

# snapshot.

a glimpse of Life!



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## The Torch of Hope



Bob Lenz

I have been traveling for 27 years, encouraging youth to make good choices, to see life as something worth living, to let them know they matter. I want them to know that ultimate life is found in a relationship with Jesus. There's no better job in the world. We get an hour at an all-school assembly program, and then hope they come back out at night to hear the Gospel presentation.

As much as I love my job, it's getting harder and harder. By the time we see students in Junior High or High School, life's hard times have beaten them up. They are so damaged by the time we connect with them. It's getting more difficult to convince them they are valuable when they have been treated like garbage. Yet I still believe with all that's in me, that the power of love can break through, and nothing can penetrate their hearts like the truth of Jesus.

We continue to find ways to get that message to them and reinforce our programs with follow up materials for the class room, and a new believer's bible study for everyone who receives Christ. Plus we always try to connect them with a local church so they can grow in their faith. Our other events like Power of One and Lifest also give local and regional youth a great opportunity to connect and grow. These resources, people and events are like torches of hope offering light in a dark world.

A new thing for me has been Facebook. I once hesitated to try it, but now I'm hooked because it give me a great way to connect with youth. We had more than 5,000 people sign up in only nine months. It also gives students a chance to share their story with us. Here's just one, shared with permission...

*Hey Bob,*

*I just wanted to say that I heard you tonight and it was very moving. I saw you at my school about 4 years ago, at Power of One, and then tonight. And every time I have wanted to come up and talk to you but never felt like I was important enough. But I felt the need, especially after tonight, to share a story with you.*

*I just turned 18. About a year and a half ago I was sexually assaulted by my school liaison officer. I'm sure if you watch any news at all you heard about it because the media was all over it. At that point in my life I was lost, hurting, and just outright unsure about everything I once believed in. This included God, heaven, Jesus, the Spirit, everything. I no longer even knew who to trust or trusted myself.*

*It took me a really long time to get to where I am today. I started speaking. I spoke at a Teen CCR meeting, I'm lined up to speak at Take Back the Night in Oshkosh, and I'm leading a retreat at my church in March. Through speaking I have realized that, yes, what happened to me was wrong, and all of that, but it opened a whole new world for me. I have taken this horrible thing, the garbage is what I refer to it as, and rebelled against it.*

*By speaking, I have realized that God allowed me to be put into that position so that I could come through it, learn the lessons I learned, and help others prevent themselves from being hurt, or become a survivor and not a life long victim.*

*Today when you brought up the stories to remind us what's really out there and how you sometimes just don't know what to say to get through to some people... Well I can honestly say a year and a half ago it wouldn't have mattered what you said to me. I talked to my pastor right after it happened, then went to church camp for two weeks, and nothing brought any spiritual or uplifting relief to me at all. Knowing they were there or having them sit with me while I cried was what I needed then.*

*But, hearing you speak tonight was also what I needed to hear. I know part of what you said was about not comparing yourself to others, but by hearing all the other situations out there (all worse than mine), I realize that they made it through it, and other people out there need my help. My goal since I started my prevention project has always been to just save one person, make one more survivor, not one more victim.*

*I think what you guys do is truly amazing and I just hope that I could have a small portion of the affect you do on someone's life. You should never think of yourself as that small person, and not just because you were better than the last speaker, but because you have and continue to influence many people's lives. I'm proof of it. The reason I decided to start speaking was partly due to wanting to impact peoples lives like you do. - Tara*

Youth today are in a battle for value, worth, purpose and life itself. We want you to know we are not just reaching youth with the message of hope, but are a part of encouraging them to reach others with that hope as well. I love seeing the torch of hope being passed from one person who once felt in such darkness and made it through, on to the next. My prayer is that Christ's light shines more brightly in all of us this year so that He receives all the glory.

For the Kingdom,

**Bob Lenz**  
International Speaker

***You can be a part of reaching young people with messages of hope and the love of Christ!***  
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