

MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

OUTLOOK

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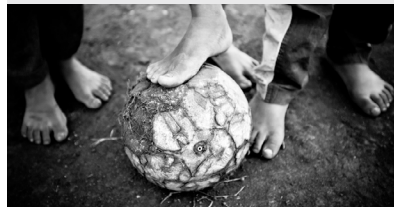
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Seven Miraculous Births
outlookmag.org/siete-nacimientos-milagrosos/

RAISING RESILIENCY

As we continue our 2023 focus on Thriving through Resiliency, we take a look this month at several groups of Adventist young adults and how they are flourishing in their chosen communities despite the challenges of the past few years that have, unfortunately, negatively impacted much of the population.

These gifted and passionate individuals are filling their mental and emotional cups through spiritual practices that allow the overflow to bless those around them. They are living out the promise of Hab. 3:19: "The Sovereign Lord is my strength...He enables me to go on the heights." We can truly share in their joy as we realize that spirituality is flourishing across multiple generations in our communities.

As you read their stories I pray that you will also receive in greater measure the abundant life Jesus Christ promises to each of us through the presence of His Spirit. May you ask Jesus what will help you most to thrive and grow as we continue preparing to live eternally with saints and angels.



BRENDA DICKERSON
editor



ON THE COVER

Linda Mong'are is a vital part of the Southview Table Talk initiative.

More on p. 8

Photo by Marty Wood

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Thriving through Engaging *Young Church Leaders*

As we focus this year on raising resiliency in Adventism, I can't help asking myself a few questions. Is there anything more important than engaging our young adults in the work of the church? Or putting in their hands opportunities for leadership? Or challenging them to be on the front lines of ministry and evangelism?

I want to talk about two important reasons we need to engage our young adults like never before.

Engagement leads to long-term commitment

First, study after study has shown when a young adult signs on for a significant ministry opportunity within our church, they are much more likely to stay attached and involved with the church throughout their life. Young adults who sign up to be student missionaries, summer camp staff and literature evangelists have a special bonding to the church and its mission and often go on to become leaders in our movement.

As a former youth director, I have firsthand knowledge of this phenomenon. I am amazed at how many young people whom I worked with at summer camp or were

in our conference's magazine program have gone on to become teachers and pastors, local church elders, deacons and deaconesses, and Pathfinder and Sabbath school leaders. I believe once someone at an earlier stage in life gets a taste of ministering to others and leading them to Christ, they never want to stop doing that.

So, my encouragement to all church members is to seek out the young adults in your church and invite them to get involved in a significant way in ministry. Think about how you can support them in their ministry journey—whether it be financially, through mentoring or just opening the doors for them and encouraging them to step through. What you will be doing is helping prepare the next wave of church leaders.

Trust fosters mission success

Secondly, we need to turn over the reins of many leadership positions to young adults right now. We forget this church was carved out in prayer by a group of young adults who had the vision, creativity, energy and will to see this movement grow up to become a worldwide church.

Too often we think if people are young they cannot be trusted, but this is simply not true. We need to be stretched and challenged by the new ideas they bring along with new avenues they create to spread the gospel.

I have a friend whose son joined the U.S. Air Force, and before two years was up, he was put in charge of the maintenance and readiness of a C-5 transport plane. In case you don't know what that is, it is the largest aircraft the Air Force has and is capable of transporting two large Army tanks at one time to be deployed anywhere around the world, as needed. The responsibility is staggering! He is the one to make sure it is safe for the crew and that the plane will be able to perform the actions required to fulfill their mission.

In some local churches, however, one might not even be considered to be a junior deacon at that age. Yet since the United States military sees how young adults can perform extremely crucial and technical

functions at an early age, perhaps we as a church should take note of that as well.

A healthy blend

This isn't about having only young adults in leadership or putting everyone over 50 out to pasture. It is about having all generations working together for our mission to move forward and thrive. We need each other and we need to have all generations represented in leadership.

My encouragement is the next time you have a nominating committee meeting or the church board is considering a leader for some aspect of ministry within the church, remember the young adults among you. They are loaded with talent and many are eager to be part of this amazing movement God has called us to. **O**

GARY THURBER
is president of the
Mid-America Union.



Building NOW

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. —Franklin D. Roosevelt

I am a firm believer that our youth and young adults can make significant, long-lasting and meaningful contributions to church life. I also believe they are able to do that *right now*.

Do they have all the wisdom and expertise needed? No, but who does? Every day, my prayer is for wisdom to faithfully serve in my role as president. What our youth and young adults need is to know that we who are older believe in them.

For many years I was privileged to take academy students around the globe on mission projects. One was to a summer camp in Puerto Rico. There were numerous different tasks, and we were easily able to keep our group of about 75 busy. On the second day we were there, the camp director asked if there was any way to add another project to the list. Up on their playing field, an old shipping container served as a storage unit. Unfortunately, the ground was eroding away on one side. His question was if we could shore up the container.

As I evaluated the situation, I knew I could not send my construction supervisor to do it. He was keeping all the kids busy. Yet there were two young men, Robby and Julian, who I thought were up to the task.

They were both seniors and both had already been on several other mission trips. Robby had been taking an engineering class, and he was very careful and thorough. Julian was his best friend and was as strong as a horse. I believed they could handle the challenge.

I took them over to where the shipping container was located and showed them what needed to be done. They needed to dig down in the ground to create solid footings, build support pillars out of concrete blocks reinforced with rebar, and be sure all was level across the support columns when they were finished. But before doing any of that, they needed to build temporary supports that could be removed when the permanent pillars were finished. I told them I believed they could do the job and if they had any questions to come find me or our construction superintendent. Then I walked away.

Solid foundations

A few hours later they came back to show me what they were planning. They had figured out the elevations and a way to make temporary supports. They said that at some time they would need about 40 people to lift the container up so the tem-



porary supports could be put in place. When they were ready, we came and lifted.

The next day began their real construction project. With meticulous care the footings were dug, the pillars were built, and the time came to lift once more. Only this time we would remove the temporary supports and set the container down on its new, solid foundation.

Building a solid foundation into the lives of our youth and young adults means that we utilize them in meaningful and significant ways. I believe God gifts people of all ages, and those gifts are to be used to bless all. Plus, being young often comes with an “I can” attitude. And if ever there was a place where an “I can” attitude would be needed, it is in our churches.

When I looked at those two young men, I believed they could do what needed to be done. I would challenge all of us to get to know the youth and young adults in your church and find what they can do as well. Oh, and when Robby and Julian were finished it was exactly as requested—solid, secure and level. They built, and I believe something was built into their lives as well. **0**

MARK WEIR
is president of the Dakota
Conference.



RELATIONSHIP CPR #1

Be Disruptive

IN JOHN 16:33 Jesus warns that we will have trials and sorrows in the last days. He then comforts us by saying we should take heart because He has overcome the world. While I have no delusions of being the Messiah, I believe He could have said that in the last days we will “experience conflict.” To that, I say *Take heart!* because conflict can be managed productively.

For the past 30 plus years, I’ve been a mediator. I have put myself between people who are at odds with each other. If that doesn’t tell you I’m a sick man, I don’t know what will! But it has always been a great joy to see people come into my office bitter and combative and leave able to treat each other civilly and better able to resolve their differences.

We all experience conflict at times, mainly because we are all imperfect human beings trying to deal with other imperfect human beings. We’re all in this marvelous adventure of life together, and there will be times when we’re just not going to get along. So, over the next several months, I plan to bring you practical tools, tips and techniques you can use to help you experience more peace and joy with less strife and grief.

HOW TO BE POSITIVELY DISRUPTIVE

Based on my mediation experience and training, I’ve developed Relationship CPR (Conflict Prevention and Resolution). Please note I didn’t say conflict avoidance. Avoiding conflict is often foolhardy and unproductive. Typically you end up just making the situation worse. You are usually far better off addressing the conflict—but you must do that in the right way.

While I do not advocate avoiding conflict, I am convinced you can prevent many disputes from ever occurring. I’m talking about the trivial, insignificant, minor matters that, if you’re not careful, can blow up and become something you don’t need, want or deserve. I appreciate the expression, “Not only was it not a hill to die on, it wasn’t a hill to get sick on.”

You can prevent many conflicts,

but not all. You will sometimes have significant differences with others you regularly interact with at work, home or church that you need to address, or your relationship could be in trouble.

Here’s one of my favorite tips: “Be disruptive.” I enjoy teaching this concept because when I was young I used to get into a lot of trouble for being disruptive, and now as an adult, I advocate the practice.

This is how it works. You’re in a conversation with someone who is beginning to escalate out of control. That’s likely not going to stop on its own. All you have to do is say, “Hold on. I suddenly have an urge for fresh air. How about we step outside, go for a walk and talk about this along the way?” You’ve just disrupted the negative interaction.

Once outside, simply say, “We need to understand each other. You go first. Please talk to me civilly and respectfully, and I’m going to do my best to understand you. Then I hope it will be your turn to understand me.”

THE QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING

At the fundamental root of most, if not all, conflicts is the fact that each one of us has a deep desire to be understood by the important people in our lives. It’s how we were created. Newborns have only one means of communication—they cry, hoping someone will understand their needs and respond appropriately. Then we reach the toddler stage and gain some mastery of the language. But if you have ever been around a two-year-old trying to be understood, yet no one can figure out what they are saying, you know it is not a fun experience for either party.

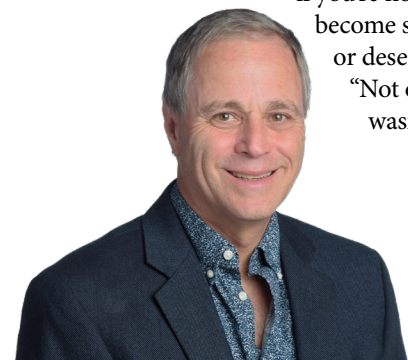
Throughout our lives, we want to be understood by others. Chances are, if you’re having an unpleasant conversation with someone, perhaps they want to be understood by you. So I heartily recommend you do what Dr. Stephen Covey suggests in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Habit five is “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” That’s a great practice that will help you prevent and/or resolve conflict.

Several texts in the Bible exhort us to live at peace with our fellow man (Heb. 12:14, 2 Cor. 13:11, Rom. 12:17-21, Phil. 2:1-5, and more). Again, this will be challenging at times, but by being disruptive and genuinely seeking to understand others first, your relationships can run much more smoothly.

I look forward to being back with you next month. **0**

RON PRICE

is the author of three books and creator of Play Nice in God’s Sandbox video series.





IF YOU ENTER any school in the Rocky Mountain Conference, you will see the acronym CHERISH prominently displayed. Spending time in one of our schools will show you the core values upon which we base our educational system:

Christ-centered learning

Honor

Exploration

Responsibility

Integrity

Service

Heroism

While the posters do add a pop of color, the words and values they represent add so much more.

Adventist education has come a long way since that first classroom in 1853. The world has changed exponentially, even in the 10 years since we implemented our CHERISH core values. What worked in the past may not work in the future, and, if we want to continue to educate students in a classroom filled with Jesus' love, we have to make some changes.

One of those changes is standards-based learning (SBL).

While some are concerned that this method is moving away from the traditions of Adventism, a closer look will reveal that it is only a framework to accomplish our calling as Seventh-day Adventist teachers. Matthew 5 states, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."

In RMC, we desire to utilize our curriculum to challenge students to find their purpose and prepare them to serve. Our work begins as we point our students to Christ, lead them to discover their God-given talents, and help them see themselves as Christ sees them. SBL is a tool that will enable teachers to teach with more targeted instruction, thus empowering students to own their individual learning experience.

More important than any form of curriculum is our shared purpose and commitment: to show our students that there is *Something Better* than what they see in the world around them. That is where our CHERISH core values came from, and it's exciting to know that Adventist educators from all over North America will be focusing on *Something Better* this summer at our Teachers' Convention in Arizona.

SHOWING THE BEAUTY OF JESUS

Parents choose Adventist education for a multitude of reasons, but overall, they want their students in a classroom that will "enable learners to develop a life of faith in God and to use their knowledge, skills, and understanding to serve God and humanity" (from Adventist Education.org).

In the Rocky Mountain Conference, our number one intention is to show our students the beauty of Jesus. Our teachers are privileged to be at the forefront of this mission, but this work cannot be done alone. Adventist schools succeed only with the help and support of the local constituency—you. Please pray for the students and leaders, and, if possible, support them with your time, skills and finances. 0

Diane Harris is education superintendent for the Rocky Mountain Conference.



Southview Church Hosts Table Talk

While on his commute to complete a Sunday morning errand, Tim Olson stumbled upon something unusual on a local radio station—an entire church service on a station known to play urban contemporary music in the Twin Cities.

Olson came across this programming unintentionally when he started his car, as it was the last station he had listened to. After hearing the service Olson had an idea.

“I thought, if they do it, why can’t we have a program on there?” he said.

Olson then took action by contacting the leadership at the Southview Seventh-day Adventist Church to discuss the possibility of hosting a radio program. After the discussion Olson contacted the radio station to gather more information on programming and check on availability for broadcasting.

“I sent an email, and they didn’t respond,” he said.

Olson had contacted the station at the beginning of 2022, and as he waited for a reply he thought maybe that opportunity may not come to fruition. Finally, after three months, he received a response from the communication team at the

radio station.

Once in contact, Olson requested a meeting between the station and Southview. He put together a presentation introducing the station to the church and also showcasing the work that Southview had been doing in the urban community where it is located. The local station responded positively and said they had a time slot available on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am for a fee.

As providence would have it, an anonymous donor provided funds for the Southview Seventh-day Adventist Church to air a weekly 30-minute program for six months. On Sunday Oct. 2, 2022, the Southview Table aired its first episode.

Little steps, big steps

The premise of the program is to offer pragmatic advice with a biblical perspective. The setting is conversational with a host and guest co-hosts discussing various topics. Members of the church



across different disciplines are invited to share their personal experiences and wisdom.

“We try to be practical on the topics that we are talking about,” said Sean Lee, senior pastor of Southview Church who also serves as host of the Southview Table Talk. “But our distinctive identity is always embedded into that. We always mention Sabbath, we always mention Seventh-day Adventist, we mention some of our teachings but it’s not specifically teaching; it’s embedded into the conversations we have during the podcast recording,” he added.

Sean Lee also says that this is a great opportunity to reach young adults who often rely on digital forms of media to receive information, not printed literature. While the launch of the podcast was focused on outreach, this project has also served as a form of in reach for the church.

“We have a chance to reach out to our own young adults from a program like this,” he said. After the launch of the podcast, a young adult church member and co-host has made the decision to get baptized.

Airing on a local radio station gives the opportunity for the church to reach demographics of individuals who may be harder to reach with traditional forms of evangelism. This opportunity also gives the young adults at church a chance to share their talents to further the reach of the gospel.

When Southview young adult member Eduardo Figueroa heard about this opportunity, he was eager to lend his musical talents to the program. Figueroa, a native of Puerto Rico, has

experience in music ministry which included leading a Christian music band that toured around different churches on the island.

“I was excited,” he said. “I still am.”

Figueroa produced the musical jingles that can be heard at the beginning and end of the podcast. He wanted to create musical sounds that remained sacred while still being modern.

“I knew something good could come out of that idea,” he said.

While the Southview Table podcast began as an idea for radio, the constant pressure and demand to produce weekly content is challenging to maintain without full-time staff. In the future the leadership wants to continue the Southview Table as a podcast with hopes of producing biweekly or monthly shows. The young adults of Southview are ready to continue this ministry.

“It’s been a great opportunity and idea to be part of a great group of friends and ideas,” Figueroa said. “I’m looking forward to seeing what other step in the ladder we can achieve together.” 0

Cindy Simba is a member of the Southview Church in Minnesota.



Listen to the podcast at bit.ly/southviewtabletalk or scan this QR code with the camera on your phone.



(facing page) Pastor Sean Lee serves as host for Table Talk, which airs on a local radio station. (below) Young adults from the Southview Church in Minnesota are committed to producing high-quality, relevant content for Table Talk.



Photos: Marty Wood





Adventist Young Professionals

Launches in Mid-America

It was fall 2019, just months before a global pandemic changed our world forever. A team of young adults felt called to launch a social media page to unite Adventist young professionals. They had seen many of their peers struggle through the transition from college to life as a professional. Unfortunately, many of these peers had moved to a new city, struggled to find a church family, and eventually had walked away from faith altogether. Adventist Young Professionals was meant to simply share stories and inspiration—to help young professionals realize that no matter what they were going through, they were not alone. Little did this group of young adults know the plan God had for this grassroots movement.

Fast forward to 2023, and AYP is a global organization fostering Christ-centered community through faith development, authentic connections and ministry engagement. AYP globally unites and locally connects 7,000 young people through a digital social network, virtual groups that foster intentional Christ-centered discussions and local city-based chapters that collaborate with churches to facilitate spiritual gatherings, service activities and social meetups.

With an emphasis toward missions, AYP seeks for all its programs to unite, engage and inspire young people to get involved in their local church. Beyond fostering intentional community, AYP educates young professionals for missional impact through an annual convention, mentorship and inspirational devotional resources.

This growth from a digital ministry to a global movement in just four short years showcases the possibilities when young people say “I will go.”

A warm and growing community

So how can the Mid-America Union Conference benefit from this grassroots ministry? How can church members and pastors support AYP in engaging young people across the MAUC in our local churches? How can we intergenerationally work together in mission to reach young adults for the kingdom?

“It is my hope that the local churches in Mid-America will provide resources and a safe place for this ministry to grow in our union,” shares Tyrone Douglas, MAUC youth director. “AYP not only provides the warm community and authentic connections for our youth and young adults to grow spiritually and socially, but also the ministry engagement opportunities and service activities that will bring vitality to many of our congregations.”

Currently on a path to launch 25 city-based chapters across the NAD by summer 2023, AYP’s founder and president Tim Kosaka met last fall with MAUC youth directors to explore opportunities for collaboration. The young professional community recently established a chapter in Minneapolis, and is collaborating with churches to engage young professionals across the territory. While its presence in MAUC is young, the impact thus far has been inspirational and empowering.

“It’s so exciting to be part of a global movement that is passionate about organically engaging young people while also working closely with our churches,” shares Gladys Saruchera, coordinator of AYP Minneapolis. “I want to help unite young adults from across our city’s many churches and conferences so they may be inspired and equipped to further their involvement in a local church. We seek to be a collaborator and supporter to the pastors and church leaders in our area.”

Saruchera says that her conversations and interactions with the area’s AYPers have inspired her as a leader. She shares about a young lady named Edith, who is a long time Twin Cities resident attending a small church where she is just one of a few young adults. Another young lady, Eden, appreciates that AYP has provided her the opportunity to meet other Adventist young people from the area’s churches and shares that it has inspired her to get more involved at her local church.

Nina is a PhD student who came to Minnesota from Kansas for a summer internship, not knowing anyone in the area. She attends a church with just a few young adults and she heard about AYP from one of them. “It was such an experience and warmth to have young professionals who share in your faith and are not only looking to do greater things in the world but also looking to strengthen our relationship with God,” she shares. “As an intern in a new big city, it felt lonely being in a different environment, but through AYP programs it was easier to meet new people. We had amazing gatherings and fellowship





Photos courtesy of Tim Kosaka

with each other. Apart from the company we shared, we also had the chance to give words of encouragement and pray for each other, which I think it's a blessing. I am so grateful to God and the organizers for such an opportunity to be part of a big family like AYP."

Finally, Saruchera shares about Angie, a young professional from Georgia who is not an Adventist and spent the summer in Minneapolis for an internship. When she was preparing to move to Minnesota, she did an online search, found AYP through social media, and decided to check out a gathering. As she spent Sabbath afternoons with AYP Minneapolis, she made new friends and learned about the Adventist faith. When it was time for her to return to Georgia, she was so glad to have found a group of Christ-focused young adults and that the AYP community had helped her stay grounded in her faith despite being alone in a new city a thousand miles from home.

"AYP is not only engaging Adventist young adults and inspiring them to serve in their local church, but it is planting new seeds for the kingdom and introducing our faith to young adults who might not otherwise step foot into an Adventist church," shares Saruchera. "When I moved to the area and signed up to launch an AYP chapter in the Twin Cities, I simply wanted to serve Christ in a collaborative and empowering ministry. While there are discouraging and hard days, AYP has been a blessing to serve with, and the stories I hear from AYPers inspire me to continue thriving to the next level."

The leaders of today

The stories of these individuals represent the experiences of 7,000 young adults who have been united, engaged and inspired by AYP's grassroots movement. Only God knows how many young people are engaged in churches because of the

inspiration and empowerment they received through the AYP community. Only He knows how many young people are still searching for a loving and empowering church family to call home.

While AYP serves a mere slice of the millions of Adventist young professionals, its narrative represents a generation who no longer are the leaders of tomorrow but who are ready to make an impact—together in mission—today. Millions of young people are saying "I will go," and are simply seeking an Adventist community that fosters not only faith development but, more importantly, authentic connections and ministry engagement.

"Let us rethink how we engage young people in our churches. Let us listen to their perspectives, empower their ideas and mentor them in love and with an open perspective," urges Kosaka. "Young professionals, let the global community of AYP provide you the community and resources you need—not to get comfortable as followers of Christ—but to grow in faith, to live in integrity and to serve Jesus Christ in love through your local church and around the globe through missions." 0

OUTLOOK News with Tim Kosaka

**Names of select AYPers have been changed at their request for privacy.*

For more information about the mission and ministry of AYP, visit AYP.me.



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Central States Pathfinders Still Finding Paths



After two years of a world-wide pandemic that we now commonly refer to as COVID, it has been a slow restart, but God is working with the Central States Conference Pathfinder leaders to motivate our young people again. Sister **Rachel Banks**, the CSC Pathfinder coordinator, has been diligently pouring into our Pathfinder leaders and Pathfinders to encourage and strengthen them to keep doing ministry to and with their young people.

In June 2022, the Master Guides and leaders came together to motivate each other, in order to help our clubs move forward in this post-pandemic period.

The Alfa y Omega Induction program from the South Omaha Spanish Church took place in May in Omaha, Nebraska. This vibrant Pathfinder club is led by **Veronica Quevedo**, who is doing an amazing job with the young people. Master Guide **Cristian Castro**



(left) The Mountain Experience Pathfinders in Minnesota are a faithful group who do well in the Bible Achievement events.

(middle) Conference Pathfinder coordinator Rachel Banks (center) gathers with other master guides during camp meeting.

(top right) The Alfa y Omega Induction program at the South Omaha Spanish Church took place in May 2022 in Omaha, Nebraska.

(bottom right) Beacon Light Trailblazers post the colors during a Veteran's Day program in Kansas City.

helped to facilitate this ceremony.

Last September the Mountain Experience Church in Minnesota came together for a Pathfinder program to showcase their talents. This Pathfinder club has been one of our consistent and faithful clubs in the Central States Conference, and did very well in the Bible Experience program sponsored by the North

American Division.

During the Veterans Day program in Kansas City, Missouri, the Beacon Light Trailblazers did a wonderful job bringing and posting the colors.

Pathfinding has always been a way of involving our youth in ministry and service to God. It is also a way to involve our young people in the vision and mission of

our local churches. We are looking forward to many more opportunities in 2023 where our Pathfinders can find more paths to do greater things for God.

Stories on these pages were submitted by Cryston Josiah, Central States Conference inter-im communication director.

Central States Hosts Hispanic Marriage Retreat



Cryston and Karen Josiah (center) present at the Hispanic Marriage Retreat in Colorado in 2022.

Forty Hispanic married couples from around the Central States Conference came together in Estes Park, Colorado, last October for a wonderful and amazing weekend marriage retreat. **Pastor Tomas DeGyves**, multi-cultural director for the Central States Conference, was able to organize this quality time together for the couples to be poured into by great workshops and presentations—and still have fun and fellowship with other couples as they strengthened their relationships.

Guest presenters for this weekend were **Pastor Carlos** and **Lilia Torres** from the New Jersey Conference, and our very own **Pastor Cryston** and **Karen Josiah** from the Central States Conference. They were able to share their tips, tools and testimonials of how to create lasting and meaningful marriages, along with remedies for how to recreate, re-energize and reignite that flame for one another that sometimes can grow dim.

Devotionals and workshops with names such

as *Marriage Is Divine*, *Marriage Is Forever*, and *Marriage Is Love-centered* were tremendous blessings to the attendees.

As a bonus, just being in the magnificent mountains of the Colorado Rockies felt like a foretaste of heaven. Waking up in the morning surrounded by the snow-capped mountains, and seeing the elk roaming freely around the grounds added a touch of nature and new beginnings that made the weekend even more refreshing.

Of course, based on the time of year, it was a little colder than some may have preferred, especially since most of the participants were originally from warmer countries. However, the food, the fun, the fellowship and the family atmosphere made

up for lower mountain-top temperatures.

We thank God that despite the odds that are seemingly stacked against marriage, God is still keeping, sustaining and blessing many marriages to be joyful, happy and long-lasting.

The conference also wants to thank the Hispanic pastors in the Central States Conference for supporting this event by sacrificing their time, energy and efforts to promote and attend. **Pastors Norris Custodio**, **Gregorio Aviles** and their wives participated in the weekend activities, and **Pastor Pedro Vargas** was able to send many couples from his district.



Photos courtesy Central States Conference



Youth and young adult director Ted Struntz baptizes a camper in Lake Metigoshe last July.

Future of Youth Ministries in Dakota Conference Is Bright

The Dakota Conference has a longstanding and strong history of supporting its young people. Even before the North and South Dakota conferences combined, each of these conferences fervently supported their youth through Pathfinder ministry, summer camp at Flag Mountain and Northern Lights, and many conference and church activities and events that were important strongholds for growing young people for the kingdom.

I was recently talking with **Elder Bill Wood**, the final youth director for the South Dakota Conference and the first one for the combined Dakota Conference. He shared a wonderful story that illustrates the commitment our members have to our youth. Wood said that on the night before a scheduled camporee, unseasonal weather began and threatened to cancel this important Pathfinder event for our kids. A dedicated member from the local church in the

area quickly contacted their National Guard Armory, apprised them of the situation and asked them if they would be willing to open up their facility and have the Pathfinders set up their tents inside the armory, so the camporee could still go on. They agreed, and our Pathfinders were able to have their camporee inside the armory. It is amazing to see what God will do when we set our focus on enriching His children.

After the North and

South Dakota conferences combined, the constituency committed to continue to run both camps, providing two unique settings for summer camp ministry. For those who may not know, our camps are 10 hours apart. Flag Mountain Camp is located deep in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota, while Northern Lights is nestled on Lake Metigoshe on the border of Canada. Despite challenges over the years, the members of our conference have sacrificially given each year to ensure our youth can come to camp. A week doesn't go by when I don't hear a story about one of our camps, like how tents were brought into Flag Mountain for campers to sleep in, how several of the mothers came in and cooked in a large cook tent, or how lay people came together and ran Northern Lights for several years so that kids wouldn't miss out on the camp experience.

It's stories like these that showcase the beautiful hearts of our Dakota members. This past summer, churches provided camper scholarships to more than 50 young people. What an impact they made on the lives of these kids! We are blessed to have such committed members who support our young people.

Past, present, future

One of the many things I love about my job as youth



Photos: Lynnette Struntz

director is going to the local churches and seeing their Pathfinder or Adventurer Club. Club ministry is a great way for our local churches to provide for the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs of our children. It's inspiring to hear both the innovative and time-tested ways clubs are reaching their communities. Our clubs are going to care facilities, connecting with groups on the reservations, taking active parts in weekly church worship and so many other things. These activities are having life-changing influences on our young people.

Our children have so many gifts God has given them. It is vital that we provide places and opportunities for them to use those gifts within the church, rather than having to go outside the church to use and grow their abilities. I really appreciate how our churches are committing to consistently provide these growth opportunities for our

Summer campers enjoy an agape supper together.

youth. And with the challenges we recently have faced during COVID, it is great to see our club ministries continuing to grow and spread throughout our conference.

However, it isn't just in camp or club ministries that our churches faithfully provide for our young people. I have witnessed great Sabbath school programs, Sabbath afternoon activities, socials, outreaches, children's choirs and bell ensembles. We also have churches reaching out to our young adults on our public college campuses, providing spiritual and social activities. These various activities all over our conference help our young people realize their place in the church now—not some future date; they are a vital part of our continuing church ministries.



With all that is going on throughout our territory, the future of youth ministries is bright. These ministries build on the great tradition set for us by committed members and leaders who saw the importance of their young people and decided to deliberately invest in the kingdom of heaven. Thank

you to all who have gone before and led, those who are continuing to lead and those who commit to give for the health and spiritual growth of our young people.

Ted Struntz is the Dakota Conference youth and young adults director.

Dakota Conference 28th Annual Men's Retreat

THE CHRISTIAN & THE NATION

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Rhonda Karr Retires After 54 Years of Dedicated Service

Entire career spent serving at one location

Courtesy Iowa-Missouri Conference



With mixed feelings, we announce that **Rhonda Karr**, Iowa-Missouri Conference treasurer since 1998, retired on Dec. 31, 2022. It is difficult if not impossible to sum up her achievements over 54 years of dedicated service.

Karr began working for the church the day after she graduated from Union College in 1968. When she started, she began as an administrative and accounting assistant for the Iowa Conference. In 1980, when the Iowa Conference and Missouri Conference

consolidated, Karr held the position of assistant treasurer and was responsible for combining the financial records of the two conferences.

While she remained in the same location for her entire career with the church, she was privileged to work with and be mentored by several well-known treasurers including **Donald Gilbert** and **Robert Rawson**, former GC treasurers, and **Tom Evans**, former North American Division treasurer.

During her career, there have been many changes.

Karr has seen five different accounting systems and witnessed the change from manual to automated systems. The role of treasury has also shifted over the years. Before human resources became a department, Karr handled employee benefits and records.

Karr said she has enjoyed her position as treasurer and the challenges it brings. “I’m a puzzle person. I enjoy the work of accounting and keeping everything in line, and everything balanced.”

Reflecting on her position, Karr shared, “I’ve enjoyed the camaraderie of working with people both in the office and in the field and helping the employees have what they needed in order to do ministry.” She is thankful for the generosity and faithfulness of the constituents and the “solid financial position” the conference is in today. “I’m thankful to God and to the constituents of this conference. Without them, there isn’t a conference,” Karr commented.

Karr said while she will miss many aspects of her job, she is also looking forward to retirement. Karr is excited to have a more relaxed pace, time to volunteer in the community and, above all, more time to spend with her granddaughter.

Words of appreciation

Dean Coridan, president of the Iowa-Missouri Conference, has worked with Karr for 36 years. “Rhonda has been very mission-minded. So, when it comes to trying to advance the mission worldwide, Rhonda just bends over backwards to help funding to get where it needs to be. It’s been a real blessing to work with her,” Coridan reflected.

As a member of administration, Coridan said Karr has played a vital role over the years. “Rhonda as an officer is a real team player. And she really helps facilitate discussions. She’s brought a sense of unity to the team,” Coridan said.

Coridan said Karr will be missed and he wishes her the best in her retirement. “I am grateful for the time that I’ve been able to work with Rhonda,” Coridan said.

Rob Alfalah, secretary for the Iowa-Missouri Conference, commented, “Although I haven’t worked in the office with Rhonda very long, just about a year, I really appreciated working with her as a pastor. Any time we had a request for funding she did everything she could to get us the funds needed. Rhonda’s kindness and courtesy made her an exceptional treasurer who will be greatly missed.”



Former Mid-America Union Treasurer **Troy Peoples** said he first learned about Karr from several conference and NAD treasury department workers whom she had helped over the years. Later, he and Karr became friends, helping each other with challenges and difficulties.

“Over the years I have relied on Rhonda’s vast wealth of experience of 50 plus years of doing the treasury work. She has a wonderful grasp of how it all fits together and works,” Peoples praised. “And she has earned the trust of the members of the [executive] committee as well as the other officers and the people around the office.”

Peoples said Karr has worked hard and he wishes her the best in retirement. “It’s just amazing what she’s accomplished,” Peoples remarked.

Virgil Minden, assistant treasurer for the

Iowa-Missouri Conference, has worked with Rhonda for nearly 24 years. He said he is thankful for a boss with so much financial knowledge. “Rhonda is easy to communicate with and she is a very understanding person. She’s been great to work with over the years,” Minden said.

Marlin Anderson, treasurer for the St. Louis Central Church, said he has worked with Rhonda since the 1970s and has relied on Karr many times over the years. “I really appreciate all the help and guidance that she gave us when we needed some advice. Her work has been very good—very appreciative. And we will miss her a lot,” Anderson said.

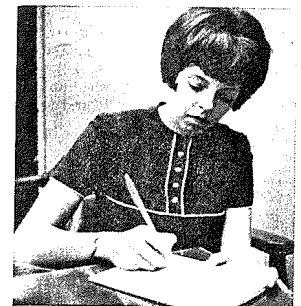
Rhonda will be greatly missed. Her leadership and dedication were integral to the financial stability of our conference. We wish her all the best in her retirement.

Iowa-Missouri Conference News

(left) Mid-America Union Conference vice president for finance David VandeVere presents Rhonda Karr with a token of appreciation during the union’s year-end meetings last November.

(above) Rhonda Karr expresses gratitude to God, the conference’s constituents, and the individuals with whom she has served in the office during the past 54 years.

(bottom right) This clipping from the **OUTLOOK** archives shows Rhonda (Fredregill) as a new college graduate taking dictation at the Iowa Conference in 1968.



NEW OFFICE SECRETARY

Rhonda Fredregill, graduate of Oak Park Academy and a 1968 graduate of Union College, has accepted employment as secretary to K. D. Johnson, President, and J. O. McLeod, Treasurer, of the Iowa Conference. Rhonda majored in Business Education. She is shown in the photo as she takes dictation for an important letter.

Hispanic Couples Attend “Update Your Marriage” Retreat

There are all manner of electronic devices being used today such as laptops, smart phones, watches, etc. The string that connects them all is the constant need for

such devices to be constantly updated. These updates keep those devices running in optimal condition and guarantee longevity. This is just one of the principals

brought by **Pedro and Cecilia Iglesias**, Family Life directors at the InterAmerican Division and presenters for the Hispanic Couples Retreat held Dec. 2-4, 2022.

Over 60 couples from the Kansas-Nebraska Conference came together for a weekend of learning how to “Update Your Marriage” and to spend time together as a couple. All throughout the weekend the Iglesias shared foundational concepts on updating and upgrading your marriage. They brought not only their personal experiences and testimonies but also presented research studies and resources that brought new perspective to many couples.

Along with captivating presentations, there was time for couples to spend some free time on Sabbath afternoon and to also enjoy a very special Saturday night dinner with their spouse. This retreat’s purpose was not only to present seminars but also to provide couples

with the opportunity to spend quality time together, since that can be challenging on a normal basis.

The weekend ended not only with a special prayer of blessing over each couple but also with a special lunch at a local restaurant which was greatly enjoyed. Many couples expressed that the most important thing they learned was to be consistent and intentional about keeping their marriages “updated,” especially through the different seasons of life.

Alejandro Dovald, Hispanic coordinator, challenged every couple to continue making every effort to grow together as a couple and to encourage others to invest in their marriage by coming to next year’s retreat scheduled for Dec. 1-3, 2023.

Saul Dominguez is communication director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

Photos: Saul Dominguez



Three Questions Every Young Person Asks

In their third book based on the Growing Young research, **Kara Powell** and **Brad Griffin** describe every teenager as a walking bundle of questions.* They observe, “Sometimes kids’ questions leak out and are muttered aloud. More commonly they remain bottled inside a teenager’s curious mind and conflicted soul. Either way, we’ll never activate this generation if we don’t understand their most pressing questions.”

The authors go on to describe the complexity of questions young people ask, and then focus on three major themes that young peoples’ questions tend to fall into. *Who am I? Where do I fit? and What difference can I make?*

These questions are best described in three words: identity, belonging and purpose. As parents and leaders of young people, our job is to direct them away from answers to these questions that come from popular culture, friends or social media and towards answers rooted in Christ’s view of who they are and who He made them to be.

Identity

When young people question our view of ourselves, we can find answers like I am “what others expect” or “I am not _____ enough.” What our young people often need help learning is that they are enough exactly as they are because of Jesus. His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient. It was complete. Accepting

this basic fact helps them grow closer to who God has made them to be—when they accept that they are enough, not because of what they’ve done, but because of what Jesus did for them.

Belonging

When young people question their connection with others, it is a belonging question. Belonging questions often ask, “Where do I feel safe to be me?” or “Where do I feel like I’m needed?” It is one thing when they’re safe to be themselves, but how often do they feel safe to be themselves at church? Is it safe there? Are they allowed to “fit” there without judgment or criticism? When we realize that church is people—and that people are messy—we become a safe place for people to be people. When that happens, young people will find that they belong with God’s people too. But we have to communicate it as a place of safety for them before they will see that they can “fit.” If we communicate anything other than that, we need to re-evaluate our priorities and how safe we really are.

Purpose

When young people begin to question their contribution to the world, this is a purpose question. They are often told that they will make a difference when they’re helping others. Or they’ll make a difference when then they stick to other people’s expectations and standards. But a Christ-centered answer tells

them they have been invited into God’s greater story, and He has crafted them to be uniquely capable of taking part in that story in only the way they can. Using the talents and abilities that God created in them for sharing the good news of Christ is the best way to dive in deep into God’s story.

Powell, Griffen and their team asked over 170 questions to young people, but in real life young people are much better at asking questions than answering them. Perhaps the best answer we can give to a curious young person is “I don’t know; lets find out together!” It invites them into the

solution. It gives them a role and responsibility to partake in finding Christ-centered answers. And it models appropriate sources for answers and gives them a scaffolding to help them build better questions in the future. May we never stifle questions, but lean into better answers alongside our young people’s curiosity.

Tim Floyd is the youth and young adult director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

*Powell, Kara, and Brad M. Griffin. 3 *Big Questions That Change Every Teenager: Making the Most of Your Conversations and Connections*. Ada: Baker Books, 2021.

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Minnetonka Christian Academy Experiences Blessings Upon Blessings



Minnetonka Christian Academy has operated on its Minnetonka Campus since 1969, but since 2014 has based its main school operations out of the smaller remodeled “bus barn” building on campus. During this time, MCA’s stakeholders diligently worked to pay off the building loan on the smaller building, while renting out the original school building to other schools and sports organizations. Still, the balance on the loan persisted.

Long-time supporters of MCA desired to see its operations return to the original building, but for several

years were not sure of the path forward to make that a reality. During that time, the “little school” building served its purpose beautifully, and was well-loved by the families, staff and students who attended there. However, over the last eight years, the school once again grew, and in 2019, the fifth through ninth grade students were moved from the little building into two upstairs classrooms in the original building to accommodate for the increased enrollment.

While MCA was grateful to be able to use a portion of the original building for

its school operations, it was recognized by many people that splitting staff and student body across two buildings wasn’t an ideal long-term solution. At the same time, the pandemic hit, and along with the rest of the world the MCA community faced the challenge of responding to the difficult conditions while continuing to offer a safe and high quality learning environment for its students.

Despite these challenges, during the school years impacted directly by the COVID pandemic, MCA’s enrollment grew from approximately 45 students in 2019 to just over 60 students at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. This was a huge blessing to the school, but further highlighted the need for a larger and more cohesive space in which to continue growing.

In the spring of 2021, several things happened at once. First, the renter of the original school building announced they would be closing out their contract on the MCA campus in June 2022 and moving to their own recently purchased campus. Then, a donor announced a large “starter” donation and challenged the MCA School Operating Committee and the Minnetonka Adventist Church to pay off the \$500,000 building loan in one year. Then, in August 2021 MCA’s enrollment grew to 70 students. More blessings—and further space challenges—as two classrooms were completely full and had to

begin waiting lists.

Finally, in late fall 2021, a second donor challenged the MCA community to a matching campaign on the building loan. At the same time, the MCA SOC began serious lease negotiations with a potential renter for the “little school” and voted to make every effort to relocate MCA to the original school building for the start of the 2022-2023 school year as classrooms were near capacity!

As the 2021-2022 school year drew to a close, it seemed as though God opened the storehouse of His blessings and poured them out. Just past the one year mark since the challenge was made, the entire building loan was paid off! Then, through the tireless efforts of the leasing committee under the direction of **David Land**, a lease was signed for the “little school” with Rayito de Sol, a Spanish immersion daycare.

MCA has returned to its original building and was fortunate to open the 2022-2023 school year with 85 students. The miracles of the last year have served to strengthen the MCA staff and community’s faith in God’s plan and continued provision for our school. He is true to His Word and constantly demonstrates how He can do “abundantly more than we ever ask or hope” (Eph. 3:19, NLT). We can’t wait to see how God continues to lead MCA!

Vanessa Pujic is the principal of Minnetonka Christian Academy.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the 85 MCA students plus staff have returned to their original building—now entirely debt free.



Photos courtesy Minnesota Conference

Maplewood Academy Students Engage in Spiritual Community

We invite you to reflect upon your time as a child and teenager. For those of you who grew up within the Adventist Church community, what highlights come to mind? When did you realize Jesus loved you? When did you fall in love with Jesus? Were there church members who made a difference in your life? What was your favorite part of church? What made you decide to stay in church? How did the church engage you? All of these questions and more set the foundation for the Campus Ministries program at Maplewood Academy.

At the time of this writing, Maplewood Academy students are engaged, working and laughing together as the hands and feet of Jesus. They have organized a week of prayer for Northwoods Elementary school students to share skits and worship thoughts about how faith grows during trials. Additionally they have packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child and filled Thanksgiving food baskets for community members.

It is touching to see our students so willingly engaging with each other and our staff on such projects. Inside each of us is the desire to make a positive difference in

the world, and we endeavor to provide our students with various opportunities to put their spiritual gifts into practice. Students participate in everything from their academic classes to campus spiritual activities, music groups, student council and sports teams. In church lingo, we would call this total member involvement.

Within the first few weeks of school, the Campus Ministries class interviewed the students and asked them how they would like to serve and be involved this year. Praise teams, Bible studies, small groups, weeks of prayer, Operation Christmas Child, class vespers, Hutchinson Church services, creating inspiring videos, skits and games are some of them. Each of these options provides students the opportunity to explore their ministerial calling, gain a variety of skills and feel empowered to lead in their home churches.

We notice their relationships with God grow as they share what they learn with others. Though most students have favorite activities, each opportunity helps them engage. It is an amazing experience to see them involved in ministry and to hear the powerful testimonies that

come from their experiences.

One of the activities students and staff enjoy is when we divide into groups to explore their opinions on different Bible topics. When asked, music teacher **Clinton Anderson** said, "I like where you get into Sabbath school with different groups and then go around to the different corners of the room and have them share about God, because I get to hear a bunch of different perspectives from the students rather than just one person talking." Students engage more as they hear the different perspectives on topics.

Sabbath school small groups have student leaders who organize different activities such as games with lesson applications or deeper Bible study methods, all catering to a variety of learning styles. **Madi Hoffer** (class of 2025) says, "I like when we play games and different things in the library because it is kind of fun to interact with people and have a worship talk to start us off."

Hannah Ruach (class of 2026) agrees. She says "I like when we have a game and then incorporate it with a lesson because games are fun, and it also relates to a lesson." Multiple studies have shown that hands-on learning helps increase student participation, fosters social and emotional learning and motivates students to remember what they learned.

The students at Maplewood Academy are a part of the army of youth rightly trained. The Adventist Church is in good hands, and what a blessing it is to watch our students engage and help others. Whether they pack Operation Christmas Child boxes or teach young children new songs about growing their faith, a spirit of love and service pervades.

Engagement is real at Maplewood Academy. It is here now, and we can count on it being here in the future!

Umeran Waktole is a student at Maplewood Academy. Linda Vigil is the Bible teacher at Maplewood Academy.



Maplewood Academy students pray over Operation Christmas Child gift boxes before distribution.

The Enduring Word Exhibit Visits Campion

Listening intently to the story of how the Bible was made and how it was published, students, church members and participants from the community got to experience up close what is arguably one of the most important world-changing inventions in history—the printing press.

“It was a blessing to have an exhibit from The Enduring Word Museum from Wetherford, Texas, here on our campus on the anniversary of Reformation Day, Oct. 31,” said **Leandro Bizama**, pastor for evangelism and worship at Campion Adventist Church.

“About 800 people visited the exhibit and were blessed by the lectures—some 500 not part of our church family. Some of us even got to print a replica of one of the original

pages from Gutenberg himself,” Pastor Bizama added.

The exhibit included artifacts of archaeology from Bible times. All of them were a reminder that the more historical artifacts being dug up, the more evidence there is that the Bible is legitimate and can be trusted. Exhibited were Torah scrolls from collections that reinforced the accuracy of modern texts as well.

The exhibit included exquisite examples of Scripture translations in English, such as the original page from the Wycliffe Bible. John Wycliffe gave up his life for such an effort at a time when it was illegal to translate the text into languages the people could understand. There are only 18 original pages of this kind in private collections in

the world, and this was one of them. Also exhibited were copies of original Bibles such as one of the first 50 King James Bibles printed and one of the original pages from Gutenberg’s press.

“All this left us inspired to read the Bible and in awe of how much sacrifice and effort it took for us to have the versions of the Bible we now hold in our hands and phones. Over the centuries, many people lost their lives trying to guard the translation of the English Bible so that we could have the blessing of studying

it,” Bizama commented.

And yet, sometimes we become so busy that we don’t take time to read it. “Let us always remember the awesome legacy of the Word of God and how blessed we are to have it and let us always discipline ourselves to consistently seek God first through reading The Book,” he added.

Information supplied by Leandro Bizama, pastor for evangelism and worship at Campion Church.



Church members examine the Gutenberg press and examples of English translations of Scriptures.

Pueblo First Church Volunteers Train as Tutors

The Outreach and Education Center of Pueblo is offering free tutoring with volunteer tutors from Pueblo First Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our tutors began rigorous training in math and reading interventions in the month of August, allowing the first session to begin Sept. 6, 2022.

“God is at work among us, bringing students from our

congregation and the surrounding community,” said **Sherry Lee Hohnbacher**, coordinator of the O&EC.

Schooling for many students in our community has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the recently published results from the National Assessment of Academic Progress, we are seeing the largest decline in

math and reading proficiency since the assessment was first administered.

According to Hohnbacher, the aim of the Pueblo Center is to address this achievement gap by offering effective intervention programs to students whose families may not be able to afford or may not have access to supplemental academic support. Both reading and math lessons are individualized, aimed to advance targeted skills and concepts.

An initial diagnostic assessment is done prior to the first day of tutoring to ensure student’s individual academic needs are addressed.

The first tutoring session ended November 17, with a celebration of students and volunteers. After only 27 tutoring sessions, the participating students are already showing improvement.

All are anxious to continue the second round of tutoring in 2023. The tutors devotedly continue their training in both Math Recovery® and the Barton Reading & Spelling System®.

Leandro Bizama serves at Campion Adventist Church as the pastor for evangelism and worship.



A free tutoring service for students is being offered by Pueblo Outreach and Education Center tutors.

RMC Youth Team Welcomes New Assistant Director



Jade Teal has joined the RMC youth department (pictured with her husband Stefan).

The Rocky Mountain Conference office staff team welcomes **Pastor Jade Teal**, most recently the associate pastor in Colorado Springs, as assistant youth director. On Dec. 1, 2022, Teal joined assistant youth director **Brent Learned** and youth director **Brandon Westgate** in ministering to the youth of the Rocky Mountain Conference.

“I am well pleased that Jade has accepted the invitation

to join our department. Jade brings a fresh enthusiasm and energy that will help us continue to enhance youth ministry in our conference,” said Westgate. “I am looking forward to witnessing what the Lord will do as our department presses forward.”

Commenting on her appointment, Teal said, “I am super excited to be joining the youth department.” She has been involved in youth ministry since she was a teenager and is “thrilled to be able to continue fulfilling God’s call on my life with the Rocky Mountain Conference.”

Born in North Carolina, Teal grew up a pastor’s kid and the family relocated several times, living in three states before she studied at Union College for her Bachelor of Science in religion and a minor in International Rescue and Relief.

Working at summer camps during her time at Union, Teal said she “fell in love with youth ministry, and especially camp ministry, because I saw firsthand how big an influence it has on a kid’s spiritual growth.”

After graduating in 2021, she moved to Colorado and served as the associate pastor at the Colorado Springs Central Adventist Church. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her

husband **Stefan** and their two cats, reading, horseback riding and spending time in God’s creation.

Teal believes it is “extremely important that our kids get to know Jesus and experience a personal relationship with Him while they are young so that as they get exposed to more of the influences of the world as they grow older, they already have that foundation and can stick even closer to Jesus.”

“I am honored to be joining a youth department that strives to make it easy for kids to know Jesus,” she adds.

Information supplied by Brandon Westgate, youth director for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Club Inductions Held at First Denver Indonesian Church

In a historic moment for the First Denver Indonesian Church, the congregation participated in an induction ceremony for their new Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs on Nov. 12, 2022.

Officiated by **Tyrone Douglas**, Mid-America Union Conference director of youth and young adult ministry, together with **Brandon Westgate**, RMC youth director, the Pathfinder club was named “Mighty Arrows” and the Adventurer club was given the name “White Dove.”

As the induction ceremony began, tears of joy were seen on the cheeks of parents and

church members alike. It was “a proud moment for everyone, and God’s name was praised above all,” reported **David Sakul**, church elder.

After **Widy Gara**, church pastor, opened the ceremony with prayer, the induction program followed with Pathfinders and Adventurers marching in, leading the

Pledge of Allegiance, Pathfinder and Adventurer pledges, and an Adventurer pledge and dedication prayer by visiting youth directors.

The ceremony included a special musical number from the Aurora Hispanic Adventist Church.

Nineteen young people

were inducted as members into the clubs.

“We praise the Lord for this event and pray for God’s continued blessings for the new Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs,” added Sakul.

Information provided by church elder David Sakul and Pathfinder club director Dave Mundung.

In a historic event, the First Denver Indonesian Church held an induction ceremony for Adventurers and Pathfinders.



Photos courtesy Rocky Mountain Conference

IRR Students Provide Medical Support on a Thanksgiving Flight



Union College

Union College students Allen Stafford and Christian Thomas jumped into action when a fellow passenger had a medical emergency while flying home for Thanksgiving.

When a fellow passenger had a medical emergency on their flight, international rescue and relief senior Allen Stafford and junior Christian Thomas sprung into action.

Stafford and Thomas were flying home to Washington State for Thanksgiving break when, two hours from their destination, the EMT training they received as part of their degree was put to the test.

"I was reading my book, and I looked up and saw a woman collapsed in the aisle," said Stafford. "I got up to check if she was okay. While I was checking her pulse, she came to."

The flight attendants requested assistance from any EMTs or doctors on the flight. Thomas, along with an emergency room doctor who was also on the flight, joined Stafford at the woman's side.

"The woman started turning blue from lack of oxygen, so we gave her oxygen and the flight attendants had

other passengers move so she could lie down," said Stafford. "The doctor asked me to start an IV. Thankfully, I had been teaching a basic IV course to the pre-health professional society at Union the weekend before, so I was confident I could do it well."

Stafford learned to start an IV in his Advanced Care for EMS Providers class. "We had to do 10 practice sticks on a mannequin and 15 successful sticks on real people for that class to make sure we knew how to do it correctly," he said. "In the IRR program, we train how we treat."

"There is this certain relief that you have when you know that you've been trained well and you know how to deal with almost anything that is thrown at you," said Thomas. "I feel like IRR significantly prepared me to deal with situations like this."

Stafford and Thomas monitored the passenger until the plane began descending when they had to return to

their seats for safety reasons. After the plane landed, the doctor handed her off to the medical personnel who met them at the gate.

"I don't think our being on that flight was a coincidence," said Thomas. "I believe we

are placed in positions where we can best help serve others and where we can glorify God, and I was just grateful I could do that on that plane."



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Mayo PA's Career Bends Unexpectedly Toward Elbows

When Tiffany Lam graduated from Union College's Physician Assistant program in 2012, she didn't have a favorite part of the elbow. But after 10 years of working with one of the top elbow surgeons at the Mayo Clinic, she lights up when asked about the joint. "My favorite part of the elbow is the radial head," she said. "It's like a little golf tee."

Ranked the number one hospital in the United States, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, is known for pioneering research in many different fields. Every day Lam performs preliminary assessments on patients with complicated elbow problems. "I enjoy the complexity of cases we have at the Mayo Clinic," she said. "The patients I see say, 'My doctors don't know what to do with me, so they sent me to you.'" Lam loves telling patients about the options they have for healing. "Working in a place where I can bring hope to people is extraordinary. Jesus's mission here on earth was to bring hope, so for me to be able to do that in a medical setting is

Tiffany Lam is now an elbow expert at Mayo Clinic after a clinical rotation while in Union's PA program kindled her interest in the joint.

pretty gratifying."

Lam always knew that she wanted to work in medicine. While she was growing up, her mother worked in physician's offices. "My after-school care was in the office," she said. "I was inspired to be a doctor because that was all I knew." But while Lam was in her junior year of college, she had the opportunity to shadow a PA and see what the profession was all about. "The PA I shadowed was a generous, caring provider. I liked how much time he got to spend with his family. I said, 'I can't believe I didn't know about this profession! This is what I want.'"

Not only are PA programs notoriously hard to get into, but also they can be academically challenging

and competitive. Lam was pleasantly surprised by the uplifting attitudes of her classmates at Union. She said, "Competitiveness is something that is really popular in our society. People say, 'I'm going to do what I'm going to do to get ahead, and if someone goes underneath me while I climb, that's okay.' At Union, I had classmates who were encouraging rather than competitive, which was really the most remarkable thing. I have friends from Union that I still meet up with. Their encouragement through a very challenging program was priceless."

While at Union, Lam didn't plan on focusing her career on elbows. But God had other ideas. "For one of my preceptorships, I was

assigned to a local upper extremity surgeon," she said. "Most of my other classmates got to do general orthopedic rotations." But when Lam applied to Mayo Clinic, she had extra experience with upper extremities that made her a desirable candidate for the elbow clinic. "God was leading the way from the beginning," she said.

"What stands out about Union? It's opportunities you never expected that come before you because God is present in all aspects of Union's PA program. I thought I had my plans set, but God placed me in new opportunities every time."

Stories on these pages were written by Annika Cambigue, a junior English and communication major from Ohio.



Photo courtesy Tiffany Lam

AdventHealth Continues Medical Mission in Juliaca, Peru

Courtesy AdventHealth



The medical mission team takes a group photo in front of the airport in Juliaca, Peru.

For several years, AdventHealth Global Missions in Mid-America has sent medical teams to Peru to provide care to local communities where medical access can be limited. Medical staff travel abroad filled with hope and uncertainty, not knowing what medical issues they will face, and return home forever changed by the experience.

Recently, AdventHealth sent the largest medical group ever from the Mid-America Region. Four teams consisting of 30 team members traveled together to Juliaca, a city in southeastern Peru located on the shores of Lake Titicaca at more than 12,000 feet above sea level. Each team had a specific role for the trip. There were two surgery teams—one for plastic surgery led by **Dr. Douglas Cusick**, and one for general surgery led by **Dr. Robert Aragon**. AdventHealth also sent a community health team and a leadership team.

During the medical mission, the teams saw nearly 1,500 patients in four communities and performed 52 surgeries, including gallbladder removals, hernias, cleft palates and hand surgeries.

“Watching the impact the work had on our team was

deeply moving,” said **Dave Kennedy**, regional executive director of mission at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission. “We regularly gathered to reflect on what we were seeing and experiencing, and tears were continually shed as team members empathized with the people they were serving. It was heartbreaking to see some of the issues people were facing every day.”

Although many local residents came to see the team for more complex health issues, some, like a man Kennedy met, just needed a pair of glasses to improve their eyesight.

“We were able to custom make him a set of eyeglasses that drastically improved his vision and, as a result, his life,” said Kennedy. “The look on his face when he put those glasses on and read the eye chart is forever etched in my mind. His smile stretched from ear to ear. I’ve thought often about what his life is like now being able to see.”

But not every case was simple to treat. Kennedy, who was part of the leadership and community health teams, observed that many local residents had cataracts, which would require surgery instead of glasses. Kennedy

recalls feeling helpless as the team was not able to conduct eye surgeries on the spot. Given the high number of cataract cases that were discovered during this mission, AdventHealth is currently raising funds to establish a cataract clinic in Juliaca, which could be operational by September 2023 before a new medical team returns to the city.

Celebrations and future plans

Along with Kennedy, the leadership team also included **Sam Huenergardt**, president and CEO of AdventHealth in the Mid-America region, **Laurie McCormack**, executive director of the Kansas City AdventHealth Foundation, and **Steve Achord**, director of nutritional services at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission. They met with leaders of Clínica Americana, AdventHealth’s partner organization in Juliaca, for mutual learning and partnership development.

“While the team was in Juliaca, Clínica Americana celebrated 100 years of service to the city,” said Kennedy. “It was a huge event, and we were thrilled to have our

leadership team there, as well as **Monty Jacobs**, who is director of Global Missions at AdventHealth.”

As part of the celebration, AdventHealth CEOs across the organization contributed monetary gifts to fund a new wing of the hospital that will include three new operating rooms and an intensive care unit.

AdventHealth also had artwork created using parts of the Trinity sculpture that currently hangs in the lobby at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission. The new artwork was sent to Clínica Americana to display in the new wing and features a plaque in English and Spanish explaining the connection between the two works of art and the two organizations.

The AdventHealth mission trips are supported by the Dr. J. Douglas Cusick Medical Missions Endowment, which subsidizes volunteers’ travel and supply expenses.

Jackie Woods is a freelance writer and project manager for AdventHealth in Kansas City.



Learn more about the AdventHealth Global Missions work in Peru at adventhealthkc-foundation.com.

Partnership, Generosity and Faith Help a Ukrainian Clinic

As the war rages on between Russia and Ukraine, brave caregivers at Clinica Angelia, an Adventist clinic in Kiev, continue to provide critical healthcare to the people of Ukraine.

Centura Health has partnered with Clinica Angelia since 2019 through the Global Health Initiatives program, an initiative that provides high quality healthcare leadership mentoring to strengthen health systems in developing countries around the world.

Since the partnership with Clinica Angelia began, Centura and GHI have given more than \$42,000—much of that from generous donors. Throughout the pandemic, the donations provided resources and inpatient service updates to care for COVID-19 patients. In recent months, the donations from Centura GHI and AdventHealth have helped Clinica Angelia purchase much-needed medical supplies and vehicles that were converted into mobile health clinics. In addition, the clinic was able to access a new portable ultrasound machine that has helped detect early signs of cancer in several patients.

“It is our mission at Centura to extend the healing ministry of Christ, whether it be to our neighbors in our communities in Colorado and western Kansas or to communities in developing countries,” said **Patrick Gaughan**, Centura senior vice president and chief values integration officer. He added, “We first looked into this partnership just before the pandemic, and we are so grateful to have been able to

provide support for Clinica Angelia through COVID-19 and the horrific invasion from Russia.”

At the end of 2022, **Yury Bondarenko**, MD, director and CEO of Clinica Angelia, visited Centura headquarters and Porter Adventist Hospital, which serves as its sponsor. During his visit, he thanked donors for their generous contributions that have helped the clinic become self-sufficient and ever serving through this challenging time in his country.

“It is a blessing. Thank you so much,” said Dr. Bondarenko. “If you pray [for us], we will be extremely grateful.”

Through the mobile health clinics, hundreds of Ukrainians impacted and displaced since the war began have received essential medical care. The mobile health clinics support various specialties and services including family medicine, lab testing, cardiology, dermatology, ultrasounds, dental care and more.

As the war continues and the weather has turned cold, the challenges to keep the

clinic operational have also increased. Air raids have caused ongoing blackouts, which have forced the clinic to rely on generators to provide some warmth to staff and patients and ensure critical operations continue.

“During this time, we lose electricity more than 10 times a day and are using generators for over 10 hours a day. Every attack is incredibly challenging for us,” said Dr. Bondarenko.

Dr. Bondarenko says that Clinica Angelia caregivers are also facing burnout and depression. With future donations, GHI plans to aid the clinic with behavioral health support and expertise for caregivers, and for the patients they serve.

“It is truly remarkable how our partners and caregivers at Clinica Angelia have pressed on, overcoming so many obstacles to ensure their patients and neighbors receive essential healthcare,” said **Eric Shadle**, MD, Centura vice president of mission integration. “We are honored to be their partner and remain committed to providing any support we can.”

Despite the challenges and

constant state of stress caregivers are under, Dr. Bondarenko says they remain resilient, telling donors during his visit to Centura that caregivers have been working through air raids to give patients the care they deserve.

“When rockets come from Russia, we get 30- or 40-minute warnings,” he said. “That can mean enough time for a dentist to finish with the patient.”

Dr. Bondarenko added that it is through his faith in God that he is able to overcome anxiety and depression so that he can continue to serve his patients.

“Evil has no logic, war has no logic. But Jesus is my CEO, and I am just a piece of clay,” said Dr. Bondarenko.

The partnership with Clinica Angelia is one of many meaningful and long-lasting relationships that Centura and GHI have formed in developing countries around the world, with direct partnerships also in Peru, Nepal and Rwanda.

.....
 Brianna DiPilato is a writer for Centura Health.

(left) l-r: Patrick Gaughan; Dr. Yury Bondarenko; Todd Folkenberg, GHI Executive Sponsor of Clinica Angelia and Porter Adventist Hospital CEO; Dr. Eric Shadle
 (right) The mobile health clinic continues to operate amid the destruction in Ukraine.



Kevin Massey, Communications Field Advisor, Centura Health



Vlad Vladovsky, Clinica Angelia

Anderson, William "Bill", b. Sept. 22, 1936 in Greeley, CO. d. Nov. 17, 2022 in Greeley, CO. Member of Greeley Church. Preceded in death by wife Florence. Survivors include daughter Debra Hanson; son Lon Anderson; 3 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild.

Bittler, Maria, b. Dec. 7, 1936. d. Oct. 31, 2022 in Denver, CO. Member of Denver West (CO) Church. Preceded in death by husband Mathias. Survivors include children Marlene, Will and Rob; 6 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

Brown, Helen Fay (Bassett), b. Oct. 24, 1928 in Chetopa, KS. d. Jan. 4, 2022 in Parsons, KS. Member of Coffeyville (KS) Church. Preceded in death by husband Orville; daughter Regina; 5 sisters; 5 brothers. Survivors include 2 sisters; numerous nieces and nephews.

Dirksen, Martin Harvey, b. May 5, 1940 in Hutchinson, KS. d. Nov. 25, 2022 in Hutchinson, KS. Member of Hutchinson Church. Survivors include wife Mavis; daughter Tammy Villegas;

son Marty; 8 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Etheredge, Christopher Clark, b. Nov. 15, 1951. d. Oct. 9, 2022. Member of Piedmont Park (NE) Church. He served at Christian Record Services headquarters in Lincoln, NE for several decades. Survivors include wife Carla; sons Kevin and Adam.

House, Kimberly Ann (Baxter), b. Mar. 1, 1972. d. Nov. 23, 2022. Member of Goodland (KS) Church.

Kroeker, Ginger A., b. Aug. 15, 1951. d. Sep. 12, 2022. Member of Omaha Golden Hills (NE) Church. Survivors include husband Paul; other relatives and friends.

Pearson, Lamoine A., b. Sep. 7, 1933 in Farlington, KS. d. Oct. 2, 2022 in Loveland, CO. Member of Campion (CO) Church. Survivors include wife Ruth H.; daughter Cindy; son Gary; 2 granddaughters; 4 great-grandchildren. Served in the US Army.

Seibold, Carol (Carlson), b. June 22, 1927 in Jamestown, ND. d. Dec. 12, 2022 in Jamestown, ND. Member of the Jamestown Church. Preceded in death by husband Vernon; 1 sister; 2 brothers. Survivors include daughter Jerene Nelson; sons Ken and Dennis; 7 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren.

Sidwell, Dennis, b. Feb. 18, 1951. d. Dec. 12, 2022. Member of the Wichita South (KS) Church.

Slack, Gerald Dean, b. Mar. 27, 1939 in Brady, NE. d. Nov. 18, 2022 in Kearney, NE. Member of McCook (NE) Church. Preceded in death by daughter Stacie; son Scott; 3 brothers. Survivors include wife Pamela Marie; daughter Shannon Lippitt; son Shane; stepchildren Angie Helmer and Arlan Meints; 1 sister; grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews. Served in the National Guard.

Wipf, Eugene, b. June 18, 1943 in Huron, SD. d. April 29, 2022 in Huron, SD. Member of Huron Church. Preceded in death by 1 niece. Survivors include wife Judy; daughter Ginger Tucker; son Travis; 1 sister; 2 brothers.

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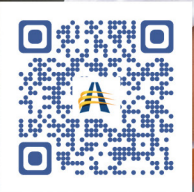


February 2023					
	FEB 3	FEB 10	FEB 17	FEB 24	
COLORADO	Denver	5:20	5:28	5:37	5:45
	Grand Junction	5:36	5:44	5:52	5:59
	Pueblo	5:21	5:29	5:37	5:45
IOWA	Davenport	5:19	5:27	5:36	5:45
	Des Moines	5:31	5:40	5:48	5:57
	Sioux City	5:40	5:49	5:58	6:07
KANSAS	Dodge City	6:04	6:12	6:19	6:27
	Goodland	5:08	5:16	5:24	5:32
	Topeka	5:44	5:52	6:00	6:08
MINNESOTA	Duluth	5:12	5:23	5:34	5:44
	International Falls	5:13	5:24	5:36	5:47
	Minneapolis	5:21	5:32	5:41	5:51
MISSOURI	Columbia	5:31	5:39	5:47	5:55
	Kansas City	5:40	5:48	5:56	6:04
	St. Louis	5:23	5:31	5:39	5:47
NEBRASKA	Lincoln	5:45	5:53	6:02	6:10
	North Platte	6:00	6:09	6:18	6:26
	Scottsbluff	5:10	5:19	5:28	5:37
NORTH DAKOTA	Bismarck	5:47	5:58	6:08	6:19
	Fargo	5:31	5:42	5:52	6:03
	Williston	5:55	6:06	6:17	6:28
SOUTH DAKOTA	Pierre	5:51	6:01	6:11	6:20
	Rapid City	5:04	5:13	5:23	5:32
	Sioux Falls	5:39	5:48	5:58	6:07
WYOMING	Casper	5:19	5:28	5:37	5:46
	Cheyenne	5:16	5:25	5:34	5:42
	Sheridan	5:17	5:27	5:37	5:46



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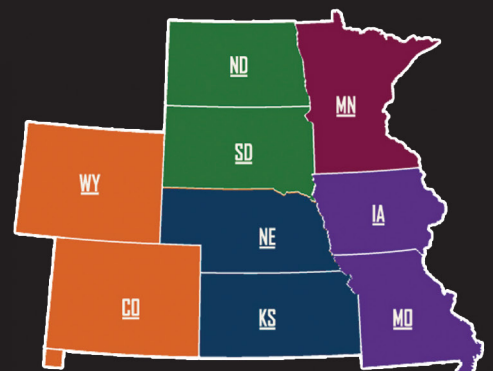
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EVENTS

The Burleson Seventh-day Adventist Church, Burleson, Texas will celebrate their 50th Anniversary April 21-23, 2023. Activities include: Friday evening supper and church history presentation; Sabbath breakfast, lesson study by Pastor Keith Gray, sermon by Pastor Mike Tucker, lunch at Burleson Adventist School, afternoon fellowship, supper at the church with musical concert by Steve Darmody; Sunday morning golf. Call 817.295.7141 with questions.

The Mid-America chapter of Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries (ASI) is hosting its annual convention April 20-23 in Northglenn, CO. All are welcome. For more information and to register, visit ASIMidAmerica.org.

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