

A Day in the Life of the CBAC Youth and Family Director



GOAL

To learn more about the ministry and leadership of the CBAC Youth and Family department and to pray for them.

PREPARATION

Prepare ten signs with a different time on each one to represent the times of day noted in the program: 5:24 AM, 8:15 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:36 AM, 12:22 PM, 1:12 PM, 3:07 PM, 7:03 PM, 8:01 PM, 9:22 PM. While presenting program, use each sign to introduce the next time frame. More than one person may present the program if desired.

INTRODUCTION

Say: Rev. Dan Pyke serves as the CBAC Youth and Family Director and the Acadia Divinity College Next Generation Ministry Director. Dan lives in Grand Bay-Westfield, NB along with his wife Lachelle, their children Rhailyn, Kendrick, Della, and Denton and their dog, Cashew. Atlantic Baptist Women supports both CBAC Youth and Family and ADC through our annual Home mission budget. Let's take a look at what a day in the life of Dan looks like to discover some of "behind the scenes" realities as a ministry leader.

5:24AM (show sign)

Once again, I'm woken up before my alarm clock goes off. Not by a child, but by our labrador retriever puppy, who is again barking to wake me up as he feels that he has gifted me with enough sleep. In an unusual twist-of-life-circumstances, our dog Cashew, was born on the same day that I started as the Director of Youth & Family. We adopted him shortly before the pandemic shutdown, and he has quickly become a significant feature of my daily routine. (He sleeps best when he has walked 6 or 7 kilometers in a day). Our early morning walks have become a meaningful part of my routine, as it's a chance to pray and reflect on the day ahead. In the words of Andrew Root, the dog's "need is grace to us, demanding that we stop and tend to our souls as we tend to their needs ... They give us permission to rest. They recognize our worth simply because we exist and we're their humans. They tell us to enjoy life as it is, not as we are working for it to become" (*The Grace of Dogs*). Those early moments in the day have become moments of tending to my soul.

Once we get back, the chaos of the next two hours begins, as we have three school-aged children to get out the door, and a not-so-helpful preschooler adding his own chaos into the mix. As kids run back from the bus stop because they have forgotten their mask, lunch, or something else, the dog is eagerly waiting to make a break for it. If he's lucky, he can escape long enough to jump over the kids walking from the nearby daycare to the bus stop.

8:15AM (show sign)

Once the kids are out the door, I take a few minutes to chat with my wife and not-yet-in-school child, and prepare for the long commute to my office. Do I walk or slide down the 14 stairs? Much of my day is spent within the windowless office I've created in my basement. A repainted desk I was gifted from my neighbour is where I spend my day, as my meetings happen over Zoom. The desk is a reminder of our commitment to join God in our neighbourhoods. Much like Mr. Feeny from *Boy Meets World*, or Wilson from *Home Improvement*, our growing friendship with our neighbour is a relationship that brings great joy to our family.

My first few minutes are spent praying and jotting down notes for the day ahead. What meetings are coming up? What projects need my attention?

9:00AM (show sign)

Our Youth & Family department spends time together each week. Although Jacqueline and I live in the same community, we meet most frequently on Zoom as our third team member, Laura, lives in Charlottetown. It is a privilege to work with them, and they push me to be a stronger leader. I have a deep appreciation for each of them, and I'm thankful to do ministry with this team. We spend time together praying for leaders in the CBAC, and planning to equip Next Generation leaders to join God in our neighbourhoods.

10:36AM (show sign)

Having finished the meeting with Laura and Jacqueline, I leave my office for an in-person meeting at a coffee shop with a local pastor. Face to face meetings have become so infrequent, and I look forward to those opportunities to connect in person. Over the COVID season, it has been a privilege to work alongside leaders and see their creativity and innovation. My favourite coffee shop in Saint John is Catapult, a social enterprise cafe with connections to Outflow, a Christian ministry in the city. As I wait for the pastor, I chat with the cafe staff for a few minutes.

It is a pleasure to connect with pastors in this role, and hear how they and their churches are leading ministry in this season. None of us have any experience leading pandemic-era ministry, and a unique role I get to play is to make connections between leaders. As this pastor shares their questions with me, I encourage them to reach out to another pastor who has had a similar experience. One of the realities of this season is that there truly is no one-size-fits-all approach, and what is working well in one church in a particular community is not going to automatically work in another location. Some churches have reopened their children's programming, while others have not. There are no easy answers, and it's important that we support, encourage, and partner with ministry leaders in our churches and across our region.

12:22pm

After having met with the pastor, I return home and grab lunch with my wife and son. Once we finish eating, it's time to walk a couple of more kilometres with Cashew. We chat with some neighbours while we walk. Our dog loves meeting people!

1:12pm

After we're back from our walk, I spend the afternoon preparing for a course that I'll be facilitating later in the day, as well as responding to emails. Emails can often seem detached and impersonal, but I'm recognizing the community that they bring as I collaborate on various projects with other leaders and pastors.

3:07pm

Now that the kids are all home, the volume in the house has increased significantly. Since I'm teaching in the evening, it's a good time to spend a few hours with my children, and walk the dog. I close the laptop and step out of my office for a few hours.

7:03pm

Now that some kids are in bed, we've eaten supper, and the dog has settled down after another walk, it's time to slip back in my office to finish preparing for my course this evening. It's become my practice to spend time praying for each of the students in this youth ministry and leadership course. A Zoom classroom does not provide the same level of engagement that I've had in courses I've taught before, but I'm grateful for the technology that allows for this level of connectivity.

8:01pm

Now that most of the 25 students are present in the Zoom waiting room, our class time begins. I appreciate the interaction that we're able to have and the perspectives that they bring. The majority of the students are in their early twenties and their enthusiasm for youth ministry keeps me optimistic for the future of our churches. It's a pleasure to spend time every Wednesday with this class of students who are committed to the Next Generation and reflecting on the involvement that others have played in their own lives.

As I'm teaching this course, it's giving me valuable opportunity to reflect on leadership, and emphasize the value of community in leadership. Too often, we succumb to the "cult of the individual," or the lone ranger style, in our leadership, and fail to give voice to the community around us. Our textbook, *Another Way: Living & Leading Change on Purpose*, reminds us that leadership is communal, and that leadership is life-giving when experienced with "a community of good companions and wise guides."

9:22pm

As I hit the red "End" button on my zoom class, I reflect on the community I've experienced today. Even in the midst of a pandemic, there have been significant opportunities to enter into community and participate in God's mission with many people in our region. From the interactions with my wife and children, to zoom calls with my team, coffee with a

pastor, email engagements, and an online class, my role as Director of Youth & Family is supported by good companions and wise guides.

Now it's time to walk the dog.

PRAY

Let's take some time to pray:

1. Wisdom, discernment and vision for Dan and Jacqueline as leaders in the Youth and Family Department. Pray for their families as well.
2. Strength, compassion and energy for youth pastors and children's pastors throughout CBAC.
3. Students at ADC as they take courses on ministering to the Next Generation.
4. For children and youth who face so many challenges to their faith and pressures in their lives.
5. That adults in CBAC churches will be encouragers and mentors of youth and children in their local churches and that they will learn from youth and give them opportunities to lead the church in joining God in our neighbourhoods.

Atlantic Baptist Women extends our thanks to Rev. Dan Pyke for providing the information for this program.