



# Who Are The Millennials?



*Introducing*  
Jonathan Wilson



Photo Credit: Shutterstock.com





The DVULI staff is pleased to introduce Jonathan Wilson, who has joined our team as a Technology & Design Specialist. Jonathan assumes the responsibility of supporting the development and maintenance of the DVULI communications resources and program information via social media, eblast, newsletter, website, and video. He will also provide website technical support and information assistance to our alumni, participants, and staff liaisons.

With a background in youth work, he has served as a middle school coordinator with Urban Young Life; he's been a youth counselor at Camp Tall Turf and currently serves middle school students at his church in Grand Rapids.

"I am very excited to join the DVULI team and help participants and alumni access DVULI resources," said Jonathan. "I'm looking forward to building relationships with the staff, participants, and alumni that will see results."

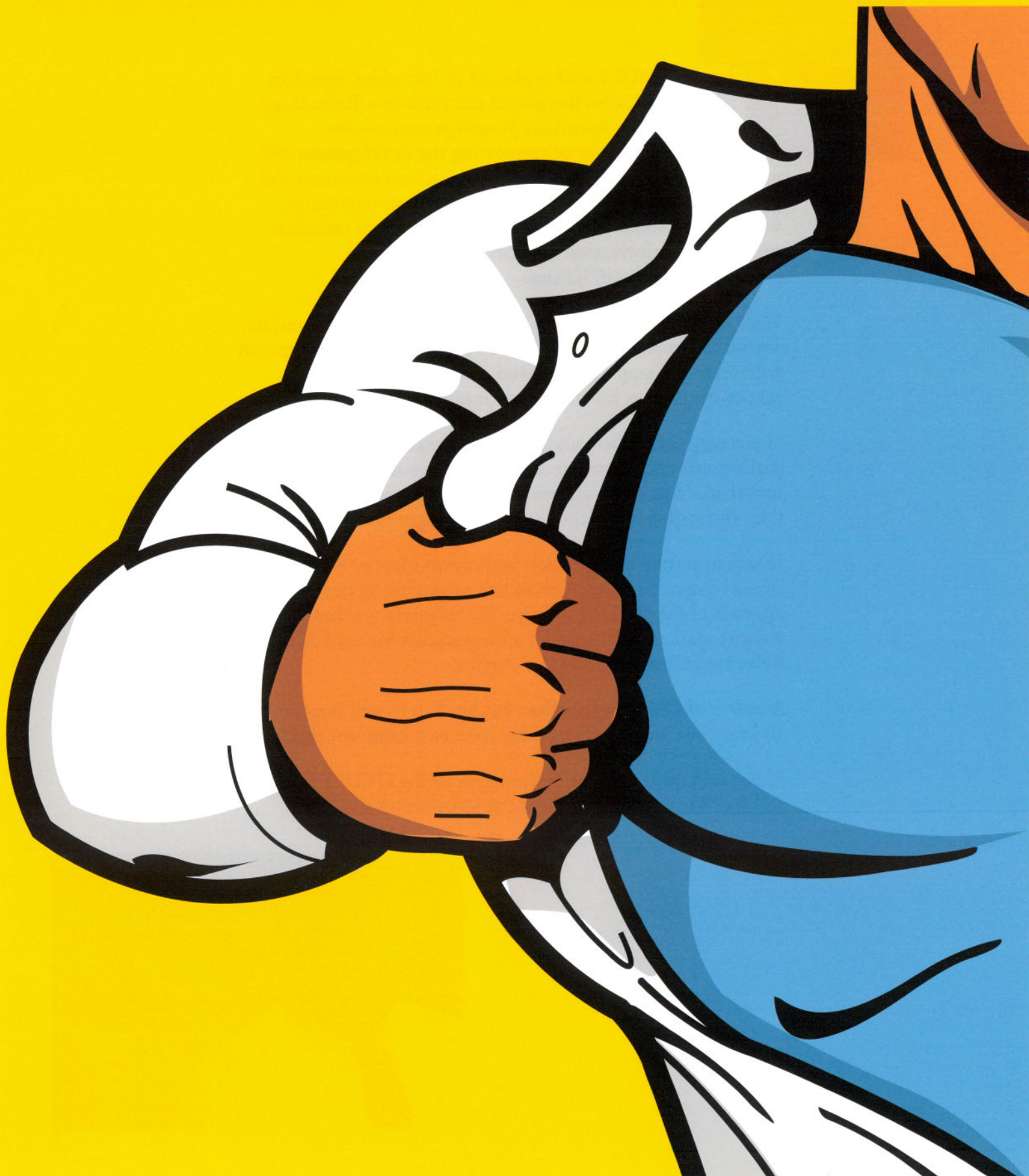
Jonathan started this position with us on March 17 and is already impacting our work as he's preparing to steer the upgrade of the DVULI website. He formerly worked as a website manager and social media specialist for the Christian Reformed Church of North America.

A native of Chicago, Jonathan has lived in Grand Rapids for 18 years. He and his wife Kelley have two beautiful children.

Please join us in welcoming Jonathan to the DVULI family and feel free to drop him a note at [jonathanw@dvuli.org](mailto:jonathanw@dvuli.org).

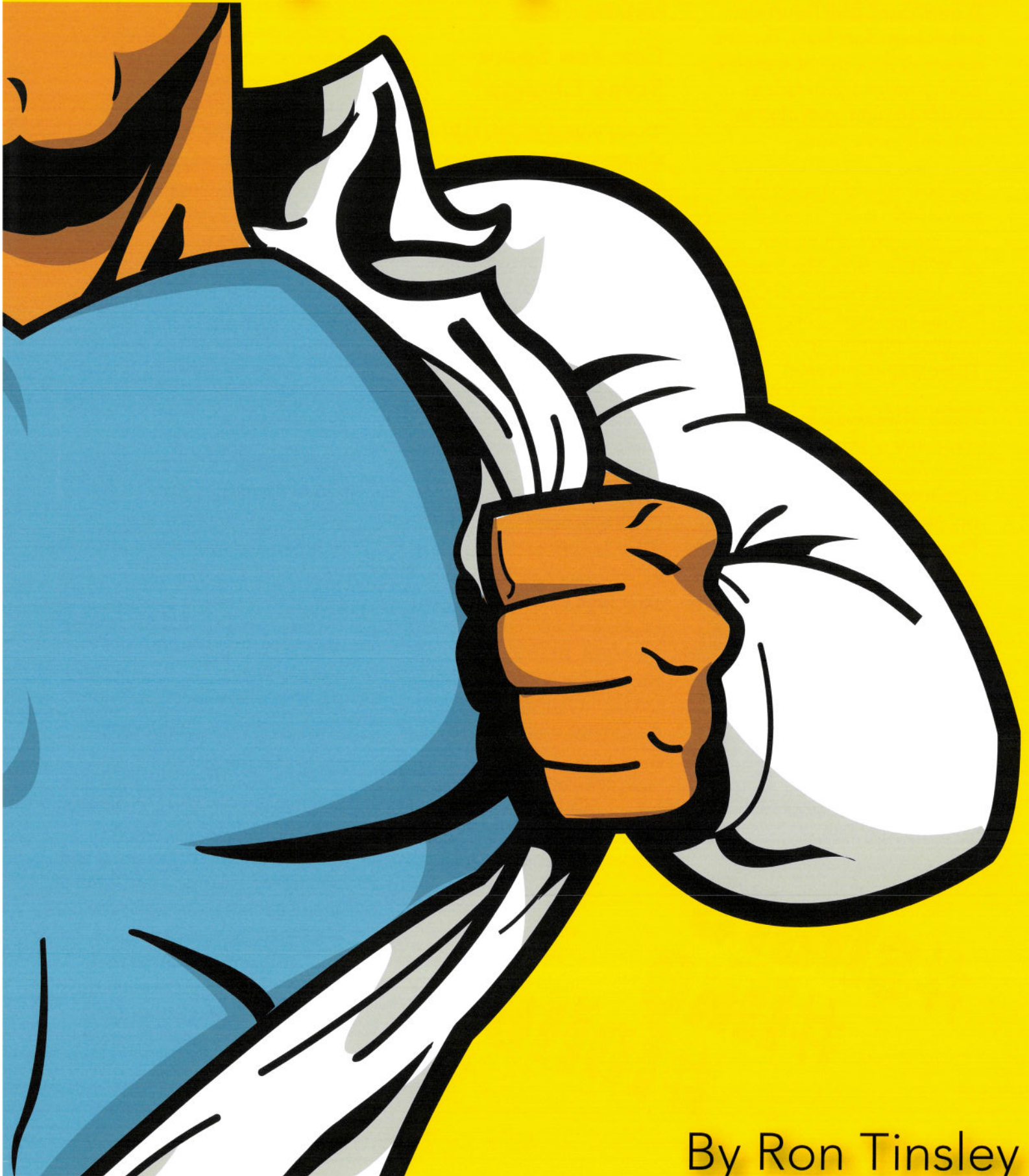


# Millennials Hav





# e Superpowers



By Ron Tinsley



**I**n 1977, a spectacular movie, complete with good and bad guys, action, and a little bit of romance, captured everyone's imagination. It showcased cool futuristic technology. *Star Wars*, the first release of a six-movie franchise, now spans two generations worldwide and continues to influence our culture.

But how would you see this movie after it left movie theaters? You wouldn't. There was no VCR (or Beta Max), no Blockbuster Video, and Cable TV did not exist. There was no Redbox, Netflix, or YouTube. There was no internet!

Today Millennials have the command of the world at their fingertips via technology. What a great time to be young, alive, and experience all things digital. There is an article on every online media outlet about Millennials, and they are considered the most-educated generation in history. They can google to find their fave brand name of limited-edition sneakers locally, financially contribute to a well-digging project via an app, and text faster than a speeding bullet. They are optimistic, energetic, and seem to have superpowers.

Much of what we hear about Millennials is negative. But if you observe them, you can get a sense of what is important to them. Here are five areas to pay attention to:

## Can You Spare Some Change?

To see young people take social change so seriously is actually scary. It also shows that this is part of their persona. Fifty years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. was chastised by white evangelicals for mixing social concerns with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But today, the idea of changing the world is foremost in the minds of Millennials. They really seem in tune with Scriptures that talk about the oppressed and outcasts. Growing up with social and economic stability has led them to be optimistic about the future. Their idea of social justice can be seen through celebrities: Use your high profile to support causes and ask fans to spread the word. In 1985, Live Aid was a concert used to highlight famine in Africa. Today, you don't need a concert. You just need a social media account, the right followers, and a cause. This means that more young people are connecting with established causes and creating their own.

## Share, Like, and Follow

Do you want to know how hashtags work? Do you want to know which phone is best for texting pics? Do you want to know where young people are digitally communing?

Don't read an article. Ask a person under 30. Millennials maintain their relationships by using technology as their friend. Their need to connect and share is so insatiable that Instagram, a photo/video social media service, grew to 40 million users within two years of its launch. This need to share can help keep relationships honest and transparent in spite of some privacy issues.

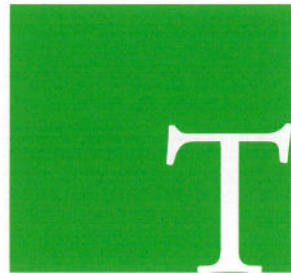
A 2013 PWC Next Gen study stated that Millennials desire a work environment that emphasizes teamwork and a sense of community. Since they are no strangers to family disintegration, they are predisposed to forming their own communities to sustain themselves. In Acts 2:42, the newly formed Christian community is a good example of a growing network where worldly classifications hold less weight. Volunteer organizations, universities, and employers have caught on to this trend and attempt to become a part of their broad network through relational outreach and social media. Technology has allowed their relationships to go beyond their physical location and connect with other like-minded people.

**#share**  
**#like**  
**#follow**





# MEET THE



he class of 2013 has  
officially reached  
DVULI alumni  
status!

Please join us in celebrating  
participants from Cleveland,  
Indianapolis, Memphis,  
Miami, and Portland. This  
marks the third round of  
training for all five cities.

Congratulate them on  
Facebook here:  
<http://goo.gl/d27Nz8>

# GRADUATES!



## The Rise of Nerds and Geeks

Nerds have always been in popular culture, but rarely in positive form. Suddenly, it's not strange to dress up in your favorite character at a Comic Con convention or to attend a movie. Technology has leveled the playing field so much that Millennials are disrupting various industries with their tech know-how and thirst for practical skills. They have been taught that getting a college degree means access to the good life: flexible schedules, decent income, and meaningful work. They are keenly aware that someone with a high school diploma will not earn much in their lifetime (with the exception of the unionized jobs that don't require higher education), so they seek applied learning (higher education) and leave room to chase their creative pursuits (self-taught learning). Sometimes they are able to bring both of these together as many "techpreneurs" do.

## Always On

Navigating through a big city is a daunting task with technology always looking for ways to attract your attention. For some, this constant pursuit of our gaze is a form of neurosis. But others thrive off the organized chaos it can produce. Being able to find whatever you want when you want it through your phone allows Millennials to try and to learn new things. For example, texting has developed its own

shorthand that has spilled over into social media. This ability to harness the power of technology is why young people don't have to know so much anymore. Is it a surprise that Spiderman is a teenage geek and Iron Man is a wealthy technophile?



## The Selfie Life

The selfie phenomenon is everywhere. The sense of "I am me and you are you" imbues young people with a strong sense of individual identity. They recognize that they must manage their personal digital lives and take control of how they are portrayed. This is necessary in a world where branding is possible courtesy of social media sites. This sense of independence also spills over in their optimism and choices. The world has endless possibilities, so why not make use of them? This may seem to fly in the face of their need to be in groups, but it does not. They seem to walk a fine line between being an individual and the expectations of being part of a group. Sometimes the groups they are connected with can be totally managed...online. Some groups demand more actual face time. Millennials are very

aware that first impressions are important and seem to take that seriously with friends.

In conclusion, the Millennial's ability to construct, destruct, remix, and mash up is creating new pursuits and ways of thinking. This is what gives them their superpowers and why so many organizations fear them. Many of us don't understand them, but we stand in awe of them. If you look closely at the five elements above, they show up in almost every movie targeting young people today.

The only thing left to figure out is, where is the kryptonite?



**Ron Tinsley**  
(Philadelphia 2004) is a creative thinker, educator, artist, and entrepreneur. He is the owner of

*prophetiksoul.com, a media and youth consulting company that specializes in visual communications and creating youth development workshops. Ron teaches college courses in Social Science and is also a member of the DVULI Millennial Think Tank. He has a BFA in Graphic Design from The University of the Arts and a Masters Degree in Urban Studies from Eastern University. He resides in his native Philadelphia with his wife and children.*





# A New Way to CONTROL Conversations



By Gary Mullins  
(Denver 2012)





**E**arly last month I was catching up with Mr. Jon, a current staff member. We began to reminisce about the good old days and a former staffer, Mr. Nick. The three of us worked together in 2007-2009 in an inner-city childcare center. Over our years together, Mr. Jon and Mr. Nick cultivated a friendship that continues to bless them both even though Mr. Nick now lives and works several hours away. Their relationship took roots through traditional activities such as time at work, meals, and outings.

These young men have continued their friendship with the occasional road trip to visit each other in their respective cities; however, the most common way they invest in their relationship now is through online gaming. As Mr. Jon and I continued to talk, I began to understand the value of the conversations they had while they were gaming. It was evident to me that online gaming requires an interaction that other social media formats do not require: the interaction is immediate, focused, and natural, which allows them to share in a cooperative experience. Because they have been spending quality time on a regular basis while gaming, their shared gaming experience allows them the space to divulge their successes, struggles,

future plans, and love interests. As we were wrapping up our conversation, I began to see that engaging in one's community through gaming has a lot to offer a generation that has grown up with social media and video games. I believe that there is an authenticity and vulnerability that is welcomed through an online conversation with folks in a community that provides room for accountability, undivided attention, and honesty.

I like to think about community in the context of shared experiences and shared time. I am beginning to see that the vehicle used to gain those shared assets varies for each individual, as well as for each generation. We are no longer a world that only congregates around a warm cup of coffee on a Saturday morning at the local diner; we are adapting to a world that relates through the vehicle of gaming and social media.

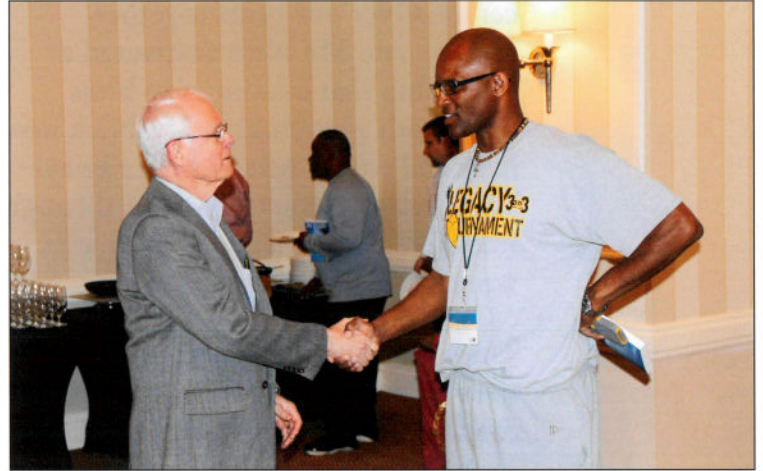


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*Gary Mullins  
(Denver 2012) is a  
member of the DVULI  
Millennial Think Tank.*







## 2014 First National Conference

**T**he DVULI class of 2014 learned, processed, and got their fill of Accountability, Balance, Interdependence, Empowerment, and Leverage at the First National Conference in Orlando. As always, the week was loaded with great training and fellowship (Go Orlando Magic!), including special guests Gordon MacDonald and the music ministry of Keith Staten (Commissioned). Participants had the honor of meeting and talking with Mr. and Mrs. DeVos as well as Dick and Betsy DeVos. The conference week continues to be life changing and unforgettable for participants.

See more photos at: <http://goo.gl/fl9KZD>











# The Millennials

By Ron Carter

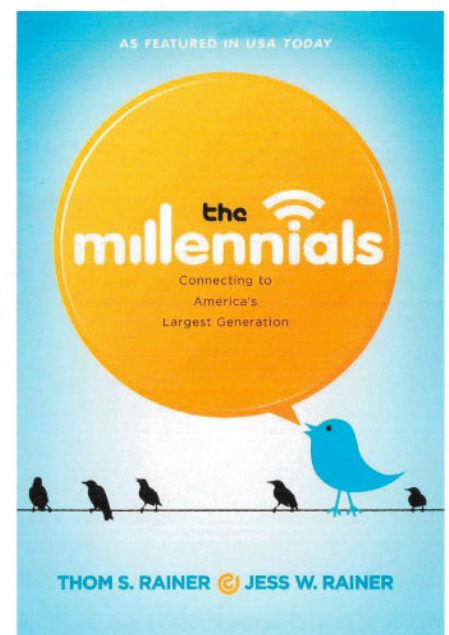


**W**ho are the Millennials?  
What really matters to  
them? How will their  
influence change the

world? These questions and others  
like them are answered in the book  
“The Millennials: Connecting to  
America’s Largest Generation.”

Written by father/son authors,  
Thom Rainer and Jess Rainer, this book  
examines the attitudes of Millennials  
on a range of subjects such as money,  
leadership, the environment, and religion.  
In the final chapter, the authors speak  
directly to the church and offer practical  
suggestions for responding to Millennials.

By far the largest generation in America’s  
history, they have a unique perspective  
on life, which must be understood if they  
are to be engaged in a meaningful way.  
To become better acquainted with this  
generation, I encourage you to get a copy  
of this book. It will help you not only  
collaborate with current Millennial leaders  
and young people, it can also support  
your leveraging efforts as you prepare to  
pass the baton. It’s easy to read, insightful,  
and written from a distinctive Christian  
perspective. I’m confident you will find it  
to be as beneficial as I did.





# Alumni Updates



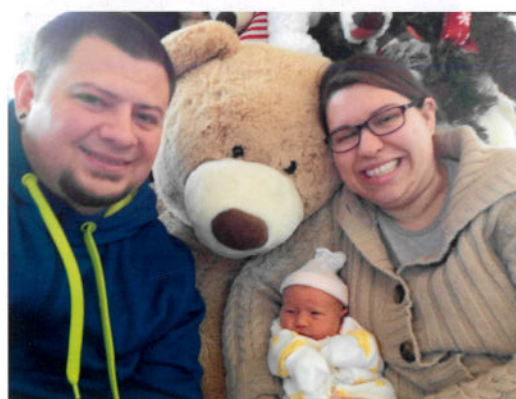
Aline-Vanya (Miami 2013) & Carl Guillaume were married on 2/21/14



Luis Fernandez (NYC 2011) & Betsy had James Levi on 1/15/14



Kim Kossie (Houston 2005) & Kerry McKee were married on 12/21/13



Derek Beaudoin (Portland 2013) & Krista had Glory Michelle on 12/26/13



Anna Jara (LA 2010) named Project Manager for LA Hospitality Training Academy



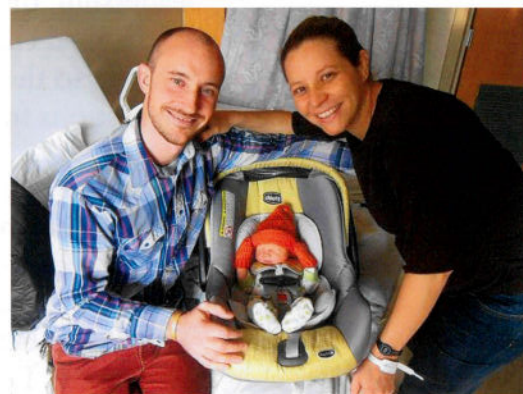
Fred Oduyoye (Cincinnati 2012) named Director of Church Relations at Youth Specialties



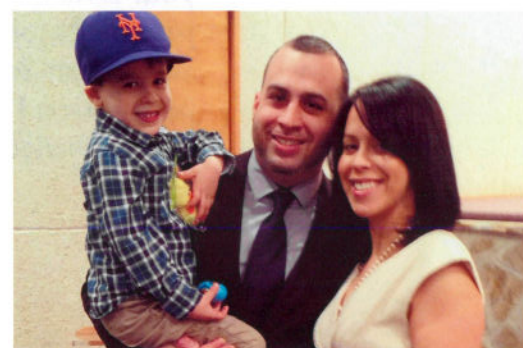
Brenda Hernandez (Houston 2010) & Jonathan had Joshua Uriel on 1/27/14



Randy Vander Weit (Grand Rapids 1998) & Lisa had Annalise Lanae on 1/13/14



Michaelanne Helms (Philadelphia 2013) & Daniel had Charles Nolan on 12/2/13



Ariel Pagan (NYC 2009) named Program Director at Children's Aid Society

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