

# VISITOR

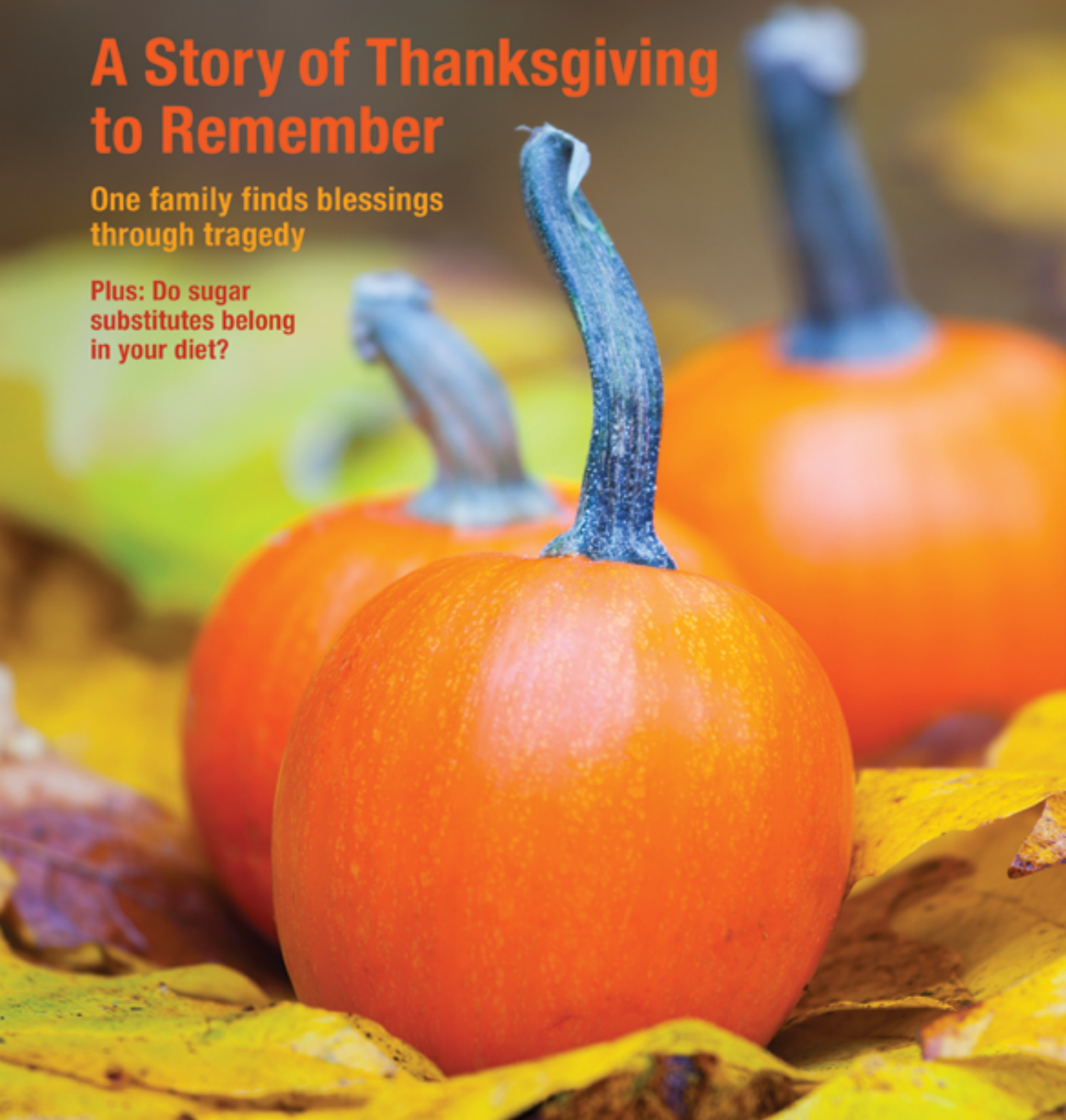
CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

NOVEMBER 2015 • VOLUME 120 • ISSUE 11

## A Story of Thanksgiving to Remember

One family finds blessings  
through tragedy

Plus: Do sugar  
substitutes belong  
in your diet?



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PHOTO BY MATTHEW HAZLETT



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*Debra McKinney Banks*

God answered the Wattses prayer for a child He could use in a mighty way, but the couple had no idea that little warrior would test their faith to the limit—and, more importantly, reward them with so many unexpected blessings.

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## ON THE WEB

### HOMELESS PASTOR

Why did Tim Madding, senior pastor of Potomac Conference's Beltsville (Md.) church, recently live one week as a homeless person? Find out why at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/homelesspastor](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/homelesspastor).



### WHO ARE ADVENTISTS?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been in the spotlight frequently since Ben Carson, a well-known Adventist and Republican candidate for president, has risen in the polls. The media has shared their version of the Adventist faith, now visit [whoareadventists.org](http://whoareadventists.org) and help share who we really are.



**GET-A-LONG DOGGIES**  
*Jack, Jake, Jacque & Jodie: The Get-A-Long Doggies*, the latest book in

Janice Mathews' Stewardship Jack series, helps children learn about relationships and how to be kind to others. Read our interview with Mathews, a member of the Beltsville church, at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/stewardshipjack](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/stewardshipjack).

### PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH

At Potomac's EQUIP meeting at Tidewater Adventist Academy in Chesapeake, Va., Peter Casillas, Potomac's associate director of evangelism and church planting, shared tips for creating an effective strategic plan for growth. Read his tips at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/churchgrowth](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/churchgrowth).

### SHARE BETTER CONTENT

Not sure what to share on your church or school's social media accounts or website? Janel Haas Ware, from Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va., and Andrew McChesney, from the *Adventist Review*, share ways to help develop pertinent content. Read the tips at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/bettercontent](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/bettercontent).

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# VISITOR

Beth Michaels ■ Editor

V. Michelle Bernard ■ Assistant Editor, Digital Media Coord.

Kelly Butler Coe ■ Art Director, Designer

Sandra Jones ■ Advertising, Circulation Manager

The *Visitor* is a monthly publication reaching approximately 60,000 Seventh-day Adventist homes in the mid-Atlantic area.

The *Visitor* provides news and information, inspiration for effective ministry, and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help engage members in experiencing the mission.

**CONTACT** ■ (410) 997-3414 ■ [columbiaunionvisitor.com](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com)  
[visitor@columbiaunion.net](mailto:visitor@columbiaunion.net) ■ To subscribe, change address or discontinue *Visitor* mailings, call your local conference as listed below. Ask for the membership clerk. Free to members. All others, \$21 annually. Email [sjones@columbiaunion.net](mailto:sjones@columbiaunion.net).

## PUBLISHING

Celeste Ryan Blyden ■ Publisher

**Board:** Dave Weigley (chair), Beth Michaels (secretary), Seth Bardu, Celeste Ryan Blyden, Larry Boggess, José H. Cortés, William T. Cox, Henry Fordham, Ron Halvorsen Jr., Ray Hartwell, Bill Miller, Rick Remmers, Rob Vandeman

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## COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE

5427 Twin Knolls Road, Columbia, MD 21045  
 (410) 997-3414 ■ [columbiaunion.org](http://columbiaunion.org)

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## CONFERENCES

**ALLEGHENY EAST:** Henry J. Fordham, President; LaTasha Hewitt, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (610) 326-4610 ■ [visitaec.com](http://visitaec.com)

**ALLEGHENY WEST:** William T. Cox Sr., President; Bryant Smith, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (614) 252-5271 ■ [awconf.org](http://awconf.org)

**CHESAPEAKE:** Rick Remmers, President; Samantha Young, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (410) 995-1910 ■ [ccosda.org](http://ccosda.org)

**MOUNTAIN VIEW:** Larry Boggess, President; Valerie Morikone, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (304) 422-4581 ■ [mtviewconf.org](http://mtviewconf.org)

**NEW JERSEY:** José H. Cortés, President; Paulo Macena, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (609) 392-7131 ■ [njcsda.org](http://njcsda.org)

**OHIO:** Ron Halvorsen Jr., President; Heidi Shoemaker, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (740) 397-4665 ■ [ohioadventist.org](http://ohioadventist.org)

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Ray Hartwell, President; Tamyra Horst, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (610) 374-8331 ■ [paconference.org](http://paconference.org)

**POTOMAC:** Bill Miller, President; Tiffany Doss, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (540) 886-0771 ■ [pcpsda.org](http://pcpsda.org)

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

**KETTERING COLLEGE:** Nate Brandstater, President; Jessica Beans, *Visitor* Correspondent ■ Tel. (937) 395-8601 ■ [kc.edu](http://kc.edu)

**WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY:** Weymouth Spence, President; Angie Crews, *Visitor* Correspondent  
 Tel. (301) 891-4000 ■ [wau.edu](http://wau.edu)

## HEALTHCARE NETWORKS

**ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE:** Terry Forde, President & CEO; Thomas Grant, *Visitor* Correspondent  
 Tel. (301) 315-3030 ■ [adventisthealthcare.com](http://adventisthealthcare.com)

**KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE:** Fred Manchur, CEO; Christina Keresoma, *Visitor* Correspondent  
 Tel. (937) 395-8167 ■ [khnetwork.org](http://khnetwork.org)

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Volume 120 ■ Issue 11

## Building Strong Foundations

I am writing these words as I fly home to California to attend the dedication ceremony of a building at Loma Linda University that will be named in my dad's honor. While I was still an academy student, I earned extra money working construction, and, by sheer coincidence, one of the projects I worked on was this very same building. It is now named the Murray E. Brandstater Outpatient Rehabilitation Hospital.



I still remember digging the foundation trenches with a square-point shovel alongside two of my academy friends. It was good, honest work—in part, its own type of education and, in part, an object lesson in the value of pursuing higher education.

### TAKING COMMITMENT GLOBAL

I love my family, and I'm proud to be a part of it. I feel the same way about my connection to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for many reasons. Three of the most important are our church's commitments to global evangelism, education and healthcare. In my own life and family, I see the fruits of these commitments.

That same Seventh-day Adventist education that impacted me in my youth has impacted my family across generations and around the globe. From Australia to the Middle East and all over Europe and the United States, we have served the healthcare, education and pastoral ministries of the church. My dad and uncle, both octogenarians, still practice medicine!

Today I find that same commitment to teaching, healing and Christ-like service alive and well in Kettering College's faculty, staff and students, as well as every classroom, laboratory and clinical setting. This commitment to service—and to regard health as harmony with God in body, mind and spirit—is our mission, our foundation. Our students practice it throughout their studies, throughout the world during mission trips and now through our new International Medical Missions program.

We are even working to extend this effort through increased partnerships with Kettering Adventist HealthCare's many facilities throughout the greater Dayton area, ensuring that many of our graduates are hired directly—and preferentially—into an outstanding healthcare organization that shares our commitment to Christ-like service. The college's new programs, including our new Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program, offer new and exciting opportunities to build in our students a capacity to serve.

As we innovate in graduate and clinical education, we build on the foundation laid by the church and by our namesake, renowned inventor Charles F. Kettering. As Paul wrote, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11, NIV). These ministries of education, healthcare and global evangelism build in others the capacity for healthy and fulfilling living. Most importantly, it prepares them for eternity.

Let's keep on teaching and healing and sharing all over the world the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And yes, even though it's hard work, let's keep laying those foundations.

*Nate Brandstater is president of Kettering College based in Kettering, Ohio.*





## POTOMAC CONSTITUENTS RE-ELECT OFFICERS

Potomac Conference delegates voted with strong approval and support for the re-election of their officers. Pictured above are Dave VandeVere, vice president for finance, and Cynthia; Bill Miller, president, and Sally; Jorge Ramirez, vice president for administration, and Bexy. Read more on page 31.

## UNION HOSTS FAMILY MINISTRIES ADVISORY

Leaders from five conferences gathered last month for the Columbia Union Conference's first Family Ministries Advisory, hosted by the union's Office of Ministries Development. Presenters Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, Family Ministries co-directors for the North American Division, shared an

array of resources and emphasized the immediate need society and the church have for stronger and healthier families.

"The most important mission field is the family," Claudio told attendees. Conference leaders got the opportunity to exchange ideas, network and share what their conference is doing to build families. Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministries Development, added that families across the union are hurting and need the information that was shared.—*Carolina Ramos*

## AEC HOSTS HEALTH LEADER TRAINING

More than 60 Seventh-day Adventist health leaders from as far away as Canada gathered in Pine Forge, Pa., for a health training weekend hosted by the Allegheny East Conference (AEC), Columbia Union Conference and North American Division Health Ministries departments.

Under the theme "Creating a

Vibrant Health Ministry," presenters like Katia Rienert (pictured below), then director of Health Ministries for the North American Division, and Fred Hardinge, associate director of the General Conference Department of Health, unfolded the Adventist philosophy of Health Ministries. They presented methodologies to help local churches achieve successful health programs.

"We wanted attendees to make God the change agent, and go back to their churches and communities and make every church a center for health, teaching and modeling health ...," says Leah Scott, union and AEC Health Ministries director.—*Robert Booker*



## VOLUNTEERS REACH PHILADELPHIA DURING PAPAL VISIT

Hoping to meet needs made aware by Pope Francis' recent visit to the United States, more than 1,200 volunteers spread across Philadelphia and Reading, Pa., before and during the pope's visit to Philadelphia to distribute literature on how to strengthen faith and build strong families.

Allegheny East Conference (AEC) volunteers (pictured) distributed more than 30,000 special edition copies of *Message* magazine. It was full of articles related to building stronger family unites and information about family-based programs offered by AEC churches in the area. "Requests [for more free





resources] have started to pour in, and our Bible workers are in place,” reports Rodney Grissom, project coordinator. Read more on page 15.

Pennsylvania Conference volunteers went door to door to leave literature and Bible study request cards, pray with local residents and invite them to upcoming evangelistic meetings. “We’re expecting 100 baptisms [from the efforts],” states Tim Bailey, Pennsylvania’s director of leadership and spiritual growth, who is already working with his pastoral team to plan a similar event next year. Read more on page 30.



together Adventist HealthCare staff, leaders, chaplains and the church family to join in a special service that was broadcast live to a host of online worshippers.

The celebration began on a Friday evening with an interactive worship led by John Sackett, president of Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center in Rockville, Md., and AHC’s chief operating officer.

On Sabbath Terry Forde, AHC president and CEO, preached a sermon on the “healing ministry” and its vital role in fulfilling God’s work. He spoke about how Adventist HealthCare is continuing the work Ellen White started more than 100 years ago—focusing on prevention and wellness, in addition to great medical care. Forde stressed that providing quality healthcare is just part of what the organization does. Erik Wangsness (pictured), president of Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md., also led prayer

and shared plans for the future of Washington Adventist Hospital. —AHC staff

**MUSICAL PLAYS AT NATIONAL CATHEDRAL**

Last month Adventists in the Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas invited their friends and colleagues from the community and Capitol Hill to the Washington National Cathedral in D.C. to experience “Love at Work: The Ten Commandments Musical,” a multimedia presentation of scripture songs and biblical narrative designed to showcase God’s amazing love.

More than 60 percent of the estimated 1,500 present were community guests, including many from Capitol Hill and the legal, academic, business and medical communities. Filmed by Hope Channel to air in early 2016, this musical extravaganza included a cast of 14 internationally known Adventist soloists.



**SASDAC HONORS ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE**

Potomac Conference’s Southern Asian church (SASDAC) in Silver Spring, Md., recently held a Sabbath celebration in appreciation of Adventist HealthCare’s (AHC) service to the community. This marked the first “Adventist HealthCare Day” and brought



PHOTOS BY TONY VENTOURIS, LATASHA HEWITT AND DAVID E. HITTLE



## VOLUNTARIOS DE PHILADELPHIA DISTRIBUYEN REVISTAS

Recientemente más de 100 voluntarios de las iglesias en el área de Philadelphia distribuyeron más de 30,000 copias de la edición especial sobre la familia de la revista *Message* a los residentes de Philadelphia. La revista estaba llena de artículos acerca de cómo construir familias sólidas y contenía información sobre programas que las iglesias del área ofrecen basados en las familias. Además incluía una invitación a llamar para obtener más recursos, estudios bíblicos y copias de *El camino a Cristo* y *El conflicto de los siglos*.

Los miembros del Consejo hispano de iglesias de la Asociación también se reunieron en la iglesia Philadelphia Spanish para repartir las revistas y algunos panfletos en español (en la foto de arriba) la mañana que el Papa visitó. “Fue magnífico ver a tantas iglesias unirse para distribuir literatura y fue especialmente importante porque el tema era de la familia”, dice Keila Canete, miembro de la iglesia Philadelphia Spanish. Lea más en la página 30.—*LaTasha Hewitt*



## MIEMBRO DE LUSO-BRAZILIAN COMPARTE A DIOS POR MEDIO DEL ARTE

Yazmín De Jesús, una joven adulta miembro de la iglesia Luso-Brazilian de New Jersey Conference en Newark, ama a Jesús y lo comparte a través de lo que sabe hacer mejor: el arte. Ha pintado murales y libros ilustrados y pueden contemplarse en varios edificios por todo Newark. “No creo que es así como Cristo se veía, pero sí como se sentía”, dice ella al referirse a su cuadro. Lea más en la página 26.



## SE INAUGURAL IGLESIA BRASILEÑA EN COLUMBUS

Por más de nueve meses los futuros miembros de la iglesia First Brazilian en Allegheny West Conference (AWC) de Columbus, Ohio, oraron pidiendo a Dios dirección sobre donde debían reunirse, dice Sergio Romero (foto a la izquierda, tercero desde la derecha), director multicultural de AWC. “Le pedimos a Dios que enviara las personas y abriera las puertas. Buscábamos un lugar donde reunirnos y Dios, como siempre lo hace, respondió de manera impresionante”, dice Romero.

John Boston, pastor de la iglesia Central en Columbus, ayudó a contestar la oración cuando ofreció el uso del salón comunitario de su iglesia para sus servicios. Durante el primer sábado de reunión del

grupo, David Rilo, el pastor de la nueva congregación, les dijo a los 63 congregados, “Dimos la bienvenida a más de los que esperábamos. Dios es bueno. Estamos listos para trabajar”.

Rilo añade que Dios obró muchos milagros para juntar la nueva iglesia, incluso envió a dos pastores de Brasil para ayudarle en el lanzamiento del proyecto. —*AWC el personal*

## LA UNIÓN, ANFITRIONA DE CONSEJO DE MINISTERIO DE LA FAMILIA

Los dirigentes de cinco (foto de abajo) asociaciones recientemente se reunieron para el primer Consejo de Ministerios de Familia en Columbia Union Conference, auspiciado por la Oficina de Desarrollo para ministerios.

Los presentadores Claudio y Pamela Consuegra, codirectores del Ministerio de la Familia en División Norteamericana, compartieron una serie de recursos e hicieron hincapié en la necesidad inmediata que tienen la sociedad y la iglesia de familias más fuertes y saludables.

“El campo misionero más importante es la familia”, le dijo Claudio a los allí presente. Los líderes de la Asociación tuvieron la oportunidad de intercambiar ideas, comunicarse y compartir lo que su asociación está haciendo para construir las familias. Frank Bondurant, el vice presidente de Desarrollo para ministerios, añadió que las familias en toda la unión sufren y necesitan la información que allí se compartió.—*Carolina Ramos*







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## Is there a place for non-nutritive sweeteners in a healthy diet?



For some of our contributors' favorite all natural recipes—like pineapple cheesecake—using healthy sugars, visit [columbiaunionvisitor.com/healthyrecipes](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/healthyrecipes).

It's a debate that seems to continue to crescendo since the first accidental discovery of saccharin by Constantine Fahlberg in 1879. Since then most would agree that the fascination and need for sweet foods has become a national problem.

And, although it appears that the addictive and health-related issues induced by sugar has only recently received more national attention, Ellen G. White counseled on that very topic before many even knew it was a problem. In *Counsels on Diets and Foods*, White admonished, "Sugar clogs the system. It hinders the working of the living machine" (p. 327).

Now her words ring true more than ever, but there is a new player in the sweets aisle—non-nutritive sweeteners—that requires some attention. The American Heart Association describes non-nutritive sweeteners as sweeteners that

offer no nutritional benefits, like vitamins and minerals. They also contain low amounts or no calories at all. They are often used to replace sugar because of their low caloric levels.

Three professionals in fields of health across the Columbia Union weigh in on different types of non-nutritive sweeteners and compare them to natural sugar. Understanding how non-nutritive sweeteners affect the body is important to properly manage your diet, they say:



### KATHLEEN COLEMAN COVERS SPLENDA

Kathleen Coleman, faith community nurse, Health Ministries coordinator and cardiac and

vascular outreach coordinator at Adventist HealthCare based in Gaithersburg, Md., breaks down the difference between sugar and non-nutritive sweeteners. "The biggest thing we are looking at is the effect on the raising of blood sugar and the response of the insulin," she says. Splenda is made up of sucrose, but three of the hydroxyl groups in the molecule were replaced by three chlorine atoms. "It was actually found when British scientists were formulating a new pesticide, so its chemical construction does resemble a pesticide even more than food," she reports.

When searching for the positives of using Splenda, not much will be found other than the low calorie levels it offers. Coleman, a member of Allegheny East Conference's Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., points out three areas of concern that have been found in research in the last few years: "Splenda reduces the quality and quantity of good bacteria in the belly by 50 percent or more, throwing off the fine balance in our system. It also restricts the absorption of therapeutic medications—rendering them less effective, such as those used for cancer and heart

disease. Finally, it can modify the insulin response and blood glucose levels. These changes are even seen with low levels of intake ... This, by far, is a serious issue.”

With all of the negative effects found with Splenda, Coleman cautions her patients to avoid using it, and instead substitute small amounts of honey or regular sugar in moderation. “No more than 100 calories (six teaspoons) per day, as recommended by the American Heart Association,” she says.



## DAVID LEE EXPLAINS XYLITOL

David Lee, DDS, of Lee Dentistry in Maryland, is no stranger to the non-nutritive

sweetener Xylitol, categorized as a sugar alcohol. Its molecular structure allows it to stimulate the sweet taste buds on your tongue, making whatever you eat nice and sweet, he says. Fruits and vegetables already contain small amounts of Xylitol themselves, allowing Xylitol to be considered a natural sugar.

“It is extracted from birch wood to make medicine and is widely used as a sugar substitute and in ‘sugar free’ gums, mints and other candies,” points out Lee, a member of Chesapeake Conference’s Baltimore Korean church in Ellicott City, Md. “Xylitol is not a synthetic sugar substitute like saccharine or aspartame and other synthetic sugar substitutes.”

With one-third fewer calories than sugar, Xylitol is safe for human consumption and has no known toxicity, he says. It can be toxic to dogs however, even in small amounts. Typically, Xylitol is used in oral care products to prevent tooth decay and dry mouth. “When sugar is eaten, bacteria break down the sugar and the end product is acid,” explains Lee. Acid left on the teeth can cause tooth decay. Because harmful micro-organisms are starved in the

presence of Xylitol, it allows the mouth to re-mineralize damaged teeth with less interruption.” This is why it is often suggested to chew gum with Xylitol, rather than harmful non-nutritive sweeteners, such as aspartame or sorbitol.



## JUANITA WEAVER-REISS TALKS TRUVIA

Juanita Weaver-Reiss has spent 20 years work-

ing in nutrition, with 10 of those years spent at the Joslin Diabetes Center, an affiliate of Southview Medical Center, a hospital in the Kettering Adventist HealthCare system based in Kettering, Ohio. She suggests moderate use of non-nutritive sweeteners but realizes it is a personal choice. “I do have clients who desire to only use sugar and foods with natural sugars,” explains Weaver-Reiss. “These would need to fit into a meal plan to aid with glucose control. It is about balancing choices and deciding how foods should fit.”

Truvia, the second best-selling artificial sweetener on the market today, is made of three main ingredients, one of which is a compound separated from stevia, so it is not stevia. Often advertised as stevia, this misleading presentation of Truvia makes it hard for consumers to make informed decisions for their own health, she says. “Consumers should be label literate ... and keep informed about current studies regarding food products.” adds Weaver-Reiss, a member of Ohio Conference’s Centerville church.

Weaver-Reiss compares the use of non-nutritive sweeteners to natural sugar for a diabetic person. “When a person has diabetes, the goal is to have carbohydrates eaten consistently during the day as a way to balance the blood glucose levels. Due to the fact that carbohydrates are changed 100 percent into glucose, when an excess of carbs are eaten, blood glucose values can rise above target ranges. Both foods that contain natural sugars and/or artificial sweeteners can be part of the meal plan.”

Truvia is relatively new to the market, having been introduced in 2008, so the research on its effects over long-term consumption is very limited. For example, some sources report that erythritol alcohol, the primary ingredient in Truvia, may be difficult for the body to digest.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Leah Scott, Health Ministries coordinator for the Columbia Union Conference and Allegheny East Conference, says “the Columbia Union wants to continue to educate on health, but realizes that it is up to each person to become informed on how to correctly care for their body.” The tools to educate others on maintaining a healthy diet, including which sugar or non-nutritive sweetener is best to consume, are just a Google search or phone call away.

“If you are unsure of which sweetener to use in your diet, speak with your local dietician and find out. Making an informed decision is important and in your power,” Scott says.



# THE UNEXPECTED BLESSING

DEBRA MCKINNEY BANKS

It's been more than six years since Van and SaMonna Watts prayed earnestly for a child that God could use in a mighty way. They desired for their youngster to grow strong in faith and resolute in their dedication to God, like Moses, Joshua or Daniel. God gave them a beautiful baby boy they named Brayden, a little soldier for the Lord.

It was when Brayden turned 5 that God sent that little soldier to war, and his family into the spiritual battle of their lives.

## THE DIAGNOSIS

"I learned early to accept God's will, even if it was contrary to mine," SaMonna says. She believed the Lord had already exercised her faith muscles over the years through life's tests and that He had prepared her for difficulties ahead. But, when the Wattses had to rush Brayden to the emergency room due to excruciating headaches, they were crushed by the scan results. There were two masses on his cerebellum.

On her knees on the floor of a nurse's office, SaMonna cried out to God. But, in the midst of the tears, she heard Him say: "SaMonna, what makes you think I won't bring you through this victorious?" Grasping to this sliver of hope, she praised God with a heart full of thanksgiving and claimed His promises for healing.

A MOTHER SHARES HOW GOD  
USED A FAMILY TRAGEDY TO  
BUILD TRANSFORMING FAITH  
AND A LIFE MORE FULL OF  
THANKSGIVING AND PURPOSE.





Diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer, little Brayden underwent surgery to remove the growths. The surgery was successful, but he required intense radiation treatments in hopes of removing all traces of the disease. During the next four months, the Wattses rode a rollercoaster of emotional highs and lows, twists and turns that stretched their trust in God to the limit.

## FINDING HOPE IN GOD'S WORD

SaMonna says she found strength and solace in Bible stories of people with incredible faith that led to incredible miracles. One such story was of King Jehoshaphat who turned to God for help during a crisis (see 2 Chron. 20). To trust in his people's strength would mean immediate defeat. Instead, Jehoshaphat prayed, "We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You" (verse 12).

After being encouraged that God would fight this battle for the Israelites, the king commanded his people to meet the enemy led by a choir (verse 21). With the words, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever," the people went out in battle claiming in faith the victory God had given them.

SaMonna also determined to go into battle against the enemy with praise to God, claiming in faith that He would heal her son. With the help of friends and church family, Allegheny East Conference's Breath of Life church in Ft. Washington, Md., the Wattses held a "praise party" that mentally and spiritually prepared them for the long journey ahead. That evening, SaMonna says, "Every concern and heart-gripping worry that was trying to weigh me and my family down was loosed when we sent up a corporate praise to our God."

Although the couple had readied for battle, it soon became a day-to-day of wondering if it was going to be Brayden's last. The Wattses endured months of "torture and fear" as the cancer continued to spread through his body. Waves of frustration and helplessness washed over SaMonna as she watched her son grow weaker and smaller.

In a blog she maintained, she chronicled her frustrations, fears, praise, faith and perseverance. One particularly stressful day after learning about the potentially harmful effects the radiation treatments would have on Brayden, she wrote:

"My stomach was twisted in knots. Then the Lord stepped in. He reminded me of the harmful flames that the [three] Hebrew boys were exposed to and the boiling oil John was thrust into and yet they were unharmed. God has the power to protect us from every harmful thing if it is in His will. If it's His will for some harmful effects to manifest themselves, I've got to trust Him. He knows what He is doing! ... As I sat there, a memory verse song I had taught the kids came to mind, 'Let us trust in the name of the



FOR A WHILE, I FELT PRESSURE THAT I NEEDED TO HAVE ENOUGH FAITH FOR GOD TO HEAL BRAYDEN, BUT IT WAS GOD'S DECISION TO MAKE. I LEARNED THAT REAL FAITH MEANS TRUSTING HIS DECISION.

Lord, and rely upon our God' (Isa. 50:10). God put that song in my head at the right moment. God knew this was going to happen. He knows what Brayden needs and He's got it all. I was at peace."

## PRAYER WARRIORS ADD STRENGTH

The Internet and social media served as powerful tools to get the word out about Brayden's illness. Prayer warriors rallied and SaMonna's Facebook page flooded with an outpouring of support and well wishes from people following their story.

"There were times when I couldn't do anything more, then I would get on Facebook and find tons of encouraging messages! The support I got from others often helped me keep it together," says SaMonna.

Even total strangers whose hearts were touched by this young family's struggle said they were sending up prayers for the boy. Faculty and students from Parkview Junior Academy in Syracuse, N.Y., had committed to praying for Brayden every day of the school year. While on a class trip to Washington, D.C., the academy's seventh- through ninth-graders got an opportunity to meet the family and minister to



DON'T CHARGE GOD FALSELY FOR WHAT THE DEVIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR. INSTEAD, FOCUS ON WHAT GOD HAS DESIGNED FOR US TO EXPERIENCE IN ETERNITY, NOT WHAT THE DEVIL IS CAUSING US TO EXPERIENCE IN THE HERE AND NOW.

them. The students visited and played with Brayden and little sister SaVanna, age 4 at the time, and presented a special program with songs and skits that blessed everyone.

## DISCOVERING PEACE IN THE DARKNESS

Throughout the trying months filled with prayer and claiming God's promises, SaMonna never lost hope that God would defeat the devil and heal her son. "For a while, I felt pressure that I needed to have enough faith for God to heal Brayden, but it was God's decision to make. I learned that real faith wmeans trusting His decision," she remembers.

She continues, "I prayed every promise; I thanked Him in advance for healing. I know that God is not a liar."

SaMonna ultimately learned that when God heals, it can sometimes take on a deeper, more eternal meaning. "Healing in the here-and-now is simply a Band-Aid to the real problem. The healing He desires comes when He restores us to perfect health at His return. Brayden is sealed for eternity in Jesus, thus, he is healed."

It's been one year since Brayden's death. SaMonna continues to be encouraged by the words of the upbeat praise song "We're Blessed" by gospel recording artist Fred Hammond: *We're blessed in the city. We're blessed in the field. We're blessed when we come and when we go. We cast down every stronghold. Sickness and poverty must cease. For the devil is defeated. We are blessed!*

As expected, all Watts family members continue to process feelings of grief, each in their own way. But, the trial helped the whole family experience God in a deeper way. Although SaVanna prayed daily for her big brother to be healed, SaMonna and Van did their best to help her process the sad reality of death. SaMonna shares, "One day, SaVanna came in and said, 'I'm angry, sad and happy.' When I asked her to explain, SaVanna said, 'I'm angry at the devil, sad that Brayden is gone, but happy that I'll see him again.'"

Before Brayden's diagnosis, SaMonna had prayed for God to reveal His purpose for her life. Knowing that her spiritual gifts were faith and exhortation, she desired to know how to use these for advancing His kingdom. "God showed me that He wanted me to speak for Him," she says.

Because of her new, deeper faith in God, she has learned to turn this tragedy into a triumph and is often called upon to use her gifts to help those who have experienced all types of loss. SaMonna desperately wanted her son to live, and would have been beyond ecstatic if God allowed that to happen. Looking back, she now understands the more far-reaching impact his death is having on people's faith.

"Most people have not had a miracle healing. Many have to deal with the pain of losing that loved one and have a hard time handling it," she explains. She now has the compassion and testimony to help people see God's grace and mercy, even in times of sorrow. "God needed someone to encourage people in their faith. ... So many people have come to me after hearing my testimony saying, 'Thank you! You helped with changing my perspective about God,'" she says.

SaMonna has no bitterness or anger toward God for not healing Brayden. "I refuse to let the devil get a reprieve," she says. "I tell people, 'Don't charge God falsely for what the devil is responsible for. Instead, focus on what God has designed for us to experience in eternity, not what the devil is causing us to experience in the here and now.'"



# SAMONNA'S TIPS FOR NAVIGATING LIFE'S TRIALS

*SaMonna shares sweet reminders she has learned through tests and trials that will help minimize the sourness that often plagues our lives:*

**1** **Purging and purifying is a process. The benefits might not be immediately visible. Trust the process and allow the trials to reap the benefits that only God can bring from them.**

**2** **Difficulties have benefits. Let your tests and trials build you up and make you stronger.**

**3** **Be ready for problems. Everyone gets them. Know that life's "lemons" are coming, so prepare for them mentally and spiritually.**

**4** **Experience peace and joy, not bitterness. As God pours out the sweetness of His mercy and grace onto your situation, develop a relationship with Him that minimizes the bitterness in all of life's problems.**

**5** **God makes burdens bearable. God's amazing grace will make each difficult time sweet. Allow Him to dilute the pain of your tests and trials with His living water (see 1 Cor. 10:13).**







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## Philadelphia Volunteers Promote Family Unit

More than 100 volunteers from Philadelphia-area churches recently distributed 30,000-plus copies of a special family edition of *Message* magazine to Philadelphia residents. The distribution was part of the Project Family 2015 initiative (PF15), which was designed to share practical Bible-based concepts for improving the family unit.



*During the pope's visit, members of the Spanish Council of Churches distribute literature to those who pass by in Philadelphia.*

The magazine was full of articles related to building strong families and information on family-based programs offered by Allegheny East Conference churches in the area. The magazine also included an invitation to call for more free resources, Bible studies and copies of *Steps to Christ* and *The Great Hope*.

"Requests have started to pour in, and our Bible workers are in place. We are expecting great things," shares Rodney Grissom, project coordinator and associate director for publishing.

Volunteers distributed the magazine in areas surrounding their churches and in the downtown area the week prior to Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia. The morning of the pope's visit, several volunteers gathered at the Mizpah church to drive downtown and distribute the magazines.

Members from several Spanish churches also gathered at the Philadelphia Spanish church to distribute the magazines along with some Spanish tracts. "It was great to see so many of the churches coming together to distribute the literature, and it was particularly important because the theme was family," says Keila Canete, a Philadelphia Spanish church member.

## Church of the Oranges Hosts Health Fair

The Church of the Oranges in Orange, N.J., recently held its annual community health fair. This year they partnered with the volunteers from the Township of Orange in order to reach more of their neighbors. More than 600 members from the community received free, back-to-school supplies, packaged bags of food, clothing, health and beauty screenings and consultations. Attendees also had the opportunity to experience face painting and puppet shows, drum corps exhibitions and even a "health wheel-of-fortune game."

The area drum corps attracted many community teenagers and sparked their excitement to learn more about the Pathfinder ministry. Several community members even signed up to participate in the Oranges' Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs.

As the afternoon drew to a close, Pastor Errol Stoddart prayed with the crowd and committed to become more visible in the community. "It is our prayer

that our efforts will bring our community that much closer to the kingdom of God," Stoddart says.



*More than 600 attended the Church of the Oranges' annual health fair.*



**NEWS**

**Paterson Church Hosts Back-to-School Event**

The First church of Paterson in Paterson, N.J., recently held its annual health and back-to-school symposium. Sharon Francis, Health Ministries leader, and Sheryl Williams, church clerk, organized the event. They chose the theme “God’s Last Day Kids” to emphasize mind, body and spiritual health.

Sessions catered to the needs of students and parents. Presenters spoke about breast cancer and healthy eating options, and organizers supplied food and lots of giveaways. Star of Hope Ministries, a local group dedicated to helping the homeless and underserved,



*Church members Sharon Pierre and Althea Cooke make fresh smoothies for health fair attendees.*

contributed 70 backpacks filled with school supplies donated by First church’s supporters. Backpack recipients also received free haircuts and hair braiding.

“The outpouring of gratitude from the many neighborhood attendees made every sacrifice and expense worth the while,” says Pastor Richard Campbell.

**Two Long-Serving Pastors Retire From Ministry**

After many years of dedicated service, the Allegheny East Conference (AEC) says goodbye to Pastors Brenda Billings and Augustus O’Giste, who both recently retired.



Billings began her pastoral ministry in the AEC in 2000. During her service, she led two Maryland churches, Bladensburg and Metropolitan in Hyattsville. While at Metropolitan, she mentored many future pastors now serving around the world.

“I am sure Brenda’s retirement will lead her to new ways to witness for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,” shares Henry Fordham, AEC president.

Since coming to the AEC in 1979, O’Giste pastored numerous congregations in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. He also served as a director for the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries departments from 2000-2006.



“Pastor O’Giste’s warm personality and determined Christ-like attitude will continue to win souls for the kingdom of God,” Fordham says.

**Prison Recognizes Hillside Church Volunteers**

At their annual volunteer recognition dinner, the Dauphin County Prison in Harrisburg, Pa., recently honored the Hillside church’s Prison Ministries team with a plaque. The team has worked in the prison for the past three years.

“Each Sabbath morning, we send a team into the prison for Bible studies and prayer with an average of 40 inmates,” says Marie Green, Prison Ministries leader. “Additionally, we often conduct full worship services at the prison.”

Michael W. Dyson, Hillside pastor, reorganized the Prison Ministries team in 2011 to include church members from the Harrisburg Hispanic church. They now work together to reach English and Spanish-speaking inmates.



*Dauphin County Prison administration representatives honor Pastor Michael Dyson (center) and members of the Hillside Prison Ministries team for their dedicated service.*



## Glenville Hosts “Fight for Your Life” Revival

This summer Pastor MyRon Edmonds and the Glenville church in Cleveland embarked on the “Fight for Your Life” tent revival, which was designed to cover great controversy themes in their Euclid neighborhood.



*Pastor MyRon Edmonds (second from left) pauses with part of the revival team.*

The leadership team planned an “old school” tent meeting, complete with folding chairs and hand fans. Church members and visitors met every Wednesday and twice on Sabbaths to listen to the Word of God. Church members shuttled visitors to the tent in a school bus and provided activities for the children. Night after night, people gave their hearts to Christ.

While services were held three times a week, prayer warriors teamed up with Andrews University (Mich.) field students throughout the week to visit homes in the community. They prayed with families, responded to their needs, provided Bible studies and encouraged faith in Christ. After five weeks of intense revival in the Euclid community, there were 44 baptisms and seven professions of faith.

“The [movement] of God has been so great in Euclid, and the need ever present, that Glenville added a second church service,” shares Edmonds. “Glenville’s mission of ‘Ready. Set. Go.’, which encourages members to go into the community and share the gospel, has been exemplified through this evangelism effort, and we are excited to see where God will take it next.”

## Glenville Installs First Female Pastor

Allegheny West Conference and the Glenville church in Cleveland recently hired their first female pastor, Regina Johnson, who is serving as Glenville’s administrative pastor.

Johnson graduated from Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, Md., in May 2012 with degrees in religion and business. She then joined the WAU Office of Ministry team as chaplain of ministry. While serving at WAU, Johnson led in the development of Crossroads, a student-led church service, started several new ministries and helped prepare 85 students for baptism.

Johnson has also been actively involved in service and outreach around the world. She led an evangelistic series in Uganda, which led to the baptism of more than 200 people. In India she led a group of students who graduated more than 2,300 children from Vacation Bible School. She most recently traveled to Brazil, where her mission group restored and renovated a rehabilitation center, conducted a “world cup” soccer tournament for children and helped form a cheerleading squad for children in a low-income neighborhood.

Pastor Johnson encourages all to “stop trying to

understand God and understand that He knows what He’s doing.” From her experience, she says she has realized that listening to God’s voice is the best thing one can do.

MyRon Edmonds, Glenville’s senior pastor, says the local church leadership couldn’t be happier to have Johnson on their staff.



*Family members support Regina Johnson (far left) during her installation as a pastor of the Glenville church.*



## Akron Bethel Gives Community School Supplies

The Akron Bethel church in Akron, Ohio, recently distributed more than 100 backpacks filled with school supplies to school-aged children from their surrounding community.

After a shortened worship service one week, members gathered in the church parking lot and distributed the backpacks. This ministry effort, organized by the church's HANDS (Helping All Neighbors Discover Salvation) ministry and Children's Ministries departments, was a product of a desire the church had to do tangible ministry "Beyond the Walls."

The event connected church members with many local children, their families and supplied an opportunity to discover other ways the church could serve. Church leaders are hoping to expand the event next year.

"We were very glad to see what God is able to do



*Volunteers prepare to distribute backpacks to members of the Akron, Ohio, community.*

through us when we purpose to be His hands and feet," says Ndubuisi Nwade, pastor.

## New Brazilian Church Opens in Columbus

For more than nine months, future members of the First Brazilian church of Columbus, in Ohio, prayed, asking God for direction about where to meet, says Sergio Romero, multicultural director for the Allegheny West Conference.

"We asked God to send us the people and open doors. We were looking for a place to meet, and God responded as He always does, in an amazing way," Romero says.

John Boston, pastor of the Central church in Columbus, helped answer that prayer when he offered the use of his church's fellowship hall for services.

On the first Sabbath the group met, David Rilo, pastor of the First Brazilian church congregation, said, "We [welcomed] more people than anticipated. God is good. We are ready to work."

Romero presented the message that Sabbath. He then presented a certificate of dedication to Pastor

Rilo and his leaders. Sixty-three people attended the service. The program finished with a Brazilian-style lunch for all the attendees. "A great spirit of love and fellowship was felt," Rilo says.

Rilo adds, God performed many miracles just to bring the new church together, including sending Jorge Floriano and Silvio Luiz Da Silva, pastors from Brazil, to help Rilo launch the project. God also brought more unexpected helpers for the project. During the first service, a new couple showed up and shared their testimony. The husband is a former church member that recently made a promise to God to come back to church and lend his talents, which he will do at the First Brazilian church.

The group recently held an evangelistic crusade in October and will participate in the Caravan of Hope that is traveling across the Columbia Union Conference territories this fall.



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## School Chapel Becomes a Blood Bank

**B**lue Mountain Academy (BMA) students, staff and community members recently participated in their first blood drive of the year. Besides providing the community with much needed blood, the drive provided a powerful reminder of the importance of the spiritual health nurtured in BMA's beloved chapel.

Staff at Miller Keystone Blood Center in Reading, Pa., told BMA administrators that the region was in dire need of blood. Blood donations during the summer months tend to be slow, often leading to dangerously low blood supply levels in the fall. With this in mind, BMA staff set a goal of donating 30 units of blood, which could be used to save up to 90 lives.

On the morning of the blood drive, staff and students were excited to begin. However, as the Miller Keystone crew set up in the customary location in the BMA gym, their sensors warned of pending disaster. Because of a sustained heat wave in the area, temperatures were running too high to continue with a blood drive that day in the non-air conditioned gym. They quickly realized they needed a new location to keep the donors safe.

Without hesitation, administration looked for a plan B. Deeming the home economics room large



*Maria Clara Canhassi, a senior, donates blood.*

enough, but not capable of providing the proper temperature, leaders said, what better place to donate life-saving blood than the chapel?

The significance of this location was not missed by student leaders and staff. The chapel is the place where students attend church, gather for FOCUS week and come to know Jesus. It's the place where they hear of Christ's redeeming blood shed freely to remove the bondage of sin.

"What an honor to serve and give in such a place with such an impactful message," says David Morgan, principal.

Although the team had a new location, they had lost valuable set-up time and the Miller Keystone staff was worried that they wouldn't have enough time for the blood drive. Senior Sharyl Cubero and her team of volunteers sprang into action. They quickly cleared the chapel platform, brought extra chairs and moved supplies. They worked for 30 feverish minutes, allowing the blood drive and a powerful spiritual allegory to happen that day.



*The Blue Mountain Academy chapel serves as a temporary blood bank.*



## Sign and Apparel Shop Provides New Work Opportunities

For more than 60 years, Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) has impacted lives of students by providing a strong academic and spiritual foundation. The school also provides job training to help build students' work skills.

"As we continue to grow, we look for other opportunities to help continue to enrich our student's lives," says David Morgan, principal.

BMA leadership recently added BMA Sign & Apparel to the work program.

"This signifies the school's commitment to providing real-world training as the teachers prepare the students to become leaders in the years ahead," adds Morgan. "Your willingness to partner with this exciting new venture ensures that the next generation of young people leaves our doors with more than just a diploma, they leave with a confidence and knowledge to impact their world in a positive way!"

BMA currently offers a wide variety of items in their sign and apparel business. They produce T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and other apparel for organizations at competitive prices. They also print high-quality banners at the shop. They have already worked with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Andrews University (Mich.), the Faith for Family initiative, the Columbia Union Conference,



Emily Hardinger, a junior, and Amanda Mott, a BMA alumnus, display one of the BMA Sign & Apparel shop's shirts.

Pathfinder clubs throughout the United States and Simplicity Christian Academy in Allentown, Pa.

For more information about the program, visit [bma.us/bmasign](http://bma.us/bmasign).

## At Retreat, Seniors Bond, Promise to Lead

Blue Mountain Academy's 60th senior class recently embarked on the adventure and tradition known as



SOLD, the Senior Outdoor Leadership Discovery weekend. As the seniors prepared for the trip to a secret location, they had many questions in mind.

SOLD is a tradition for seniors and their sponsors. The details of the weekend are a well-kept secret. The theme often centers on bonding as a class, and how they can help become leaders at BMA.

"This experience was unlike any other. We started out separate, in our own cliques and preconceived thoughts of each other, and ended with new bonds with people we never thought we could relate to. On our last day, we didn't want to leave and begged to stay for another week," says senior Sharyl Cubero of the event.

"BMA's mission—to provide a Christ-centered, Seventh-day Adventist education that leads students into lives of service for God—is the center of what we are about," says David Morgan. "As this senior class embarks on their final year at Blue Mountain Academy, we ask for your prayers!"

# THE CHALLENGE

chesapeake conference newsletter

NOVEMBER 2015

## Claim the Next Step in Your Walk with Jesus

The Sermon on the Mount is the first major message given by Jesus recorded in the New Testament.

Interestingly, the last word in the Old Testament is “curse.” Seeing the needs and desires of the multitude, Jesus begins His message with the word “blessed.”

He leads them up on a mountain. Just as Moses, who was representing the children of Israel, went up on a mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God, Jesus as the new lawgiver provides an expansion of the law. Without distracting from the significance of what God had already given, Jesus explained the far-reaching applications of God’s will.

Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes. Ellen White explains that, “Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience” (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 13). So, the next 10 verses of the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5:3-12, describe the blessings that progressively come to His followers.

Amazingly, Jesus describes a value that the world would scoff at and couples it with a reward from God. While no one wants to be poor in spirit, they are promised the kingdom of heaven. The mourners are comforted. The meek, who seem too gentle and submissive to go far in this life, actually inherit the Earth. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—hopefully each one of us—are filled. The merciful, whom have experienced so many of God’s blessings already, receive mercy. Those who are pure in heart have nothing obstructing their view of God. The peacemakers are claimed as God’s children.

Jesus culminates with the blessing we are most likely to resist, persecution for the sake of following Him. It is only natural that when we become more like Jesus, we will be less like the world and resented for it. But, our reward is great.

So, claim the next step in your walk with Jesus.



Rick Remmers  
President

## NEWS

### Frederick Students Build Faith at Outdoor School



Fifth- through eighth-graders from Frederick Adventist Academy in Frederick, Md., gather for Outdoor School at Mount Aetna Camp in Hagerstown, Md. For three days, the students explored the nature center and participated in challenging exercises, including a high ropes course. Eighth-grader J.D. Linton says the team-building activities helped him feel closer to his friends, and that the whole experience brought him closer to God.—*Beckie Carbaugh*

### Adventurer Family Fun Day Draws 300



Nathan Choi and Lucas Greenleaf, Hagerstown Hawks Adventurer Club members, relax during a trip to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., on the annual conference-wide Adventurer Fun Day. The event drew some 300 Adventurers and their leaders and families. Following a scavenger hunt and awards ceremony, the children toured the facility and got an up-close look at aircraft, including the Space Shuttle Discovery.—*Ann Reynolds*

PHOTOS BY BECKIE CARBAUGH AND ELIZABETH GREENLEAF



## Williamsport Promotes Wellness at Festival

Members of the Williamsport (Md.) church recently set up a booth under the banner of “LIVECLEAN,” giving away freshly made peach smoothies as an alternative to the more typical carnival style foods at the Canal Days Festival in Williamsport. The annual event attracts vendors and craft merchants for a weekend of simple country pleasures.

Volunteers peeled peaches, handed out smoothies and talked with people about their concerns, encouraging them that simple lifestyle changes are not difficult to make.

As visitors sipped the frothy drinks, they browsed the table loaded with *Vibrant Life* magazines, *Steps to Christ* and other books on health.

“Honestly, we had planned on serving 300-400 smoothies, and were totally surprised when we wound up serving 2,700!” says Barbara Brostom, project leader. “I loved the looks on people’s faces when they found out it was all free, and that we weren’t trying to sell them anything. ... It was just the best feeling to know we were right where God wanted us at that moment.”

More than 40 church volunteers staffed the event. When at last the canopies were taken down and the numbers tallied, 400 pounds of peaches, 83 pounds of bananas, 290 pounds of ice, 24 pounds of honey went into smoothies, and volunteers distributed more than 600 pieces of literature.



Volunteers make peach smoothies at the Canal Days Festival in Williamsport, Md.

The day after the event, someone called the church office. “Are you that church? The one that gave away the peach smoothies at Canal Days?” asked the caller. “I have a couple questions about something in the magazine I got there. Could you help me?”

—Kandace Zollman

## Pastor’s Web-Based Prayer Meeting Has Global Reach



Pastor Josh Voigt, seated beside son Nathan, conducts an international prayer meeting from his dining room.

Josh Voigt, pastor of the Middletown and Catoclin View churches in western Maryland, wakes at 5 a.m. for morning devotions when the house is quiet and his wife and three little boys are usually still sleeping.

Recently he began hosting an online prayer meeting from his iPhone using an app called Periscope. Voigt asked for prayer requests. By the second or third day, there were 200-250 requests from all over the world. Most participants are Millennials from Europe and the Middle East, he says, and many are questioning their faith. Many are Muslim. He reads from the Bible and prays with them and helps them find the answers they seek. Some have expressed the need for a Bible and he has supplied one.

He hopes that others will see that people can be reached for Christ with as few tools as a Bible and a cell phone. “I want to encourage others to find a way to have a ministry of their own,” says Voigt.

PHOTOS BY CELESTE VOIGT AND KANDACE ZOLLMAN



# MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT

NOVEMBER 2015

## New Spencer Member “Grateful” for God’s Love

John Peña was introduced to the people and teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early 1970s when he watched Bill Dull, then pastor of the Spencer (W.Va.) church, and his wife, Lois, help three of his family members dealing with alcoholism. But, Peña had questions about the Adventist Church—about its doctrine, about Ellen White and about hypocrites who might be in the church.

Wanting to “put his past behind him and get a new start,” he says he moved near Beckley, W.Va., and worked at a local gas station and convenience store. One day the store’s credit card machine stopped working. A man had started fueling up, but the machine wouldn’t accept his card. Peña paid for the man’s gas, trusting he would come back the next day to pay. He was impressed with the man’s character.

The next day, the man and his wife came back to pay. Once again, Peña was impressed with the way the man carried himself.

Peña’s father-in-law, who no longer consumes alcohol and is now a faithful Adventist, invited Peña to church that weekend, as he had often done in the past. Peña decided to go and was amazed to learn that the man who had returned to pay for the gas was the church pastor.

Peña began to earnestly study his Bible and, after moving back to Spencer after several years away, began attending the Spencer church on a relatively regular basis. For seven years Peña attended, watched, listened, asked questions and took Bible studies. He also quit smoking, which had enslaved him for 35 years. He felt the Holy Spirit pulling at his heartstrings and says he saw the Holy Spirit working in his life.

Peña then attended the church’s “reaping” series that was part of the Mountain View Conference’s REACH Appalachia initiative and the Voice of Prophecy Bible study request card mailing. He attended regularly, but still didn’t make a commitment to join the church.

The Friday before the day designated as “baptism Sabbath,” Pastor Daniel Morikone called Peña, who off-handedly asked, “What do I bring to be baptized?” Prior to that phone call, the pastor had admonished



Peña “to get your eyes off people and off issues and onto Christ. If your focus is on the behavior of other people, you’ll never be ready for baptism.” Morikone spoke to Peña whole-heartedly about Christ, a loving Savior.

Peña finally realized that all of man’s arguments, warnings and wooing were not enough to make him commit. It was at this turning point that he realized that Jesus wanted to be with him, wanted to come in and sit at the table with him, like real family does, and just share His life with him. When he started looking at God through the life of Christ, he understood his need for baptism, for that new heart, completely healed, that Christ promises. That’s when he started really thinking about baptism.

Peña, now a baptized member, speaks lovingly about those who helped him find “the path of life,” and he wants to do the same for others. He says, “The more I see about the beauty and love of God, the more grateful I am. I’m just very grateful.”—Chris Hasse

## Wellness Camper Shares “Awe” at Camp Results

**B**etty Rader attended the Mountain View Conference’s (MVC) 2015 Wellness Camp. David Meyer, a certified Wellness Coach at camp, recently interviewed Rader about her experience:

**David Meyer:** Betty, you came in to the Country Life Natural Food store, an Adventist-owned store in Glenville, W.Va., and Alice Meyer, a member of the Glenville (W.Va.) church, gave you a brochure about the conference’s wellness camp held at the Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va. What made you decide to attend?

**Betty Rader:** I was really interested in doing something better for my health. I’m getting older and have to take care of myself. I wanted more energy and to lose some weight.

**DM:** What did you enjoy the most about the camp?

**BR:** Not having to cook and learning how to cook the different foods. I could ask the cooks what was in things and how to prepare them. They were very helpful. The setting at the camp was special too. The fresh air and the scenery helped me de-stress. It was such a gorgeous place.

**DM:** What was most helpful to you health-wise?

**BR:** The cooking classes, where we learned how to make different things, were the most helpful. Learning



*Betty Rader and David Meyer share a hug after the wellness camp graduation ceremony.*

how to use the herbs and seasonings to make simple food tasty was a great help, but all the classes were enlightening. The instructors explained things in regard to preventing heart disease, cancer, depression, diabetes and weight loss. It was eye opening to learn how much we can benefit our health by lifestyle, and how little is actually controlled by heredity.

**DM:** What results did you experience?

**BR:** My cholesterol dropped 35 points. I’m still in awe. I was hoping for maybe a 10-point drop. My energy levels shot up and I was able to walk more easily. Years ago I broke my right ankle and have problems with it being stiff. So an important goal I had was to be able to walk up stairs normally—stepping up with one foot and then the other. I was able to do this after the first week. The stretching and bending exercises in the mornings limber you up. I lost six pounds during the camp, and my blood pressure went from 139/83 to 118/63 by the end. I had other benefits as well.

**DM:** How have you been doing since wellness camp?

**BR:** Well, I’ve lost another eight pounds, and I’ve continued on the plant-based diet and space my meals five hours apart. Wellness camp was such an invigorating experience, more than I ever dreamed it would be.

For more information on next year’s wellness camp, call (304) 422-4581. It is scheduled for July 24–August 5.



*Betty Rader receives a diploma from Daniel Morikone, MVC Health Ministries director, at the wellness camp graduation ceremony.*



### Teenagers Participate in First Local Mission Trip

Fourteen teenagers recently participated in New Jersey Conference's first local mission trip. Teens were selected from churches throughout the conference and spent 10 days participating in the "My City My Passion" project run by the youth department. The project included three aspects: acts of compassion (service), leadership training and fun activities.

During the mission trip, the teens ran a street Vacation Bible School (VBS) in Newark, where they sang, played, helped and ministered to kids visiting the park with their parents. They also cleaned city streets and shared their faith.

Paulo Macena, youth director, shares, "This was a pilot project, but since it worked so well, we will do it every year. We are challenging the youth in New Jersey to give one week of their summer vacation to participate in our local mission trip [where they will be] trained in



The 14 teen volunteers who participated in the "My City My Passion" mission trip pause from their duties.



Volunteers paint the faces of children in a park.



Volunteers clean the streets of Newark.

leadership skills and serve the community they live in."

Although only 14 teens participated this year, dozens have asked to join next year, Macena reports. Jessica Branda, 17 and a member of the Wayne church, says, "This experience brought so many benefits for my life: spiritual growth, so much fun and an opportunity to be a light in a stranger's life."

Nicole Medina, 16 and a member of the Tranquility Valley church in Andover, shares: "During the week we spent together, we became a family, a family that takes care [of] each other and that cares for others around us. It was an amazing experience!"—Cristina Macena

### Vine Haven School Hires New Teacher

The New Jersey Conference recently welcomed a new teacher to Vine Haven Adventist School in Vineland. Violeta Molina is teaching kindergarten through third grade.

"We are sure she will be a great addition to our school system and a blessing to Vine Haven," says Sadrail Saint-Ulysse, education superintendent.



## First Filipino Church Hosts Health Expo

The members of First Filipino church in Plainfield recently hosted a health expo. The goal of the event was to build relationships in the community by sharing information on health issues.

A majority of the members have careers in the health field, so they were well prepared to host and run the more than 12 stations aimed to help improve the visitor's health. Members of the community learned about proper nutrition, received blood pressure checks and back massages, learned about the benefits of water, and received prayer and counsel with Pastor Manny Jardiniano.

Two days before the expo, local firefighters and police contacted Margie Magbanua, the event coordinator, and volunteered to help teach attendees about safety. "It was truly a blessing to receive help from the government officials of Plainfield," says Magbanua.

Church leaders plan to host more health events in the future. To help with the next event, contact Magbanua at [laurismargie@msn.com](mailto:laurismargie@msn.com).—*John Magbanua*



*The Plainfield police and firefighters teach young visitors about safety.*

## Young Adult Artist Preaches Through Art

Yasmin De Jesus, a young adult member of the Luso-Brazilian church in Newark, loves Jesus and preaches Him through what she knows best: art.

De Jesus will graduate in December with a bachelor's in fine arts from Montclair State University (N.J.). She has been painting since she was in high school. Her art includes lots of color, emotion, culture and faith.

De Jesus has painted murals and illustrated books. Her work can be seen in several buildings throughout

*"I don't think this is how Jesus Christ looked, but I believe it's how he felt," says artist Yasmin De Jesus.*



*This painting by Yasmin De Jesus was inspired by Ephesians 6:10-12, verses about the armor of God.*



Newark. She has received many scholarships and awards, including the NJCU Sculpture Award (2008), Poster Illustration Art Award for NBA Nets (2009) and the Art in the Atrium scholarship.

De Jesus was baptized in 2012 and says she finds purpose in expressing her faith through art. "The Bible says, 'Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God' (1 Cor. 10:31, NIV). Ever since I became a follower of Christ, I have tried to live by this verse. It has made a huge impact in my art. It gave my work purpose and meaning," De Jesus says.

"Many in the art world, if you asked them, 'Who is your favorite artist?' they would say Leonardo, Picasso or Caravaggi, but I can honestly say that my favorite artist, my role model and my example is the Creator of all the universe. Who is a greater artist than Him?"

See more of De Jesus' artwork at [yasmindejesus.webs.com](http://yasmindejesus.webs.com).





## What is Next for the Ohio Conference?

This year many faithful readers of *Mission Ohio* have focused on the closing of Mount Vernon Academy (MVA) in Mount Vernon. Now that this difficult chapter is coming to a close, many constituents have asked, “What is next for the Ohio Conference?” and “What will happen to our young people?”

A majority of MVA faculty and staff have successfully found employment. Eighteen constituent underclassmen were enrolled at MVA last year. Seventeen remain in Adventist schools this year. Sixteen are at boarding academies, and one attends the Clarksfield Seventh-day Adventist school in Wakeman. The conference awarded those attending board academies a \$5,000 scholarship and the Clarksfield student \$2,500.

Earlier this year, conference leaders appointed a Secondary Education Visioning Committee to help determine the future of secondary education in Ohio. Now that permanent department directors are in place, “this committee can begin its work in earnest,” says Ron Halvorsen Jr., conference president. Other tentative visioning ideas include:

- Allowing more students access by helping Adventist education become more affordable for Ohio families;
- Running strategic day schools in population centers;
- Creating scholarships for constituent students;
- Using technology to aid and network all conference schools, including smaller elementary schools.

### Ohio Youth

Recognizing the loss of fellowship opportunities for Ohio youth, conference education and youth leaders have begun collaborating on programs designed to reach youth in grades 9-12. Later this month, the conference will host a Bible camp at the Camp Mohaven Retreat and Conference Center in Danville, designed for all high-school aged young people to learn to study, understand, apply and “love out” the Word of God.

Leaders are also exploring the following ideas: mission trips to the large cities in Ohio; a pilot program connecting young people in small churches with a Sabbath School class of a larger group via the Internet; a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) camp; and a writers workshop for homeschooled youth.



*Edward Marton, conference youth director, and Ken Knudsen, conference superintendent of education, collaborate on ways for the two departments to reach youth in grades 9-12 in Ohio.*

### Finances

Halvorsen has been candid about the financial health of the conference. After explaining the strain on conference finances in 2014, constituents generously sent offerings totaling \$264,000. This year Halvorsen said he began praying for a 10 percent tithe increase. “Healthy conferences generally experience a 5 to 6 percent growth annually,” explains Karen Senecal, conference treasurer.

As of August 30, the Ohio Conference is up 4.35 percent for the year, compared to last year at this time, and Senecal anticipates figures to bounce back to the 6 percent gain experienced by the conference earlier this year. While this does not mean the conference can increase spending, it does allow current spending to be covered.

### Future

“Conference leaders are optimistic and excited about what 2016 has in store for our churches, schools and constituent families,” says Halvorsen. “We look forward to sharing exciting stories of answered prayers and what God is doing across this great conference.”

Conference leaders urge members to join Halvorsen’s prayer for a “very special blessing” for Ohio in 2015.

## Hispanics “Share Hope” at Camp Meeting

Where can a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church enjoy a weekend of Christian fellowship, healthy meals, spiritual guidance, evangelism training, great music and outdoor activities? Where can it happen all in one place and for less than the price of taking the family out for dinner?” asks Pedro Simpson, Ohio Conference Hispanic Ministries coordinator. “At Camp Meeting!”

Earlier this fall, more than 450 members from Hispanic churches across Ohio met at the Mohaven Retreat and Conference Center in Danville to celebrate their annual camp meeting, themed this year “Compartiendo Esperanza” or “Sharing Hope.”

“We were blessed by our guest speaker, Julio Juarez, a retired pastor from Chicago,” says Simpson. Juarez led members through a journey of the Christian church from its very beginnings, pointing out the principles followed by the apostles that made the primitive church grow. He encouraged members to apply those principles to the church in the 21st century. Some of his other topics included “the church as a center for training and not for entertaining,” “making disciples, not members” and “training disciples to tell their personal testimony.”

Participants in the Hispanic assistant lay pastor training also enjoyed a session on “how to fight fatigue in the ministry of small groups.”



*Pastor Pedro Simpson baptizes Jose Arce and his wife, Michelle Correa, at the “Share Hope” camp meeting.*

Simpson says the weekend concluded with “10 beautiful souls surrendering their lives to Christ” through baptism. He added, “Compartiendo Esperanza’ was indeed a camp meeting filled with the Holy Spirit and hope.” Leaders and members say they are eager to return next year.

## Women’s Ministries to Host Christmas Tea

The Ohio Conference Women’s Ministries department recently ended their partial hiatus by inviting ladies of all ages to attend next month’s



Celtic Christmas Tea at the Mohaven Retreat and Conference Center in Danville.

“Now that the situation with Mount Vernon Academy has settled down, we are able to actively explore alternative venues for our annual events as well as exploring new programs for the women of our conference,” says Heidi Shoemaker, Women’s Ministries director for Ohio. “We hope this new time and location will become a new tradition for our annual tea.”

Leaders will host the special Celtic Christmas Tea, Sunday, December 13, from noon to 2 p.m. While no childcare is available, young ladies of all ages are welcome to attend and sit with their family. Tickets are \$10 and include a seasonal menu of teatime treats, a joyous message given by special guest speaker Karen Senecal, Ohio Conference treasurer, and a free gift.

For more information or to register by December 1, visit [ohioadventist.org](http://ohioadventist.org) or call (740) 397-4665.



# Pennsylvania Pen

NOVEMBER 2015

## Engaged Community Members Host Grand Opening

A small group of mission-minded members saw their prayers answered when they celebrated the grand opening of the Engaged Community church, a church plant located in a storefront on East Philadelphia Street in downtown York. Members, visitors from surrounding churches and guests from the community began the day with Sabbath School and worship. They later hosted a lunch inside the new church, which has rooms for worship, a youth Sabbath School class, a kitchenette and a small classroom.

The afternoon activities drew many from the neighborhood. Members gave children backpacks filled with school supplies and balloons. Church youth offered face painting and led out in games. Ben Parrish, community and cooperate health manager at Adventist WholeHealth in Reading, joined the Engaged team to offer free health screenings and literature. Worship team members also played music on the front sidewalk.

Prior to forming the church plant, more than two dozen members were meeting in the home of Derek and Sheri Sandstrom. Praying and searching for a church home where they could connect with downtown York residents. "The storefront property was an answer to prayer," says Sandstrom. "Already we are seeing God draw people."



*Ben Parrish interacts with a local resident.*

Kevin Monaghan, an elder at Engaged Community, spent much of Sabbath morning outside, greeting those walking past the new church and inviting them inside. "We've had several people just walk off the street and join us for worship," he states.

Members say they are excited about the future and plan to offer a health seminar and other outreach events that meet practical needs, such as clothing distributions. "We want to meet their needs, let them know we care, then introduce them to the gospel," shares Monaghan.

## Washington Church Celebrates 125 Years in Ministry

The Washington church recently celebrated 125 years of service to the Lord. More than 100 attended the weekend services, including local district members, former members and visitors.

More than 60 people traveled in from Georgia,

California, Washington and 16 other states to rejoice in and honor the memory of those whom God used to bring them safely into faithful adulthood. Many participants said they were thankful for opportunities the church provided them, including the ability to study at a local Adventist elementary school and financial help to attend Laurel Lake Camp in Rossiter and Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg.

More than 84 people attended the Sabbath morning service. Elder Wayne Owen led out in a heavily attended Sabbath School, and Mark Beaven, retired pastor of the district, gave the morning message. Other former pastors and members who grew up in the Washington church to become ministers and teachers, participated in the activities.

An afternoon service of rededication, featuring a message from Ray Hartwell, conference president, closed the celebration.—*Bob Williams*



## REACH Philadelphia Becomes Official Church

This fall the REACH Philadelphia congregation became the newest established church in the Pennsylvania Conference. With a good turnout of family, friends and neighbors, REACH met in their temporary storefront location on Ogontz Avenue in Philadelphia for a special service, where visitors witnessed REACH Philadelphia members review the core beliefs of the church and sign the charter after worshipping together.

To make the event extra special, REACH Philadelphia also celebrated their fourth year of ministry by taking a photograph inside the new Ministry Center on Limekiln Pike. Tara VinCross gave a prayer of dedication for all that would be accomplished within the new space. Leaders then invited everyone to write on the walls and floors and pray over each section of the unfinished building.

Within the center, members will provide activities and tutoring for children, and students will learn about urban agriculture. The center will also be home to the REACH Columbia Union Urban Evangelism School students from across the country. Another center feature will be the future café open to all.



*Ray Hartwell, president of the Pennsylvania Conference, officially recognizes the leaders of the REACH Philadelphia church.*

To close out the celebration of so many milestones, attendees enjoyed a corn roast and cake in the side courtyard, where one day, guests will be welcomed.  
—*Krystal Irrgang*

## More than 1,100 Participate in “Faith for Families”

The forecast predicted rain, but that didn’t dampen the spirits of members who spent an afternoon going door to door across Philadelphia and Reading for the Pennsylvania Conference’s “Faith for Families” event.

The 1,120 volunteers included church members



*During the Faith for Families event this fall, Pennsylvania church members distribute literature and prayed with people at their doors.*

and friends, pastors, teachers and students from local Seventh-day Adventist schools, including Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, and conference leaders. It rained in the communities around Philadelphia, but not in the city itself until after the teams returned to the churches. In Reading more than 120 people went out, despite torrential downpours, to connect with people.

The groups gathered at 13 churches, then distributed door hangers, literature and prayed with people in the neighborhoods surrounding the churches. Volunteers returned to the churches with stories of how God had used them—many sharing that those they met said their visits were an answer to prayer. Others were excited that people they met signed up for Bible studies. Volunteers also invited people to upcoming evangelistic meetings.

“We’re expecting 100 baptisms, [because of this activity]” says Tim Bailey, director of leadership and spiritual growth, who is already working with the pastoral team to plan next year’s “Faith for Families” event. “We want to see this be an ongoing part of our evangelism efforts.”

PHOTO BY RAY HARTWELL



# Potomac People

NOVEMBER 2015

## Potomac Constituents Focus on Church Mission

**W**e need to stay focused on defeating the enemy,” said Bill Miller, conference president, at the Potomac Conference Corporation’s second quinquennial constituency meeting at Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md. “[We are] reclaiming God’s kingdom, finding new resources to plant churches and schools and continue supporting and growing our congregations and classrooms. The greatest resource we have is God, and He has given us each other to be about His business and fulfilling His mission.”

Miller’s report echoed the tone of the meeting, in which nearly 700 delegates gathered to discuss church business and voted for all officers and vice presidents to continue in office.

After his detailed report of Potomac’s financial status, Dave VandeVere, vice president for finances, opened the floor for any questions delegates had in regard to the conference’s budget and future plans.

“God has called us to dedicate ourselves to the purpose of bringing His kingdom here,” VandeVere said. “How inadequate our financial resources can seem for the challenge, but we trust in God’s promises as highlighted by the pen of inspiration in *Patriarchs and Prophets*: ‘Let none waste time in deploring the scantiness of ... visible resources. The outward appearance may be unpromising, but energy and trust in God will develop resources. The gift[s] brought to Him with



*Potomac Conference and Columbia Union Conference officers pray together before the business session begins.*

thanksgiving and with prayer for His blessing, He will multiply” (p. 243).

While the meeting focused on happenings between 2010 and 2014, administration focused on God’s calling to passionately continue His work.

“Our goal is that each church and school radiates the hope and wholeness of a spiritually maturing and numerically growing healthy body,” said John Cress, vice president for pastoral ministries. “This means that we will continue to identify, train and empower pastors and teachers as servant leaders to build healthy, disciple-making churches and schools.”

Jorge Ramirez, vice president for administration, said administration will look for ways to improve systems dealing with statistical information and ways to better serve employees and supply them with necessary resources.

“An important factor in moving forward is having a mindset of growth,” said Keith Hallam, vice president for education. “In our children and schools, that means growth in academic ability, physical and social well-being, character development and, most importantly, spiritual health.”

Miller added that Potomac members are privileged to pray the Lord’s prayer. “Your kingdom come—we each long for that day. The day Jesus will return, the day tears will be wiped away. We long for the day when all will be made right and the enemy of the church will be destroyed and God’s eternal kingdom is eternally established.”



*Delegates voted for the following leaders to continue in office: John Cress, vice president for pastoral ministries; Jorge Ramirez, vice president for administration; William “Bill” Miller, president; Dave VandeVere, vice president for finances; and Keith Hallam, vice president for education.*

PHOTOS BY TONY VENTOURIS

# Potomac People

## Farmville Family Fun Day Draws 250

For a while, God has put on my heart that we needed to reach the children in our community," says Alfreda Seals, Youth Ministries director for the Farmville (Va.) church. "We needed to show the community we care." Seals wanted to attract a younger crowd to her church and, with the support of members and conference funding, she organized a community-focused Family Fun Day.

"I wanted to have something that people could easily see from the streets," Seals explained. "So, I rented a tall blow-up water slide, bungee runs, kiddie pools and a lot of other things to entertain the children. We also organized games, such as balloon tosses, three-legged races, face painting and crafts."

The event drew almost 250 people. "Over and over again people said this was one of the best things they'd seen [our] church do," shared Shawn Kelley, pastor. "They told us what a blessing we were to the community, and we were asked when we'd be doing another event."

Organizers advertised the event on local radio stations and in the local newspaper, but Seals and Kelley say the best idea they had was to contact the local elementary schools and ask them to advertise the event in their classrooms. On the registration forms for the event, many people expressed an interest in being contacted by the church for future events, including the community guest day that followed several weeks later and a weekend singles retreat.



More than 250 from the community and church joined Farmville members for their Family Fun Day.

## LivingWell Hires New General Manager



Last month the leadership team at LivingWell, formerly known as the Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store, welcomed Laura Worf as the new general manager. Worf says she is humbled by the way God has ordered her steps.

"I'm excited to be serving with the LivingWell staff as we work toward the goal of increasing the mission and sales of the store, and provide products that promote healthful living and a relationship with Jesus," she adds.

Prior to answering this call in Silver Spring, Md., Worf served as vice principal for finance and facilities at Auburn Adventist Academy (Wash.), where she closely worked with a team to ensure the smooth and accurate management of the academy's finances and managed the maintenance of its rental properties and industrial park.

Worf also worked as chief executive officer for Olympia Master Builders (Wash.), a five-county, more than 1,000-member association, that she successfully led through the housing crisis and helped raise to the 27th largest association in the United States.

"As we reviewed the events leading to this point, we were all convicted of God's leading," says Dave VandeVere, Potomac's vice president for finances and chair of LivingWell's board. "We are rejoicing in His blessings as we begin this new chapter with Laura as our leader."



# Spotlight

## on Spencerville

NOVEMBER 2015  
*Highlights from Spencerville Adventist Academy*

### Students Strengthen Relationships at Retreat

The entire high school student body at Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) recently traveled to the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md., for its annual spiritual retreat. The retreat is deliberately placed early in the school year so that students and staff have a time of spiritual bonding. Event organizers planned the retreat with the hope the effects of spiritual unity gained at Mt. Aetna will be seen in the day-to-day ministry of the school throughout the rest of the year.

David Bracetti, pastor of the Leominster All Nations church in Leominster, Mass., was the keynote speaker for the event. Bracetti shared his personal testimony and provided guidance to students around the central theme of “Identity.”

“In a world, which increasingly provides Christians with a convoluted menagerie of identity choices, students [can] discover that their true identity is found only in the cross,” Bracetti said. “The love and grace that Jesus demonstrated through His death and resurrection provide us with the basis for our identity.”

Sherri de la Cruz, a senior, says she was “enriched, both spiritually and socially, by the speaker and the events.” The students were often mixed into large groups where they were given the opportunity to discuss spiritual ideas together.

Jacob Harris, a first-year senior, says, “The preacher really connected with me, and I appreciated how all the students got together to discuss his ideas. The



*Members of the skit team—Jeff Fennell, Reignon Prillman, Kamila Oster, Tiffany Buddy, Kierstin Zinke, Adriana Pacheco and (back row) Alex Hess—brought each meeting’s theme to life with an illustration relevant to the topic.*

connection between everyone was really special. I realized that when we all open up our hearts to each other, it creates an environment in which we can really grow spiritually.”

The highlight for many was an activity where leaders blindfolded a large group of students and then required them to “find their way to heaven while avoiding hell.” Students used their “skills” as Christians to navigate the various influences, promptings and persuasions voiced by faculty members, to decide on the correct route. Students spent time discussing the lessons and ramifications of each activity to their real spiritual journey.

Richard Machado, a freshman who did not “make it to heaven” in the game, reflected that he “listened to a beautiful voice, which sounded like it should lead me to heaven, but I realized that not all things that sound good on the outside are necessarily good.”

SAA leaders ask for continued prayers, so students will daily find their identity in Christ and fulfill His mission to be lights to the world.—Tim Soper



*Pastor David Bracetti presents a message to students and staff about finding their identity in Jesus Christ.*

## NEWS

### Homework Program Adds New Section Focused on Practical Skills

In an effort to provide opportunities for academic growth and learning, the High School Homework Help Program (H3P) meets twice weekly after school in SAA's library/media center. Organized two years ago by Paty Serrano, science teacher, H3P assists all students who would like to broaden their knowledge and become better learners.

Tutors and teachers are available to engage more with students and address possible gaps in their retention of classroom instruction.



Berkeley Poulsen, a junior, gets extra instruction from Cliff Wright during H3P.

This year a life learning segment was added to the program at the suggestion of Cliff Wright, Jr., SAA's administrative fellow. For the last 15 minutes of each meeting, teaching staff share insights in areas of learning not found in the classroom. Topics include personal finance, witnessing, social media responsibility and time management, among others. "Every meeting has a different topic, allowing us to intentionally focus on growing students in all areas of life," says Wright.

### Biology Department Partners with Towson University

The SAA biology department is excited about their second year partnering with Towson University (Md.) to provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) labs to students. The Towson University Center for STEM Excellence Bioscience Education and Outreach Program lends SAA science equipment free of charge so that SAA students can do STEM activities in the biology classroom.



Sophomore Erika Membrano performs a lab using agarose gel electrophoresis to determine if a mystery patient has a genetic disorder.

"Opportunities like this, where equipment and lab materials are provided for more advanced labs, give all of our students more opportunities to apply what they learn in the curriculum to their everyday lives," says Paty Serrano, biology teacher.

### Chorale and Orchestra to Perform Rutter's *Magnificat*

SAA's chorale and orchestra will present John Rutter's *Magnificat* at the Spencerville Adventist church, 16325 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md., December 5 at 4 p.m. The concert will end with an opportunity to sing along with the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*.

### Calendar

November 8	National Honor Society Induction
November 23-27	Thanksgiving Break
December 5	Choral/Orchestra <i>Magnificat</i> Concert
December 8	Band Department Christmas Concert
December 10	Choral/Bells/Orchestra Christmas Concert
December 13	ACT Testing
December 14	Prospective Student Open House, 9:30 a.m.
December 18	Christmas Break Begins, 12:15 p.m.



# SHENANDOAH VALLEY ACADEMY HAPPENINGS

NOVEMBER 2015

[www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org](http://www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org)

## We Helped “Seti” Find a New Village

**K**aren M. Flowers, an elder at Potomac Conference’s Charlottesville (Va.) church, shares the story of how her church helped “Seti” navigate from being a refugee from war-torn Burundi, to living in Virginia and attending Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA). Along the journey, they found that helping Seti helped the church grow through their own transition, and hope that other churches can experience the same thing:

On the Sabbath Seti’s family entered the Charlottesville church carrying a letter stating they were Seventh-day Adventists, we could only smile and hug. Over time we learned more of their harrowing journey, from war torn Burundi, through a traumatizing escape from genocide in Rwanda, to a makeshift life in a large refugee camp in Tanzania, on to their final destination in Charlottesville through the relocation efforts of a non-governmental organization that helps refugees become American citizens.

On a concurrent journey, the Charlottesville church has grown in the last decade from a small gathering of older members to a diverse, young congregation of nearly 100 weekly worshippers, representing 31 nations. More than two dozen children and youth bring new energy and new challenges to this growing

congregation as they seek to become a faith community where all people experience grace, find wholeness and become great lovers for God by embodying the life and teachings of Jesus. Seti, a young man just entering 10th-grade, with a tender heart for God and big dreams of becoming a doctor, is one of these youth.



As our journeys continue to merge, we become increasingly aware of just how difficult it can be for an immigrant family to make their way in a strange cultural setting and among many who do not fully appreciate their journey. In time the difficult hurdles standing between Seti and the spiritual, social and academic growth God has in store for him come into focus. As our vision clears, we see God’s leading in bringing Seti and his family to us, even as He prepares the Charlottesville church to become the caring, supportive “village” community they left behind so long ago.

As Seti’s parents shared their desire for their son to attend an Adventist school, we felt God’s call to move into action. Principal Dale Twomley’s encouragement gave us confidence to take the next faith steps: “No qualified student will be turned away because of finances if the student really wants to be at SVA and is willing to work, the parents will do their part, and the church is willing to do its fair share.”

Seti and his family are convinced he is where God wants him, at SVA. I can’t help wondering how many other young people sit in our pews with big dreams of preparing themselves to serve Jesus for whom SVA and other Seventh-day Adventist schools may be the best path toward fulfilling those dreams. Who will find them and become their village?



Seti (front row, second from left) and his family and supporters attend SVA registration.

## Senior Publishes First Book

What do you do when you are a 13-year-old who isn't allowed to watch television or play video games? This was the question that Darius Bridges asked himself after school one day as he sat in his bedroom searching for something to do. Bridges, the grandson of artists and son of a musical mother, has always been creative.

As an award-winning student who garnered ribbons for his poetry and artwork, he loved to draw, paint and use his imagination to create all types of images. So, in his bedroom that day, he decided to make an origami puppy. He drew a happy face and polka dots on the puppy and named it Dot. Dot is a happy-go-lucky puppy who wants to spread happiness throughout the world.

The next day, Bridges took his creation to school. His classmates embraced Dot and then encouraged him to create more puppies. He created 12 pups, including those he named Pierre, Angel, Zad, Raven, Twitch, Gadget, Lily, Aleksander, Damien, Laura Love and Super Pup.

Four years later, as a junior at Takoma Academy (TA), Bridges finished writing the children's stories about the lives of the 12 pups. His stories promoting self-esteem, creativity and wholesome values were so captivating, his parents, Conrad and Cheryl Bridges, decided they wanted other students to read them. Conrad encouraged his son to write stories for all the



PHOTO BY RICHARD JOSEPH GORDON

pups, and Darius' stories were compiled into a book and published in March 2015 under the title *Stories of the Personality Pups*.

The pups live in the town of Puppyville, each with their own name and unique personality, from happy to shy, energetic to cool and artistic to smart. The pups enjoy all kinds of fun activities, and three of them have sing-along songs.

Darius wants the Personality Pups to help children from all over the world identify with a pup that best matches their own personality. He wants them to use the book to explore and use their own imagination by reading their stories through the illustrations of the pups. Today Darius is an entrepreneur who has sold hundreds of books to children in the region.

While Darius, who is president of the senior class, wrote most of the stories before attending TA, he says the staff, vast resources and diverse people attending TA caused him to take a second look at his book and change some things in it. "Takoma Academy is a school full of different cultures, interests and personalities. TA's diverse environment helped shape my personality to be more realistic and relatable," he shares. "I thank Takoma Academy for their love and support throughout this journey of becoming an author."

For more information on *Stories of the Personality Pups*, visit [mypups.com](http://mypups.com).



## We're Living Out Stewardship

The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care" is Webster dictionary's definition of stewardship. The administration, faculty and staff at Washington Adventist University (WAU) are entrusted with resources, as Ellen G. White states it, "to prepare students for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come" (*Education*, p. 13).

Our resources come from many places, such as tuition, subsidies and significant consistent gifts from donors. We have used these resources and gifts to create a learning environment that is welcoming to all God's children who seek a Christian education at WAU.

This fall, with the help of financial gifts bestowed by our many supporters, we granted more than \$3.1 million in scholarships to students who could not afford to pay. Our practice is to support our students in all aspects of their needs. Our enrollment is growing and, in turn, the financial needs of our students are also growing. Learn more about Christian education at WAU at [wau.edu](http://wau.edu).

We also invite you to celebrate the blessings of God at our annual, free, Christmas concert, December 4, 7:30 p.m., at the campus' Sligo church. It is truly one of the most beautiful events of the year, and our students would love to see you there.

My favorite Christian author also wrote, "He who cooperates with the divine purpose in imparting to the youth a knowledge of God, and molding the character into harmony with His, does a high and noble work" (*Education*, p. 19).



**Weymouth Spence**  
President

## First Homeschooler Enrolls in Dual Credit Program

A homeschooler since third grade, Emilie Flores from Hyattsville, Md., is now entering her senior year of high school and taking on a new challenge. She has enrolled in Washington Adventist University's Dual Credit Program, which allows students to take college courses for high school and college credit. This program is designed to give eligible students a jump-start on college, says John Gavin, dual enrollment program coordinator.

Juniors and seniors who place at college level in math and English tests are eligible to take approved courses. In addition to welcoming more homeschoolers to take courses on WAU's Takoma Park campus, students from Columbia Union Conference academies may also enroll.

Students from nearby Takoma Academy visit the WAU campus to take classes, while those at some of the boarding academies, such as Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, Pa.; Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md.; or Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va., take classes on their respective campuses from instructors qualified to teach college-level credit courses.

Flores will be taking most of her classes at WAU this year, including English 101, Jesus and the Gospels, weight training and the First Year Experience, a class

designed to help new students adjust to university life. Next year she is planning to attend WAU and is considering a music major. She loves music and plays the violin, piano and organ and has been involved in singing groups.

"I look forward to being in the classroom with other Seventh-day Adventist students, and learning alongside them," Flores says.

For more information about WAU's dual enrollment program, call Gavin at (301) 891-4153.



PHOTO BY EUGENE SIMONOV



## Graduate Gets Award for Being Agent for Change

Earlier this year, 2015 Washington Adventist University political science graduate Phillip Malcolm received the Newman Civic Fellow Award at the WAU Student Recognition Ceremony given by the university's Betty Howard Center for Student Success.

The award honors student leaders committed to creating lasting change, and honors Frank Newman, one of the founders of Campus Compact, an organization that awards and recognizes student leaders who are active and engaged in their communities. Campus Compact leaders selected Malcolm from more than 201 Campus Compact member colleges and universities from 36 states and Washington, D.C.

In this short interview, Malcolm shares about his volunteer activities and what this award means to him:

### What volunteer activities were you involved in at WAU?

I served as the Student Association president during the 2013-14 school year, was part of the Black Student Union and Campus Ministries, was captain of the men's soccer team for two years, mentored Takoma Academy students in the First Generation Ambassadors Program, recruited student volunteers for the Takoma Park City Lunch & Learn Program, and helped with local political campaigns.

### What inspired you to help in so many ways?

We hear about how Washington Adventist University is in the business of "Engaging Minds and Transforming



Phillip Malcolm (second from right) joins Weymouth Spence, WAU president (far left), Rep. Benjamin Barnes (center) and WAU students at the Maryland Higher Education Day in Annapolis, Md.



PHOTO BY ROSS PATTERSON

Lives." This is something that I decided to buy into during my time there. This phrase is so very important to the calling that God has given us. Jesus has afforded us the opportunity to make positive changes in our world, and we must take advantage of that.

### What opportunities does going to WAU provide for students who want to affect change?

Our university is located in such a pivotal part of Maryland. We have access to a local government that is willing to collaborate with us to make Takoma Park an enjoyable, engaging and transformable community. Because of WAU, I was able to step out of my comfort zone and strive for excellence. I received this award because of a God in heaven who continues to bless me as I do the work He has prepared for me.

### What words of wisdom would you like to pass on to current students?

As an alumnus of Washington Adventist University, I urge my remaining brothers and sisters to take heed of Jesus' call to go into the community and engage minds and transform lives. This is what it means to be a Newman Civic Fellow. This is what it means to be a child of God.

Malcolm is now working at the Immigration Law Firm of Robinson Kirlaw & Associates, P.C., in Greenbelt, Md., and plans to attend law school in the fall of 2016. He is also continuing to pursue his political aspirations by getting involved in campaigns for public office with the goal of one day running for public office in Maryland.



## The Warmth of People

After 14 years with the same organization, another job opportunity never crossed my mind. I was being asked to leave sunny Florida in the tail end of winter to fly to a place in southern Ohio that had snow on the ground.

Arriving a day early, I recall feeling that first shiver as I left the warmth of the airport and headed to my car rental. I decided to head directly to Grandview Medical Center in downtown Dayton to speak with the heart of the team, the employees, before my interview the next day. I was dressed in the warmest casual attire I could find. On a Sunday afternoon I expected to fly under the radar and get the honest truth about what it was like to work for Kettering Adventist HealthCare.

When entering the hospital from the parking garage, the first thing I noticed was the Creation Wall. What a beautiful landmark located in the lobby that shows the foundation of this faith-based place of care and healing. The receptionists warmly smiled and asked if they could help me. When I asked "Do you like working here?" their smiles got even bigger. I would ask this question to everyone I met, stating that "I am interested in working here." As soon as I mentioned this, the details of how much they enjoyed their colleagues, their leadership, and their opportunity to express their faith came out. A nutritional services employee even offered to help me apply for a night shift position if I was really interested.

As I was leaving my secret shopping experience, my mind was moved by my heart. I wasn't just going into a day of interviews the following day, I wanted to learn more about what made this place different and how a passion for serving and caring can be so consistent and warm in a much cooler climate.

As I started my new role and met new people, they would ask, "Where are you coming from?" After I would mention Florida, 90 percent would look at me puzzled and say, "Why would you leave Florida?" My response has always been the same. I share my secret shopping experience, saying it was easy to leave the warmth of the weather in Florida for the warmth of the people here at Grandview.



*Luis Chanaga*

**Luis Chanaga**  
Vice President  
Finance and Operations

*Member of Kettering  
Seventh-day Adventist Church*

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*"...it was easy to leave the warmth of the weather in Florida for the warmth of the people here at Grandview."*

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# *your healing* MINISTRY

## New Emergency Center is Meeting a Need

By Christina Keresoma

Kettering Adventist HealthCare is no stranger to the community of Preble County. For generations, Preble County Medical Center has been serving exceptional care from the heart of Eaton, Ohio. Over thirty physician specialties have been meeting the community's daily healthcare needs. But those needing emergency care used to have to travel over 30 miles to the nearest emergency center.

All that has changed with the opening of the Kettering Health Network Emergency Center in Preble County this past August. The community can now access 24/7 emergency care that is staffed by Board Certified emergency physicians, as well as on-site pharmacy, imaging, and laboratory services.







The community's response was immediate and enthusiastic with thousands showing up to celebrate the open house a few days before the first official business day. Since opening, the emergency center has cared for an average of 40 patients a day—double the estimated 22—which shows how access to high-quality emergency care is serving a profound need in the health of this community.



# NEWS



NOVEMBER 2015

## A Need for Missionary Support Close to Home

Over 21 years ago, Good Neighbor House began as a small pantry providing food, clothing and household items to a few hundred



families in need throughout Dayton, Ohio. This year, more than 21,000 people are receiving medical and dental care along with access to those basic life sustaining needs of food and clothing. The need for these services has grown by 36% in the past 5 years. The work of mission outreach is alive and well!

The highlight of each day is the chance to pray with those walking through our doors while providing them spiritual and emotional resources to help them integrate into a healthier tomorrow. Miracles happen as people find their purpose and dignity in life.

It is solely through the compassion and dedication of a caring, faith-filled community that Good Neighbor House exists and thrives to stand in the gap of our most vulnerable neighbors.



Each week, more than 100 volunteers represent the hands and feet ministry of Jesus Christ by nourishing the mind, body and spirit. With your prayers and support, we know this ministry has a vibrant future.



Our goals include:

- Expand the full-service medical clinic for the underinsured with chronic diseases.
- Create wellness programs to help families set and reach higher goals for themselves.
- Increase spiritual and counseling service.
- Grow the number of people served through our wellness programs, pantry, community garden, diabetes services and dental care.

Christ makes it very clear in Matthew 25 that His true followers are those who help “the least of these”.

Please join us in being a “Good Neighbor” by



giving to our “2015 Annual Campaign” which supports the growing programs and services that reaches thousands of neighbors in need each year.

**To give, please visit [goodneighborhouse.org](http://goodneighborhouse.org) and click “Donate”. Thank you for helping us to empower a community.**





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AND SEE  
THAT THE  
LORD IS GOOD.  
PSALM 34:8



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*Annual Christmas Concert*  
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Conducted by James Bingham and Preston Hawes

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4 at 7:30 PM**  
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located on the university's campus

The evening will feature performances by the  
university's orchestra and chorale.

*The concert is free and will also be live streamed on [sligoschurch.org/media](http://sligoschurch.org/media)*



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### Gravy Quik is back

Just in time for your holiday entertaining. Gravy Quik, long a favorite of Adventist cooks looking for a vegetarian gravy, has just been reintroduced. And we're giving you a "Welcome Back" gift, with a 50¢ off coupon for Gravy Quik.

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# Bulletin Board

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## EMPLOYMENT

### NURSE PRACTITIONER

**NEEDED** for Adventist health ministry/free community clinic in Wyomissing, Pa. Full-time position with benefits. Salary based on community wage and experience. Please send résumés to AHollingshead@AWHN.org or Alysha Hollingshead, 1025 Berkshire Blvd., #700, Wyomissing, PA 19610, or call (610) 685-9900, ext. 24, for more information.

### RN LIVE-IN POSITION:

Elternhaus, a Seventh-day Adventist assisted living near Columbia, Md., seeks qualified RN to live in 2-4 days per week as housemother. Qualities seeking: mature, patient, nurturing individual with experience in hospital med surg, nursing home or assisted living care assessment. Responsibilities include: 8 hours patient care, 8 hours delegation/teaching caregivers, 8 hours sleeping on-call. Meet the spiritual and emotional needs through quality time spent with residents providing social interaction, including Bible study and worship services. Call Diane at (410) 707-7071.

**UNION COLLEGE** seeks a senior vice president for academic administration (VPAA), beginning June 2016. The VPAA leads out in the vision, strategy and execution of the college's academic goals. Doctorally qualified Adventist candidate will be an experienced leader, innovative thinker and excellent communicator. See [ucollege.edu/faculty-openings](http://ucollege.edu/faculty-openings). Send CV to Dr. Vinita Sauder, [visauder@ucollege.edu](mailto:visauder@ucollege.edu).

**SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY'S** Business Department seeks finance faculty to begin spring or fall term 2016. Successful candidate will possess proficiency in previous teaching experience. Candidate should hold earned doctorate in finance or related field. Master's candidate with minimum of 18 graduate hours in finance considered. Instruction in multiple areas preferred. Send cover letter and CV to Dr. Aaron Moses at [mosesa@swau.edu](mailto:mosesa@swau.edu).

**WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY** School of Education and Psychology is seeking applications for a tenure-track, faculty position in psychology to begin September 2016. We are seeking

an enthusiastic person who will lead and direct WWU's master's program in counseling psychology. An earned doctorate in clinical or counseling psychology or counselor education is required. Applicants should be license-eligible in the state of Washington. For more information and to apply, please visit [jobs.wallawalla.edu](http://jobs.wallawalla.edu).

### PROGRAMMER WITH A

**PURPOSE:** Empower Adventist ministries to fulfill the gospel commission and proclaim the three angels' messages, using Web and mobile technologies. Openings for experienced Ruby on Rails and/or AngularJS developers. Learn more about K3 Integrations, our career opportunities and the other technologies we use at [bit.ly/K3-dev](http://bit.ly/K3-dev).

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**PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE** seeks faculty member in psychology department. Qualified person should have earned doctorate in psychology (ABD will be considered) and undergraduate teaching experience. For more information and to apply [puc.edu/hr](http://puc.edu/hr).

**PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE** seeks faculty member in nursing department. Qualified person should have earned master's degree in nursing; doctorate in nursing or related field preferred. For more information and to apply, visit [puc.edu/hr](http://puc.edu/hr).

**PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE** seeks manager for college market. Candidate should possess a degree/experience in business/management or related field. Knowledge and experience in merchandising, logistics and financials. For information, visit [puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings](http://puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings).

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### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

seeks faculty in management/marketing. Responsibilities: teach marketing and related courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as performing various duties described in the full position description. Qualifications: doctorate in marketing, as well as sufficient teaching experience in marketing at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and to be actively engaged in research, student advising and supervising student projects. For more information and to apply visit: [andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job\\_6](http://andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_6).

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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**AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE MANAGEMENT** with an expected job growth rate of 17% between 2010-2020, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Southern Adventist University offers an associate's degree in automotive service, as well as a bachelor's in automotive service management. Both programs feature hands-on experience with ASE master mechanics and a focus on incorporating Christ-centered values in the classroom as well as the workplace. Southern's students have an 85% pass rate on ASE certification exams. Part-time work opportunities and internships are available in the auto shop on campus. Visit [southern.edu/tech](http://southern.edu/tech) for more information.

### THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT JOB OUTLOOK

is strong with an expected growth rate of 16% between 2012-2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Southern Adventist University offers an associate's degree as well as a bachelor's in construction management. Students learn to unravel the complex components of commercial and residential construction projects and gain management techniques and leadership skills needed to supervise a job site. Southern's program features hands-on experience, while incorporating Christ-centered values into both learning and working environments. Visit [southern.edu/tech](http://southern.edu/tech) for more information.

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## Sunset Calendar

	Nov 6	Nov 13	Nov 20	Nov 27	Dec 4
<b>Baltimore</b>	5:01	4:54	4:49	4:45	4:43
<b>Cincinnati</b>	5:33	5:26	5:21	5:17	5:15
<b>Cleveland</b>	5:17	5:10	5:04	5:00	4:57
<b>Columbus</b>	5:25	5:18	5:13	5:09	5:07
<b>Jersey City</b>	4:48	4:41	4:35	4:31	4:29
<b>Norfolk</b>	5:04	4:58	4:53	4:50	4:48
<b>Parkersburg</b>	5:21	5:14	5:09	5:05	5:03
<b>Philadelphia</b>	4:54	4:47	4:42	4:38	4:36
<b>Pittsburgh</b>	5:12	5:05	5:00	4:56	4:54
<b>Reading</b>	4:56	4:49	4:44	4:40	4:38
<b>Richmond</b>	5:08	5:01	4:57	4:53	4:52
<b>Roanoke</b>	5:18	5:12	5:07	5:04	5:02
<b>Toledo</b>	5:24	5:17	5:11	5:07	5:04
<b>Trenton</b>	4:52	4:45	4:39	4:35	4:33
<b>Wash., D.C.</b>	5:03	4:57	4:52	4:48	4:46

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A FESTIVE HOLIDAY CONCERT

Featuring:  
**"Brother Heinrich's Christmas"**  
 by John Rutter

Presented by the  
**New England Youth Ensemble**  
 of  
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At the  
**Frederick Adventist Church**  
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**Saturday, Dec. 12,  
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For further details:  
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## CORRECTION

In the October feature "Taking it to the Streets," the Pennsylvania Conference was unintentionally omitted from the conferences that partner with the Columbia Union's new REACH school. In fact, Pennsylvania leaders and constituents are heavily involved in all REACH programming.

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# COLUMBIA UNION REVOLVING FUND

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By providing loans for more than 2,000 projects to date, CURF is helping the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in Southwest Ohio and all across the Columbia Union.

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Since 1968 the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) has been providing low-interest loans and financing for Seventh-day Adventist church and school building and renovating projects so as to facilitate growth. What started as a \$200,000 fund with investments from members has grown to a \$168 million resource that makes ministry possible.



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## mind·ful of my spiritual needs

Richard Matthews, Graduate Student,  
Master of Arts in Religion

*Mr. Matthews is the Deputy Director for Regional Combatant Support, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. He is also a retired Army Officer who has been faithfully serving God and Country for 30 years.*

"I have never experienced the fellowship and genuine concern for each other that I experienced at WAU. Our fellowship was not limited to class but extended to our homes, to potlucks, and get-togethers outside of class.

At WAU, the spirituality is the difference."

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