



FAITH ASCENT  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2020



## THE MISSION

*Faith Ascent's mission is to reduce the number of teenagers abandoning the Christian worldview after high school and disengaging from the local church.*







## YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK IN 2020

Your generous support is changing lives. In 2020, your donations:

- Put on Base Camp St. Louis, despite COVID-19 restrictions
- Created Trail Head, an online space for discipleship and relationships
- Launched the creation of the Climbing Guide, a new publication we will offer for free to parents and churches



# BASE CAMP 2020

Unfortunately, Base Camp West had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. But we are thankful that God provided a new location for Base Camp St. Louis and we were able to modify the format and still hold it as a smaller day camp.

The majority of students who attended Base Camp this year attended for the very first time, so we are thankful we could offer this important training experience for these students.

Base Camp was a success thanks to the efforts of speakers, volunteers, and sponsors!





# BASE CAMP 2020 AT A GLANCE

43  
**students ("Climbers")**

7  
**small group leaders**

13  
**speakers**

16  
**sessions/topics**





# SARA'S STORY: SPOTLIGHT ON BASE CAMP

*\*name changed*

Sixteen-year-old Sara\* attended Base Camp for the first time this year hoping to gain more knowledge on challenging topics. Dr. Swamidass was the one of her favorite speakers. This year, Dr. Swamidass spoke on the resurrection of Christ and how this core message brings unity to the church, in spite of diverse thoughts. He also opened up the floor for Q&A, where various opinions were freely voiced. Sara didn't agree with everything that Dr. Swamidass said, but she welcomed the opportunity to think through why she disagreed. This format challenged her to dig deeper into the reasons for her own convictions.

Another session that was important to Sara was taught by Mr. Keating. He spoke about identity and highlighted issues from the gender identity crisis flooding our world. This session and topic hit "close to home" for Sara as she has been trying to engage with a friend whose views on gender identity vary widely from hers.

**"I have often struggled in knowing how to talk in such a way that helps her understand my point of view."**

Sara felt these two sessions helped equip her for conversations with this friend.

**"My desire is to have more opportunities to discuss it with her... to learn each other's perspective and to gain knowledge."**

Since Base Camp, Sara has felt a positive change in herself. Though she left Base Camp with even more questions than she carried in, she feels confident that she has tools to help discern the truth and engage with others who disagree with her.



*Dr. Swamidass & Mr. Keating, 2020.*

**Thank you for supporting Base Camp and providing youth like Sara with the opportunity to wrestle with hard questions and prepare to engage with others on challenging topics.**

# OTHER MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

## TRAIL HEAD

After Base Camp this year, we launched Trail Head, a brand new online platform for Climbers to connect and have theological conversations. It's also a place for students to pray for each other and honestly share the doubts they are wrestling through. Students are logging onto Trail Head regularly and using it as an outlet to connect with peers and staff and ask tough theological questions.

## CLIMBING GUIDE

In October, we began writing the Faith Ascent Climbing Guide, a discussion-based resource on Christian doctrine. We will offer this PDF for free to equip parents, small groups, youth groups, and Bible studies to engage with teenagers in discipleship and theological training. In early 2021, we will publish the Faith Ascent Climbing Guide as a free resource to be used by those on the front lines of relational student ministry.

## CHURCHES & SEMINARS

Faith Ascent desires to walk alongside the local church and serve as a resource. In addition to Climbing Guide, we have followed up with every local Climber's home church to make sure students are receiving follow up after Base Camp. We have provided apologetics teaching to local youth groups. We have also provided Base Camp lectures and several webinars for free online so people can continue learning at home!



# WHERE WOULD YOU GO IN A CRISIS? SPOTLIGHT ON TRAIL HEAD

**A 2019 study found that Gen Z (compared to other generations) is most likely to feel their online community better understands their passions than family or friends and most likely to enjoy the company of an online community more than those around them in real life.**

Trail Head (our private online forum just for Climbers) has a variety of topical chat threads like Base Camp topics, faith questions, comparative world religions, faith and culture, and scripture discussion.

**There is also a conversation thread called the Crisis Hotline.**

Several Climbers have written in to the Crisis Hotline for prayer, advice, and support. Out of respect for the students, we won't share too many details, but a Climber recently wrote into the Crisis Hotline and shared about a conflict with their parents, personal self esteem, and a mental health crisis.

**Within hours, before Faith Ascent staff could respond, three other Climbers responded with thoughtfully written paragraphs of prayers, encouragement, and stories from their own experiences! It's beautiful to see young people using Trail Head to support each other through challenging circumstances.**



We are excited to see teens supporting teens, that this online forum is a place of authentic community, and that the friendships formed and questions asked during Base Camp can continue year round.

We are thankful that God is using this outlet as a way for ongoing ministry and discipleship, even in this year of COVID-19 social distancing!



# FINANCES AT A GLANCE

## 2020 BUDGET

\$346,339.47

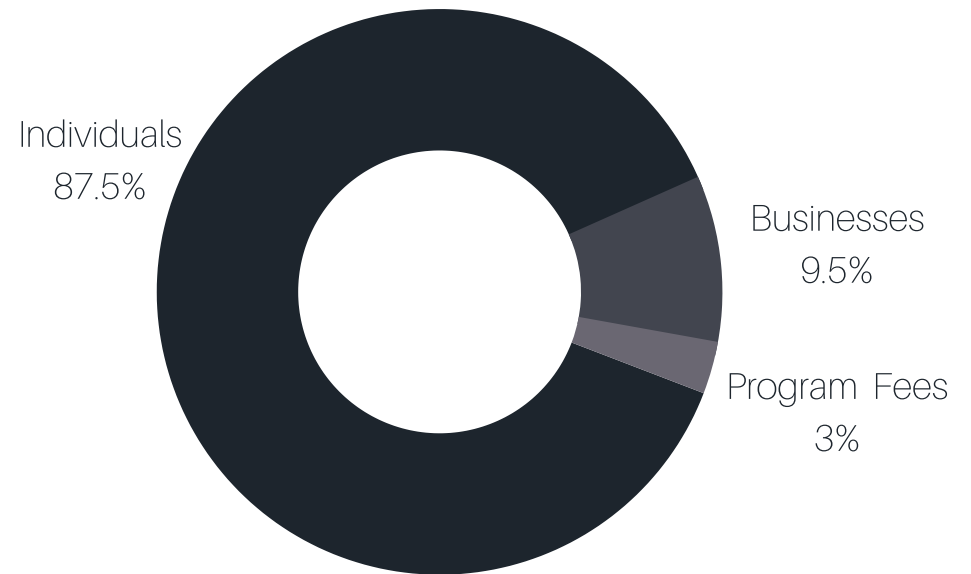
## AMOUNT RAISED (TO DATE 12.1.20)

\$245,154

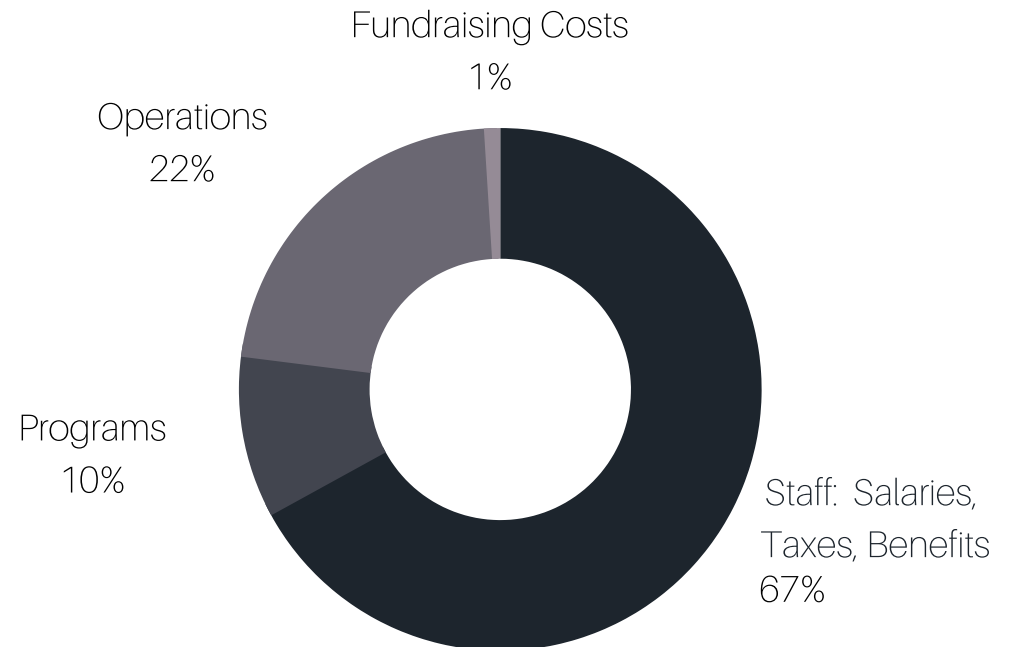
## EXPENSES (TO DATE 12.1.20)

\$213,676

## INCOME SOURCES IN 2020



## EXPENSES IN 2020



# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

What a year this has been for all of us. Nobody could have foreseen the Coronavirus pandemic, social and economic lockdowns, and the changes we have all faced. On top of that, our ministry has been undergoing a period of transition. We have had some bumps along the way, but this year's social challenges have afforded us an opportunity to grow and improve.

Despite the challenges, we are thankful that the ministry has continued to expand! The previous pages outline how God has provided opportunities for ministry this year. We are excited about how God has used Base Camp, Trail Head, and will use the Faith Ascent Climbing Guide. The majority of Climbers at Base Camp this year were first-time attendees: many students were exposed to worldview ideas they had never considered before. Additionally, we have focused efforts of improving our behind-the-scenes pieces, such as rebranding, social media and marketing, strategic planning, and organizational structure. We hope these efforts will allow us to function more efficiently and reach even more young people.

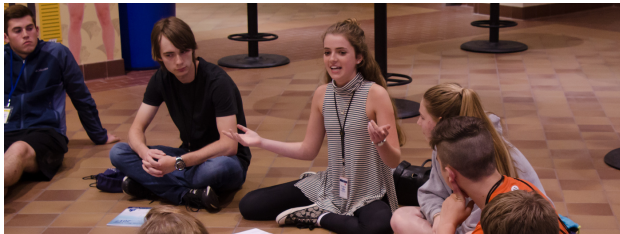
Finally, allow me to speak frankly about the financial needs of Faith Ascent. Pandemic concerns, the day camp format, and cancelling Base Camp West meant lower student attendance, and consequently lower revenue for our small ministry. As with many non-profit organizations this year, lower revenue meant cutting costs. And so we have. We are looking at a shortfall based upon our budget and need your support. Could you give a special year-end gift?

Your donations support important big events like Base Camp as well as ongoing ministry on a daily basis, giving students, churches, and parents the tools to properly process the deep questions of life. We need your support to continue and build this important ministry.

As 2020 draws to a close, we pray God's richest blessings on you and your family.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'TK Jaros', is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Kurt Jaros, Executive Director



## KEEP THE WORK GOING

### PRAY

Prayer is so important! Make sure you receive our email newsletters to stay up to date on prayer needs.

### SHARE

Help be an advocate! Tell your friends and church about Faith Ascent. Pass this report along when you are finished reading it or share it online.

### VOLUNTEER

Talk to us about using your talents behind-the-scenes or for big events like Base Camp.

### GIVE

A year end gift of any size allows us to provide Base Camp 2021, publish the Climbing Guide as a free resource for apologetics training, and disciple students daily on Trail Head.



# THANK YOU FOR OVER 10 YEARS

*Your generous support has prepared  
youth with a firm foundation of  
worldview training for over 10 years!*

*Thank you for praying and giving to  
support the ministry.*



600 Kellwood Pkwy. #300  
Chesterfield, MO 63130  
[www.FaithAscent.com](http://www.FaithAscent.com)

