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## **Paul Bertelson, Founder & President**

Paul Bertelson, founder and CEO of *YouthWorks!, Inc.*® (YW), could never have imagined that a volunteer effort as a teenager would turn into a lifetime of ministry. Today, his life’s journey is a path that hundreds, if not thousands, of youth choose every year after experiencing a YW ministry adventure.

Paul grew up in Edina, Minnesota and was just 17 when, as a volunteer, he first started identifying and addressing the needs of the Church. After attending the University of Minnesota, Paul—an entrepreneur at heart—launched and managed several businesses but continued serving in junior high ministry. In 1979, his passion for youth became his livelihood when he became the Director of Junior High Ministry for Colonial Church in Edina. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Paul’s heart for youth missions grew as he served the families at Colonial Church and later at Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) in Edina.

In 1994, while working as the Missions Pastor at CPC, Paul founded YW, a non-profit organization designed to provide fun, life-changing, Christ-centered youth mission adventures to young people ages 12-19. Three years later, Paul left the pastorate to lead YW full-time, but he did so with the intent of ministering to the local church for the rest of his life.

*“It was the Church that invited me into ministry even when I had no clue as a 17 year old what that meant. It was the Church that helped me see my purpose. It was the Church that gave me resources to do ministry. It was the Church where I met and married my life partner, Nan. It was the Church that celebrated with our family when we had a little boy born with Down syndrome. It was the Church that gathered around us, held us, and cried with us when Brett went home to be with Jesus,”* said Paul.

YW, which has served more than 400,000 participants and 10,000 churches since its inception, was built on a foundational understanding and appreciation for the local church. It exists to serve local churches across America and Canada—to “Help the Church Be the Church.”

Under Paul’s leadership, YW has grown from a youth missions organization—planning and facilitating mission trips and ministry experiences—into a family of ministries that, collectively, equip the Church to serve children, youth, college students and multi-generational groups of all ages.

Paul resides with Nan, his wife of 30 years, in Minneapolis, MN. They have a grown son Drew, who lives in Colorado. Their son Brett is living safely with Jesus. In addition to serving as CEO of YouthWorks, Paul is an elder of his local church and volunteers as a leader for YoungLife Capernaum.

**For more information on *YouthWorks!, Inc.*, visit [www.YouthWorks.com](http://www.YouthWorks.com).**