

Ground Zero Case Statement



The Problem

Problem 1: Today's teenager is bombarded with messages of violence, promiscuity, self-indulgence, relative morality, and destructive lifestyles. Messaging leaves this generation – the largest in American history – lonely and isolated with little direction or hope.

Problem 2: Teenagers' spiritual condition is a great concern. More and more teens are unchurched, de-churched, or adopting atheism, which has been heavily promoted by the culture and media.

Problem 3: About 40% of America's teenagers are growing up without a father in the home or the benefits of an intact family. The lack of parental involvement and lack of a spiritual foundation leaves teenagers ill-equipped to navigate the temptations presented by a morally-bankrupt culture. Christian teens, too, can be weakened by a media-rich environment sending the wrong messages. They often desire to grow in faith, but lack the support, connection, or resources to do so.

About the American teenager today

- 1/3 have been drunk in the last month
- 1 in 4 use illegal drugs
- 8,000 contract a STD everyday
- 1 million are pregnant right now
- 340,000 get abortions each year
- 1 in 10 have been raped
- 9 out of 10 have seen porn online
- 4 out of 5 are no longer virgins
- 40% have inflicted self-injury
- 1 in 5 have contemplated suicide
- 2 million attempt suicide each year¹
- 83% believe truth is relative

About the Grand Strand teenager today:

- 20,000 students between the ages of 15 and 18 live in Horry County (2013 census)ⁱⁱ
- 31% of Horry County's children, including teens, live in poverty.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 40.8% Horry County children live in single parent homes.^{iv}
- 2.9% of students in grades 9-12 drop out. About 7.1% of persons 16-19 are not in school and have not graduated. That is higher than the state average, 5.8%^v
- During the 2013-14 school year, the SC Department of Juvenile Justice reported 1,569 juvenile offender cases and 113 resulting sentences in Horry County^{vi}
- 88% local teenagers are not part of a church.

Mission

To transform teenagers' lives through Jesus Christ.

Vision

Ground Zero's vision is to transform the lives of America's teenagers by replicating this innovative model in communities around the country.

Values

We prepare for **LIFE CHANGE**. Ground Zero Experiences help prepare the hearts of teenagers in every spiritual condition and from every imaginable background for transformation.

We present **TRUTH**. Ground Zero Experiences are permeated with truth from God's Word, the means by which minds are renewed and hearts are transformed.

We promote **GROWTH**. Ground Zero Experiences nurture teenagers' faith in Jesus Christ, helping them grow in their Christian walk.

Our Solutions

We use experiences to connect teenagers with one another, Christian adults and Jesus Christ.

Ground Zero Entertainment Experiences – These events provide an opportunity for teenagers to connect with one another and enjoy a variety of Christian artists in an environment unmatched by any other. Bands, illusionists, comedians and extreme sports make these Experiences unforgettable!

Ground Zero Connection Experiences – These events feature national speakers addressing relevant topics and the gospel in a way that is directly applicable for today’s teenagers. Connection Experiences offer students an opportunity to either enter into a new relationship with Christ or take their existing relationship deeper.

Ground Zero Leadership Experiences – These events equip youth leaders and students so they can better relate to and reach teenagers and encourage them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Ground Zero School Outreach Experiences –Ground Zero connects speakers and entertainers to public and private school assemblies, bringing positive messages and encouragement to students.

Our Life Change Goals

Ground Zero provides positive, Christ-centered entertainment that is a healthy alternative to what teenagers are exposed to in today’s culture. Our focus is to help teenagers, many of whom are struggling with a wide range of social and cultural issues, to discover and embrace the powerful, transformational love of Jesus Christ, facilitating these life changes:

- A personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Meaningful, encouraging relationships with godly Ground Zero staff, adult volunteers, youth workers, and peers to fuel transformation and spiritual growth.
- A strong devotional life that is marked by Bible study, prayer, and service in a local church.
- Awareness and ability to filter unhealthy messages from media and peers.
- Fruits of the spirit yielding a positive relationship with parents and other authority figures, as well as harmony with siblings.
- Freedom from substance abuse, addictions, self-harm, and sexual impurity.

We Believe: Statement of Faith

About the Bible - We believe the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Spirit of God moved men to write scripture. Therefore, we believe the Bible as given in its original language is without error.

About God - We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh to reveal God to humanity and became the Savior of the world.

About Man - We believe that mankind was created in the image of God to have a relationship with Him, but became alienated through sinful disobedience. As a result, man is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through their human efforts. Therefore, man is eternally lost.

About Salvation - We believe that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. God freely offers salvation to those who place their faith in the person of Jesus Christ as a means to an eternal relationship with Him.

About the Christian Life - We believe Christ-followers should live intentionally for Jesus. Believers choose daily to obey God's Word, yield to the Holy Spirit, pursue maturity, and become more Christ-like.

About the Church - Ground Zero is not in competition with the local church. Instead, we work alongside the local church in a complementary role to achieve God's plan for all mankind. We believe that the church is the body of Christ. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. Members are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The church's purpose is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to the lost world.

We Believe: Biblical Positions

Ground Zero seeks to advance the cause of Christ by working alongside other believers. Because there are so many life issues being discussed in the media that are raising valid questions about faith, doctrine and the interpretation of scripture, we have developed the following Biblical positions. This is not a complete list of what we think the Bible has to say, but rather a current list of what God has shown us through prayer, study, reflection and discussion with other Christian leaders. We hope to add to these positions as our ministry continues.

About Marriage- We believe marriage is between one man and one woman.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24, ESV)

About Sexual Purity- We believe God calls Christ-followers to sexual purity. Sex is a gift from God to be treasured solely within a marriage relationship.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4, ESV)

About Homosexuality- We believe God calls Christ-followers to abstain from sexual relationships or marriage with members of the same sex.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination (Leviticus 18:22)

About Abortion and Life- We believe God creates and sustains all life. Life begins at conception and ends in His time.

You give life to everything. (Nehemiah 9:6, NIV)

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:13, ESV)

About Alcohol and Substance Abuse- We believe in the indwelling Holy Spirit and as such, Christ-followers are charged with caring for their bodies by avoiding any substances that would abuse them or tempt others to abuse theirs.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19, ESV)

Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18, ESV)

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. (Romans 14:13, ESV)

About Ground Zero

In 1984, as a middle school student Scott Payseur was given a clear vision of God's calling for his life. He recalls returning from a Youth Conference and telling his mother that God was calling him into youth ministry. She assumed he meant in a church, but he explained what God had put on his heart. It was to work alongside the church to reach the teenagers that wouldn't come to church, and to help Christian teenagers by giving them somewhere positive to go. After the youth conference, he wanted teenagers to have the opportunity to experience speakers and bands like he just had, but on a regular basis. It wasn't anything he'd ever heard about or seen modeled; so he wasn't sure how it would work. But he never let go of this idea.

In May of 1993, Scott and his wife Kimberly moved to Little River, SC for what he knew may be a short term position at a small church. By December the position ended and he began working other jobs: first construction then the Carolina Opry. Discouraged he wondered: "Why did you bring us here? What now?" In February he

felt God prompting him to go find an office space. Could it be time? Is God going to begin to fulfill this ten year vision? Scott found a single room on the top floor of the old Flat Iron building on the corner of 9th Avenue North and Kings Highway (now torn down). The office had lots of windows and looked over Kings Highway, the Boulevard, and the Pavilion. He cleaned it up and painted it. The only furniture in it was a single stool. For two months, every day he would go sit on the stool and just look out at Downtown Myrtle Beach and pray. He wondered, "Did God bring me to Myrtle Beach to sit on this stool?"

In August of 1994, God opened the door for Scott to take a position at a church in Kingsport, Tennessee. There, God provided the opportunity for him to open a teen club called the Fire Escape. Scott saw and experienced first-hand how the use of the facility, artists and speakers accomplished both taking their ministry to Christian teenagers to the next level as well as reaching teenagers outside the church.

In 1998, Scott and Kimberly stepped out in faith to start Ground Zero. For eight years Ground Zero was located in Johnson City, Tennessee. During that time Ground Zero offered concerts and events for students, and training and encouragement for youth workers and parents. The desire to eventually take the ministry to Myrtle Beach was already there.

In 2005, God began to open doors and by 2006, Ground Zero had come to Myrtle Beach. God has used Ground Zero in the Grand Strand Area in amazing ways. Church youth groups and families have benefited from monthly worship events during the school year having access to some of the best speakers in the nation. Area schools have benefited as well being offered these speakers at no cost for school assemblies.

In 2011, the city offered to lease the Rivoli Theater on Chester Street to Ground Zero for \$1 a year for 20 years! Having a venue for teenagers to experience positive speakers and bands was part of the original vision for the ministry. There were attempts over the first 15 years to pursue opportunities. Though none of those ended up being the right building for us, each lesson and experience has been a huge part of this journey and what God has done in the hearts and lives of all those involved.

In October of 2014, after 3 years of renovations, Ground Zero opened its venue for an amazing season of ministry! On the night of the Grand Opening, a line of more than 500 students grew outside the door and flooded into the building. DJ Pdogg, Tim Byrne, Royal Tailor and Fireflight made the night unforgettable. Throughout the

2014 school year, Ground Zero's events reached thousands of students and more than 300 lives were transformed through documented faith decisions.

Outcomes

During the 2014-15 school year:

- More than 3,000 students attended experiences at Ground Zero
- 6,000 students were reached through Ground Zero school assemblies
- More than 300 students made decisions for Christ.
- 60 different churches are represented at events and in partnership with Ground Zero

Words of Endorsement

“We’ve been able to see first-hand the amazing work that God is doing through Ground Zero. There is a visible passion, and heart for reaching the lost and impacting the local community. Every time that we have partnered with them, it is evident that something special is happening and it is simply wonderful to watch unfold. Our lives have been blessed by our experiences with Ground Zero. We love these people, and we love this organization!”

Sidewalk Prophets, GMA Dove Award New Artist of the Year

“In a culture full of negative influences, Ground Zero is a bright light shining God's love. I am so thankful Ground Zero provides opportunities for the youth and adults of our community to have fun and draw closer to Christ. Youth ministry and outreach is a team effort and a church can't do it alone! I am thankful Ground Zero is by our side.”

Austin Bond, youth pastor, Belin United Methodist Church, Murrells Inlet, SC

“I love Ground Zero! What I love most about Ground Zero is that they are fully committed to their mission to see students' lives changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is a passion of mine as well as most youth pastors. So, if you're a youth pastor, worker, or volunteer and haven't considered partnering or participating in a Ground Zero event, you should consider getting involved today!”

Rev. Chase McRae, Director of Student Ministries, North Conway Baptist Church, Conway, SC

“What Scott and his team at Ground Zero are doing is just the kind of training, equipping and encouraging that builds up the local church! Their investment and impact on the Grand Strand and the surrounding area has been thoughtful, generous and strategic. It has been an honor to be a part of the Ground Zero mission.”

Duffy Robbins, Professor of Youth Ministry, Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

As a local student pastor whose passion is to see unchurched students reached with the love and superiority of Jesus Christ, I can personally attest to there being few organizations doing more for the Gospel than Ground Zero. God has used Ground Zero's faithfulness and commitment to Him to make Himself known to thousands of teens, with hundreds surrendering their lives every year. If our mission is to reach the unchurched, then our strategy should focus outside our four walls. Ground Zero has perfected this strategy. As one who spends lots of time in the schools, Ground Zero's name, reputation, and renown are impeccable, even among public school students. They are a light in our community –for some, Ground Zero may be the only light they will ever get to see.

Tommy Moore, Minister to Students, Oceanview Baptist Church, Myrtle Beach, SC

“Ground Zero is an outstanding organization driven by God honoring values and operated with absolute integrity. As a local church pastor with a heart for youth, I am deeply grateful to have Ground Zero in our region. We have a strong youth program, and yet we find Ground Zero to add value and strength to the youth in our church. More importantly, we see Ground Zero making an impact on un-churched youth and making an intentional effort to connect them to local church ministries. Finally, we have seen ground zero do more to unite the youth ministries of our region than any other Para church ministry. I strongly encourage enthusiastic support of Ground Zero financially and through volunteer service.”

Jeff Dunn, Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, Myrtle Beach, SC

“American teenagers are coming of age in a dynamic and often confusing world, unlike that of previous generations. Providing a safe, healthy, productive environment for youth is not only important – it is essential for economic success and quality of life. For the Myrtle Beach Area, Ground Zero serves a vital role, offering teens a safe haven and spiritual foundation. For many teens, Ground Zero may be the only positive force to counter societal ills and deliver love, guidance and support. Ground Zero seeks to transform teenagers and, in doing so, transform our community. We are all better because of Ground Zero.”

Brad Dean, President, Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce

“One of our favorite places to play on earth is on the boardwalk in Myrtle Beach during the Sunday Celebrations concert series. Ground Zero is a ministry we are thankful for and proud to partner with and we look forward to their continued impact in Myrtle Beach!”

Adam Agee, lead singer, Grammy-award winning Audio Adrenaline

“Ground Zero is a great youth ministry partner for our church. They are able to bring in high quality entertainment and speakers that communicate truth in an attractive and relevant manner to teens. Even though we’re a decent sized church, we wouldn’t have the budget to do all that Ground Zero does. By partnering, we can reach kids with the gospel that we might never reach on our own. We cooperate... not compete.”

Todd Elliott, Lead Pastor, Beach Church, Myrtle Beach, SC

“On multiple occasions, I have had the privilege of seeing God’s hand at work through Ground Zero. In partnering with Ground Zero, it has been undeniable that this ministry is serious about its mission to see the lives of teenagers transformed through the Power of Jesus Christ. In today’s society in American culture, Ground Zero’s work and approach to ministry is more valuable than ever before.”

Clayton King, Clayton King Ministries, NC

Stories of Success

I was born in Columbia, SC, but I wasn’t there long. When I was about 1, my family moved to Myrtle Beach and found our church home at First Presbyterian just down the street from here. I grew up in church but it wasn’t until middle school that I really owned my relationship with Jesus.

In 6th Grade, I was bullied. I switched schools because of it. It was hard being bullied and is sometimes difficult to talk about, especially because my bullying experience wasn’t directly physical, like fighting. I was bullied through people’s words and general exclusion. The funny thing about those who bullied me is that we grew up together and had the same weekly routines. We went to school with Monday through Friday. Then, I saw them again at church on Sunday. Because we’re the same ages, we were always in the same groups at church. So I often wouldn’t even go to my own Sunday school class. Whenever possible, I would help with younger ones. While I loved being able to serve, it also gave me a refuge from my bullies.

In the midst of the trials of middle school, three key things really started shaping my faith: going to youth group, taking Bible classes at school and being involved with Ground Zero.

I got involved in student leadership with Ground Zero. That really showed me that I could use my skill set and lead with a greater purpose. It boosted my self-esteem because I saw that I could do great things no matter what others said.

Now, I’m in High School. I am currently holding 3 positions in various clubs, 1 being state-wide, and I’ve been invited to numerous leadership conferences. Through my relationship with Jesus and the self-esteem gained through leadership, I am here. I have embraced my relationship with Jesus Christ and try to pursue it daily.

I know that through my relationship with Jesus and the opportunity presented for me to teach, lead, and serve, Ground Zero has really boosted my self-confidence. I can't wait to help others find new self-worth through Christ with what Ground Zero has to offer.

Where are the ones who bullied me? I honestly don't know. It's easy to be assume the worst of them. It can be really hard to forgive when I'll probably never hear an apology. But, forgiveness is what I've received and what I'm striving to give. I continue to pray for those who have hurt me and I truly hope that someday they'll come to Ground Zero and experience Jesus like I have.

Student, age 16

I was seven. I didn't know what PTSD was or what bipolar meant, but I knew my dad was sick. I remember his episodes of not knowing who we were or where he was. I remember the seizures. I remember caring for him while my mom was at work. I recall him doing his best through it all. I remember still going to church. He taught Sunday school and he was there for my baptism. Then, four days later, he was gone. Suddenly, with no warning, my mom and brother and I were left in this world to hurt alone. And alone is exactly where I was. Alone is where I fought to stay.

My world kept falling apart with increased momentum in sixth grade. My mom got remarried and I moved to a new school. My step sister used her popularity to damage any chance I had at making a mark there. Worst of all, it came out that my father's death was his intentional choice. I felt out of control. The world was spinning around me. I was alone and growing numb.

In an effort to regain control and just feel something – anything - I took a blade to my skin. Bleeding was feeling. No one else knew or needed to know or would even be capable of understating, I thought. So, I kept it to myself. It was hidden and so was I. With practice, I mastered the art of pretending. Smiling and giggling at school and in public became an exhausting second nature. At home, I was safe. At home, the mask came off, so sadness and pain reigned.

In February 2014, things started to look up. My youth pastor took us to Ground Zero's event with speaker Marv Penner. Marv talked about self-harm, the psychology behind it, and what God has to say about it. After the event, I emailed Marv and told him my story. I was shocked to receive a response from him within just a couple of hours. He cared. He really cared.

Marv encouraged me to stay connected to Ground Zero. Through that connection and the relationships established there, I found hope. I learned that God can use my story for something bigger – for something good. In Romans 8:28, God promises to use ALL things for the GOOD of those who love the Lord and are called according to His plan. That's me! And now I know this is going to be good!

I'm clinging to His words: "You are altogether beautiful my darling, beautiful in every way."
(Song of Songs 4:7 NLT)

Because of this, I know I have worth. I am beautiful. I haven't cut since November of 2014. It's part of my past - part of my story. And He has big plans for my story.

Student, age 14

Our 24-Month Goals

Entertainment Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,500 guests a year • Block Party during 2016 school year.
Connection Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000 decisions for Christ a year • 2,000 students connected to local churches a year
School Outreach Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,000 guests each year.
Leadership Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 900 guests a year • Engage 25 Network Members to build the Transformation Team. • Launch a GZ student-led worship team in 2016-17 school year.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop weekly youth outreach targeting the 88% of a local teenagers not being reached by the church. • Open coffee shop daily with a sustainable plan • Complete venue, furnishings. • Develop plan to expand to at least 1 other location. • Brainstorm for new programming ideas in next planning cycle.

Ways to Give

Through your support, you can help make the future bright for thousands of teenagers in the Myrtle Beach area by providing the truth, support, and transformation they need to navigate safely to adulthood. You can inspire believing students to stand firm in their faith and help share the Gospel with hundreds more who might never hear about Jesus Christ otherwise.

- Systematic giving. Your on-going support keeps Ground Zero going strong. Please consider giving monthly or pledging annually at mygroundzero.com.
- Individual giving. Single gifts of \$500, \$1,000 or even \$5,000 can help Ground Zero make experiences available to more students this school year.
- Legacy giving. We are looking for legacy donors to help us endow the work of Ground Zero and pursue our vision of helping plant more venues like ours around the USA.
- Investment giving. Please share your ideas about gifts of stock, bonds business interest or property.
- Planned giving. We stand ready to assist you with planned giving through your estate.

Ground Zero is a registered 501c3 non-profit organization. Your gifts are tax deductible to fullest extent allowed by law. Please consult your tax professional for details.

Accountability

Ground Zero is a 501 c3 nonprofit Christian organization. We are committed to the highest standards of responsible stewardship. As a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), we uphold high standards of accountability that convey God-honoring ethical practices including a focus on board governance, financial transparency, integrity in fundraising, and proper use of charity resources. Ground Zero has engaged the Clifton, Larson, Allen CPA Firm (Indianapolis, IN) to assist in financial accounting and reporting. Our financial partners make our ministry possible. We pledge to use their gifts with care in budgeting, spending, and direction from our Board of Directors.
