

WOODMORE HIGH SCHOOL HUDDLE LEADER
MATTHEW WEGERT'S STORY OF HOW HE GOT INVOLVED!

The Woodmore F.C.A. banner was still hanging on the cafeteria wall, even though the chapter had not been active since the former football coach moved to a different school district years ago.

Having graduated from Woodmore High School years ago, and having seen our five kids go through the Woodmore system as well, I've spent a lot of time in the school building attending athletic events, meetings, award banquets, academic functions, etc. I've looked at the banner many times.

I'm a Christian. I was an athlete, and I'm still athletically active. I've coached a little. What's more, my college involvement with The Navigators provided a "vision" and some tangible training for this type of thing.

Maybe God would like to see Woodmore's chapter become active again...Maybe I could play a role in that.

In the Spring of 2016, our third daughter graduated High School, and her guidance counselor Andrew Hemminger visited the reception to congratulate her. In passing, I asked him about the currently inactive F.C.A. chapter. He was open to seeing it re-activated, but he mentioned that student-leaders would be necessary for that to happen.

Approximately a week later, I received an email out of the blue from a student-athlete saying that she and another student-athlete, "recently talked to Mr. Hemminger about bringing F.C.A. back to Woodmore for next school year." She went on to say, "while we were talking to him he mentioned that you were also interested in this. We were wondering if you wanted to be a part of this and what your ideas were for next year."

Things were moving a little faster than I planned.

The students, Liz Koenig and Kate Barbee agreed to meet, compare notes, and discuss it further. Later, after informing them that I was a "yes," they contacted Woodmore High School Principal Jim Kieper, who agreed to meet with these two student-leaders and myself. He was supportive and helpful, not only during that meeting, but also through the entire year.

We've met in the library each Friday morning before school. Through the year, we've studied and discussed Biblical verses and principles related to real life issues from relationships to cultivating "eternal" perspectives, from relying on God when things get complicated and painful to practical tips for meaningful "personal devotions," and from the meaning of life itself to why and how to become a Christ-Follower in the first place.

We've watched numerous videos allowing Christian athletes and coaches to teach us and tell their stories. We've enjoyed "extracurricular" activities that included a service project and watching the movie "Woodlawn" (outdoors & projected against Kate Barbee's parents' barn). We learned the movie's central character, Tony Nathan, had a teammate for his entire professional football career with the Miami Dolphins who was none other than Woodmore's Jon Giesler, whose photo and jersey our students see prominently displayed each time they enter the building.

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We've discussed a number of devotionals from the F.C.A. publication Heart of an Athlete. And on the lighter side, we've enjoyed many friendly competitive "ice-breaker" activities, a March Madness men's and women's Final Four prediction contest, and we laughed as two comedians of yesteryear discussed baseball in an effort to decide "who's on first."

Many thanks to Matt Yeager at F.C.A.'s Northwest Ohio office for all his practical help and support.

I hope the year's experience was as meaningful and significant for the dozen or so Woodmore F.C.A. student-athletes as it has been for me. I've enjoyed getting to know them a little, and I'm trusting that God has used, or will use something from this year's F.C.A. experience in each of their lives going forward.

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