

NEWS NOTES



Southern College students who participated in the 1986 program to feed the homeless.

Southern College Students Feed Homeless in New York City

Thanksgiving vacation for many students at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists means spending a week in New York City rather than at home. For the past 10 years the Behavioral Science Department has sponsored a study tour of New York City. Course objectives include studying ethnic peoples and urban problems, fostering a sense of mission to urban populations, visiting social agencies, and reinforcing a service orientation among the students by having them participate in the Salvation Army Thanksgiving Day feed for a few of the estimated 30,000 homeless of New York City.

Over the past 10 years the students have contributed approximately 2,000 hours of volunteer time on Thanksgiving Day. They have assisted with feedings in the Bronx, Harlem, the Bowery, and other Manhattan locations. This past Thanksgiving 45 volunteers from Southern College helped feed nearly 3,000 people in lower Manhattan. The group's activities merited a spe-

cial award from the New York Salvation Army.

The program provides ample opportunities for students to get involved with the indigent guests. On occasion they have been able to pray with a troubled individual, and they have invited several homeless people to church the following Sabbath.

The students receive stocking hats and scarves to give to street people. Each student must locate a homeless person, engage the person in conversation, and then give him or her the article of clothing. The students are often surprised by the friendly response, and usually find the encounter to be very rewarding.

Other activities include visiting some of the ethnic communities in New York City, touring selected urban areas with the Hunter College Urban Studies staff, and meeting with Mother Hale, the 81-year-old Harlem resident who works with infants born to drug-addicted mothers.

Students have been enthusiastic about the study tour. Invariably they say, "This is the best Thanksgiving I've ever had." The varied experiences seem to enhance appreciation of racial

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and ethnic subcultures, increase sensitivity to the needs of the disadvantaged, and renew a commitment to service.—Ed Lamb.

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Harris Pine Mills— and SDA Schools

What will the recent declaration of bankruptcy by Harris Pine Mills mean to the Seventh-day Adventist school system? Doomsayers have predicted the closing of one or more academies and dramatic declines in the financial resources and student enrollment of others. Is this pessimism warranted? What is being done to help the schools cope with the problem? Read on.

When Harris Pine Mills, which had been a leader in the production of unfinished pine furniture, filed for bankruptcy in December 1986, the closures and layoffs affected employees at 26 branches in 15 states as well as at the home office in Pendleton, Oregon. Most of the factories were operated in connection with Adventist schools.

A number of church organizations have sought in various ways to blunt the impact of the layoffs. The North Pacific Union Conference, where about 175 students worked at five mills, has established a fund to assist those students. "We don't want any students to drop out of school because of lack of employment," North Pacific President Bruce Johnston said in announcing the fund.

Under the program, \$30,000 would come from 1986-1987 funds in the union education department. Additional funds will be drawn from union conference operating reserves. Johnston is calling for a lay taskforce to seek alternative industries for Northwest SDA campuses.

Individual campuses have developed creative solutions to the employment problem. At Champion Academy (Colorado), for example, plans are underway to transform the mill into a factory for processing disposable kitty-litter trays. Jefferson Academy (Texas) is absorbing some of the losses while a portion of its mill employees are now assembling telephone components.

Upper Columbia Academy (Washington) has expanded its broom factory.

In Central California, 46 students worked at the milling plant at Rio Lindo Academy. All have

been reassigned temporarily to on-campus jobs. Some Rio Lindo students were able to work at orchard pruning when a visitor offered to stay on to teach the students pruning techniques.

At Monterey Bay Academy, where 65 students worked at two Harris branches, about half of those laid off have been reassigned to other industries.

The Indiana Conference voted a \$20,000 appropriation to assist student employees of Harris Pine Mills.

Broadview Academy (Illinois) has expanded a new electronic assembly plant to employ more students.

In Michigan, a lay advisory voted up to \$20,000 from the Michigan Advance Fund, a conference-wide financing program, to assist students laid off by the bankruptcy.

The Columbia Union Conference, which had Harris Pine Mill outlets at three of its academy campuses, has voted up to \$185,000 to pay for student employment and is searching for new industries for its schools.

At a number of locations, local businesses expressed interest in employing the students from Harris Pine Mill factories.

As an act of concern and compassion, the General Conference on December 10 made a gift to all mill employees—regular and student—of an amount approximately equal to two weeks' pay.

Also, the future of the organization may not be as pessimistic as it once appeared. U.S. Bankruptcy Court Trustee John Mitchell, quoted in the Portland, Oregon, *Oregonian*, said there is "more than a distinct possibility" that the sawmill will be sold, and that 19 former Harris Pine plants in the United States are now open and functioning. The three mills that are expected to close permanently are located in College Place, Washington; Geneva, Illinois; and New Market, Virginia.

Whatever the final outcome of Harris Pine Mills, the church remains committed to helping students who have suffered from recent events. Fred Stephan, Director of Education for the North American Division, sums it up this way, "Harris of Pendleton has played a very significant role in the education of thousands of Adventist youth. The church at large, aware of the impact and importance of the work-study program, has once again demonstrated its interest and concern by providing whatever is necessary so that Adventist young people can obtain a Christ-centered education." □