>

Another challenge for the ROC is staffing the facility with volunteer supervisor assistants. Most of the volunteers are very active in their congregation, meaning they have other meetings and functions to attend. Besides the obvious issue of busy schedules, it is also important to not overwork the volunteers so that they become burnt out. Therefore, the ROC is constantly seeking a fresh supply of volunteer help from the congregations.<sup>104</sup>

The future of the ROC remains to be determined at the end of 2005, when the three year pilot comes to an end and the four Watertown WELS congregations evaluate

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<sup>101</sup> Mueller, Interview, October 9, 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Mueller, Interview, December 9, 2004.

<sup>103</sup> Jensen, Interview, directed question, December 12, 2004.

<sup>104</sup> Mueller, Interview, directed question, October 9, 2004.

the initiative. The issue that may make or break the continuation of the ROC is funding. Although the congregations have not yet had to support the ROC from their budgets, the reserve of grant money is running low. It takes about \$75,000 to operate the ROC. All four congregations have experienced problems with making their own budgets. In December, 2004, St. Mark's had to make the difficult decision to eliminate two teacher positions and one pastor. In this author's opinion, the best way to view the future of the ROC is with the optimism and confidence the Watertown Recreation and Outreach Center Board of Directors expressed when they extended the call to Pastor Mueller for three years with no guarantee of the project continuing:

As you consider the Call, you no doubt are faced with the question of the 3-year time period with no guarantees after that. Perhaps it would be helpful to view the pilot status the way we have. We see it in much the same way a mission board of our synod might view an exploratory mission call. We know the field is ripe. We have a larger nucleus and support system than any exploratory ever had. We have at least three years, possibly more, to see what kind of doors Christ will open. Trusting in Christ and faithfully using the people and resources He has given us, we are confident that this is one exploratory mission that take off in dramatic manner and become an ongoing ministry.<sup>105</sup>

May the Lord continue to bless this truly unique mission for the souls of the youth in Watertown.

**To God Alone Be the Glory**

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<sup>105</sup> Jensen, *Letter*, March 31, 2003, p.3.



## **Addenda**

### **Recommendation to the Churches (St. Mark's version)**

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
ROC Proposal / Recommendation

St. Mark's Church Council – November 21, 2002  
St. Mark's Voters Assembly – December 16, 2002



#### ***What is the ROC?***

The ROC is the Watertown WELS Recreational Outreach Center, a proposed joint teen ministry project of Watertown WELS congregations.

#### ***What is the purpose of the ROC?***

The ROC is organized to:

- a. Offer all teenagers in Watertown, Wisconsin, a place where youth can gather to socialize and interact with other teenagers and counsel with Christian adults.
- b. Offer teenagers a positive environment for recreation, Bible study, worship, service opportunities, and fellowship.
- c. Offer avenues for connecting teenagers to active membership in WELS congregation.

***What further benefits are there to the ROC?***

It has been said that the ROC can serve as the first step toward future joint projects between the Watertown WELS congregations. Our hope is that this may lead to further cooperative efforts to do ministry in an efficient and cost effective manner.

***St. Mark's Commitment to the 3-Year Pilot Project***

1. ***By joining the ROC what is St. Mark's overall commitment to this 3-year project?***
  - a. St. Mark's will commit to this project by offering its collective and individual prayers.
  - b. St. Mark's will commit to this project by encouraging its members to offer their time, talents and special offerings to the project.
  - c. St. Mark's will commit to this project by adding a line item to its budget to cover a portion of expenses at the ROC, if the need arises.
  - d. St. Mark's will supply two (2) members to the ROC's board. One of St. Mark's members on the board will serve as one of the Board's officers. *(Copies of the ROC's simple Constitution & Bylaws are available upon request.)*
2. ***What will be St. Mark's budgetary commitment to the ROC for 2003?***
  - a. \$0
  - b. Grant money covers the entire first year as we begin this pilot project.
3. ***What will be St. Mark's budgetary commitment to the ROC for 2004?***
  - a. \$13,050
  - b. As of the date of this report (11-21-02), this is a hard capped number; it cannot be altered or exceeded except by St. Mark's Voters Assembly.
  - c. **This is not a dollar amount that St. Mark's will definitely have to contribute from its budget.** Our budgetary contribution will most likely be smaller because of direct contribution to the ROC by individuals. Still, while working hard to seek individual donations, we would have to budget the \$13,050 as a **possible responsibility.**
4. ***What will be St. Mark's budgetary commitment to the ROC for 2005?***
  - a. \$14,200
  - b. Everything said under item 3.b & 3.c applies to this 2005 budgetary number as well.
5. ***By what formula was St. Mark's budgetary commitment figured?***
  - a. 50% of the ROC's budget was divided evenly among the current participations.

- b. The other 50% of the ROC's budget was divided based on communicant membership.
- c. This formula was devised to stress equal partnership in the ROC, while at the same time recognizing congregational size.
- d. When we realize that we have about double the number of members as the next largest participating congregation, the formula appears to be quite favorable to St. Mark's.

**6. *By joining the ROC now is St. Mark's "locked in" for the next three years? What if we come to a time when we just can't continue in our participation?***

- a. By joining St. Mark's is expressing its sincere commitment to participate in this 3-year pilot project.
- b. Our hope is that the ROC will continued to be viewed as an exciting opportunity to minister to the youth of our congregations and community, rather than being viewed as a woe to our budgets.
- c. Still, finally, a congregation can only do what God enables it to do. St. Mark's will, therefore, continue to faithfully review its entire ministry as well as the resources God gives us for ministry. Such regular review would include our ongoing ability to participate in the ROC. If at sometime during the 3-year pilot project St. Mark's prayerfully determines that it cannot continue in its budgetary support of the ROC, St. Mark's remains free to withdraw its membership and participation in the ROC.

**Other Area WELS Congregations'  
Commitment to the 3-Year Pilot Project**

***What are the other WELS congregations contributing?***

**1. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran**

- a. St. John's already in early October 2002 passed a resolution to join the ROC and participate in the 3-year pilot project.
- b. St. John's budgetary contributions for the 3-year pilot project –
  - i. 2003 = \$0
  - ii. 2004 = \$9,250
  - iii. 2005 = \$10,075

**2. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran**

- a. Trinity already in late October 2002 passed a resolution to join the ROC and participate in the 3-year pilot project.
- b. Trinity's budgetary contributions for the 3-year pilot project –
  - i. 2003 = \$0
  - ii. 2004 = \$6,900
  - iii. 2005 = \$7525

**3. St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran**

- a. At the present time St. Luke's participation is pending.

- b. St. Luke's continues to express great interest in the project and we are hopeful that this congregation will soon join us in this project.
- c. Because St. Luke's has not yet joined the ROC, all 2004 & 2005 budgetary numbers and congregational commitments have been figured based only on St. John's, St. Mark's and Trinity's participation.
  - i. 50% of budget divided evenly by the three congregations (33% each).
  - ii. 50% divided by communicant membership
    - 1. St. John's = 1427 communicants or 30%
    - 2. St. Mark's = 2500 communicants or 56%
    - 3. Trinity = 604 communicants or 14%
- d. If (when) St. Luke's joins, the numbers would change favorably for each congregation involved.

## **Additional WELS Commitments to the 3-Year Pilot Project**

### *What other WELS commitments are there to the ROC?*

#### **1. WELS Kingdom Workers (WKW)**

- a. Local Chapter
  - i. Living Waters Kingdom Workers Chapter has adopted the ROC as its premier project.
  - ii. The chapter is eager to promote and participate in the ROC.
- b. National Chapter
  - i. The national chapter of WKW will provide support by matching individual offerings and some grants.
  - ii. Through granting the national chapter has already contributed over \$15,000 to the ROC.
  - iii. The current rate of matching is 25 cents on the dollar.

#### **2. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)**

- a. Over two years ago the WELS granted us \$40,000 to proceed.
- b. Especially appealing to the synod was the idea of several WELS congregations working together to do youth ministry.
- c. It is hoped that the ROC may serve as a model for other WELS congregations to work together in youth ministry.

#### **3. Area WELS Congregations**

- a. Once the participating Watertown WELS congregations are on board and working, the ROC will approach other area WELS congregations about participating.
- b. Initial conversations with some of the area WELS congregations have been promising.
- c. Their participation would strengthen our base while decreasing each individual congregations budgetary commitment.

### **Other Support for the Project**

#### ***Is there any other support for the ROC?***

##### **1. Grants**

- a. Siebert Lutheran Foundation has already given us a \$25,000 grant for furnishings, etc.
- b. We are in the process of applying to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans (AAL & LB) for a grant. The application looks promising.
- c. Other grant opportunities seem possible. Many charitable organizations are very interested in granting money to projects that involve several congregations working together.

##### **2. Community Backing**

- a. Conversations with community leaders have been fruitful.
- b. Community leaders recognize the need for such a youth center and our unique opportunity to provide it.

### **Recommendations for St. Mark's Voters**

#### ***December 2002 Voters Meeting***

3. Be it resolved that St. Mark's Lutheran Church officially join the WELS Watertown Recreational Outreach Center (The ROC).
4. Be it resolved that St. Mark's set and cap its budgetary commitment to the ROC at \$0 for 2003, \$13,050 for 2004 and \$14,200 for 2005.
5. Be it resolved that St. Mark's instruct its Church Council to appoint as its representatives two lay members to the ROC's board.

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