

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

SEPTEMBER 2013



Serving Up Love

ADVENTIST MEMBERS IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES



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A Model Church

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On the Cover

Minner Labrador, director of Church Ministries at the Southwestern Union Conference, was one of dozens of church volunteers who helped at a mobile food pantry in Itasca, Texas, this past June. The event was hosted by the Grandview church, during which volunteers distributed basic necessities and fed about 500 people in two hours, sharing the love of God in a very practical way. [Photo by Jessica Lozano]

Point of View»

BY JOE WATTS » SOUTHWESTERN UNION ACS DR DIRECTOR



We Are Blessed So We Can Bless Others

If your church were to disappear today, would your community notice? If not, why not? That question always gives me pause. Do we realize what Jesus prayed for us? "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one," (John 17:15). Could it be possible that our churches have become havens from the world? This responsibility to our communities includes, but is not limited to, the preaching of the Word.

There are tremendous needs and opportunities in our communities following a disaster. But what about the daily needs in our community? Maybe we need to put on our spiritual glasses to see and then develop solutions to those challenges. God wants to partner with His church to satisfy those needs. It may take thinking outside the box to find a solution. Our attitude and demeanor, shows people whether we really care. What good does it do to give a cup of cold water if by our body language we transmit the message that we don't care? But a glass of water, given with a smile, conveys that we truly care.

Have you noticed that it feels good to do good? The message of the gospel is not getting us out of this world and making it to heaven, rather, the message of the gospel is to bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to this earth, and to bring healing to people in our communities. We do that by sharing God's love in practical ways and connecting people in pews with people in communities. By this we are sharing the Christ who cares.

Sometimes we may even experience a divine appointment moment when we help people, knowing that it is God's will that we are heeding His command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned. Matthew 25:40 tells us, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Whether we are assisting after a major disaster or helping people in need in our community, we are following Jesus' example.

Joe Watts, Southwestern Union ACS DR director



Stepping Stone to Success

LM: School is now in session across the Southwestern Union, and students at Southwestern Adventist University are learning the skills they will need to succeed in their careers and lives. Some recent graduates are using those skills in ways they never imagined. Karla Dechavez '05 (**KD**) is the development coordinator at the North Texas Food Bank in Dallas, Texas, and Wendi Clapp '03 (**WC**) is the principal of Sandia View Academy in Corrales, New Mexico.

KD: At first, the thought of moving to Texas was a bit daunting to me—in fact, Texas was the last place on earth I ever wanted to move, until, I visited Southwestern Adventist University. I toured the campus a few months before graduating from high school, and after just a few hours there, I knew this was where I wanted to spend the next four years of my life. The campus was great, the students were among the friendliest I'd ever met, and above all, I felt God there. I graduated with a bachelor's in corporate communication in 2005, and 8 years later, I'm still in Texas. I can honestly say that my career took off thanks to my education at Southwestern and the relationships I established there. My first job as a student in the



Karla DeChavez
Class of '05

Records Office led the way to my first full-time job, as Assistant to the Registrar. From there, I moved over to Assistant Director of Development at the Office of University Advancement, and from there, one of my mentors hired me as development coordinator for the North Texas Food Bank, where I've been for three years. Southwestern gave me so much more than I could ever give back in return, and for that I will be forever grateful.

WC: I wouldn't trade my experience at Southwestern for anything. After ten years of teaching high school science, I transitioned to administration. I am currently preparing for my second year as principal at Sandia View Academy where God continues to expand my understanding of what it means to trust that He is the true provider of all our needs. I still use so many things I learned at Southwestern. Much of it had nothing to do with a classroom, though I believe the education I received with my biology degree was superior. My relationships with teachers, peers, and faculty helped shaped my life into a direction that God continues to use today. My experience at Southwestern played a crucial role in preparing me for service in the teaching ministry.



Wendi Clapp
Class of '03





CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN » SENIOR MANAGER OF MISSION DEVELOPMENT, FLORIDA HOSPITAL

Generosity: Give Yourself To Others

“Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships,”
(President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s last words).

A peculiar legal case came before the Massachusetts courts back in 1928. I say peculiar because it is not the kind of story I would have expected to happen in that era—a time in our nation’s history that preceded the Greatest Generation, when people were more honest, had more integrity, and were less selfish in character.

A DROWNING MAN

A man was walking along a boat dock when he tripped over a rope and fell into the cold, deep water of the ocean bay. He came up gasping for breath and crying for help before sinking again.

AN INDIFFERENT SUNBATHER

A few yards away on another dock, there was a young man lounging in a deck chair basking in the sun.

The drowning man surfaced again; he was terrified and desperate. He shouted as loudly as possible, “Help! I can’t swim!” before going under.

The young man, an excellent swimmer, relaxed in his chair and looked away in callous indifference.

When the drowning man surfaced a third time, he was panic-stricken and too exhausted to seek help. The swimmer watched the tragedy unfold as the sputtering victim struggled and slipped away into the icy depths for the third and final time.

THE COURT’S JUDGMENT

The victim’s family was outraged that the swimmer did nothing to help. They sued him in court, but lost. The court ruled that, although shameful, the sunbather was not legally obligated to endanger his own life in saving the life of another human being.

GOD’S STANDARD

It is difficult to read that story without hearing Christ’s words from John 15:13 (NKJV) echoing in our minds, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?

Most of us, I think, would have taken action to save the drowning man without hesitation, because it is an issue of right and wrong for us. Although we might not be legally responsible to take action, we would feel morally obligated; it is the right thing to do.

OLD SCHOOL GENEROSITY

We usually categorize generosity under the area of finances. Granted, sharing our money with those in need is definitely a measure of generosity, but so is sharing ourselves. Giving ourselves to those in need is what I call “old school generosity,” because it goes back all the way to Jesus Christ and how He lived His life.

GIVE YOURSELF

While you may not have large sums of money to give, or a chance to save someone’s life, the gift of yourself is the greatest gift you can give. You can always give your time and prayers. You might even be able to travel to a devastated area to relieve the suffering of those in need. If Jesus could travel all the way from heaven to earth to live among us for thirty or so years and then die to relieve our suffering, then we can find a way to travel to another city, state or country for a few days to share hope and relieve the suffering of those who are hurting.

LIST THREE WAYS YOU CAN HELP

We rub shoulders every day with people who are hurting. This year alone, we have witnessed many natural disasters that have taken human life and left so many people with so little. Everywhere we look, there is an opportunity to serve—to make a difference in some small way. So I am going to ask you to do something: List three ways right now that you can pitch in and help. Can you give an offering? Can you donate a portion of your time and energy? Can you share encouragement?

GENEROSITY RESTORES

We live in a world where great energy and focus is given to achieving our dreams—and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that at all. But without generosity, none of it matters because our life will be void of meaning. Living our life as a giver, as someone who seeks ways to contribute generously, and not as a taker, is what creates a fulfilling life: a life worth living.

Benji Watson said, “Generosity heals.” He is correct. When we generously give of ourselves, not only do we heal the hearts of those whom we help, but we also heal our own.

That’s CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

Jazmine's Miracle

SILOAM SPRINGS, ARK. » My name is Jazmine Alvarenga and I am 21 years old. I have attended the Seventh-day Adventist Church since I was a baby. When I was 13, I accepted the Lord and was baptized. I loved learning about the Lord, His promises, and His forgiveness.

At the age of 17, I left the Lord's side and started living a worldly life. I did as I pleased and had no respect for the Lord. I would go out on Friday night and wake up on Saturday morning tired and sleepy from lack of rest.

On Sunday, July 8, 2012, I was riding a four-wheeler with an acquaintance. He lost control of the four-wheeler and I was thrown off by force and hit a tree head first. I was airlifted to the hospital and the neurosurgeon told my mother that I had a three percent chance to live. I suffered a traumatic brain injury, a broken neck, a broken back, and other broken bones and injuries to my body. The doctor said that, if I survived, I would be unable to live a normal life, since my brain had been scrambled like an egg and was swollen. I was in a coma for two months, and when I awoke I did not know who I was, where I was, or that my family was my family. About a month after I awoke from my coma, my rehabilitation process started. I started learning how to eat, how to stand, and how to take baby steps.

My accident was a tragedy that has turned into a blessing. I know that I am still alive because of God's will and purpose for me in life. I also know that all of the prayers that were said for me were heard. My mother's prayer to the Lord was "You are the Almighty, and You have everything under control. Let it be Your will; You have the last word." The Lord has given me a full life again and I have been baptized in His name. I will share the Lord's blessings for the rest of my life.



▲ Jazmine being rebaptized by Pedro Ledezma.



◀ Jazmine in the hospital after her four-wheeler accident.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY HOLLY SMITH

After the Storm—Helping to Mend Broken People

Oklahoma is no stranger to tornado season. Every spring, the storms bring their rapid, twirling winds, hail, and the need to take shelter. However, on May 20, 2013, when an EF5 tornado barreled through Moore, Oklahoma, staying on the ground for more than 45 minutes, nothing could prepare us for the devastation to follow. At Hope Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship of Moore, we were thankful to find our church still standing with little damage. Though some of our members lost their homes, thankfully none lost their lives. As we looked over our neighborhoods the sight was unbearable; 13,000 homes destroyed, businesses demolished, and 20 precious lives lost. Gathering for prayer, we knew we had an enormous mission field before us, and would need the help of our fellow laborers in Christ.

Working at our church through Adventist Community Services, we had more than 700 volunteers come through Moore

from all over the United States. Resources flooded in from various places. The students at Tulsa Adventist Academy gathered enough resources to fill a tractor trailer. Supplies were sent from churches in Ohio, Arkansas, Tennessee, and more. Adventist Community Services Disaster Response joined the effort, providing a generous amount of the tools needed for clean up. So we hit the streets! Carrying out water, food, blankets and tools, we came close to the people and dug in to clear the rubble, cut down fallen trees, pull down walls, and offered a listening ear.

Two of our young volunteers, who were apprehensive about approaching people, came to a lady sitting in the midst of the destruction that had been her home. As they asked her name, she was so devastated she could not recall it. Tears streaming down her eyes, she said, “You must think I’m crazy!” Claspings the woman’s hands they reassured her and prayed with her. Expressing her thankfulness, the lady recounted to them how she and her family were huddled in the bathtub, praying, when the storm hit. Once it passed they were amazed to discover that the only thing left in place was the bathtub they were in.

Sadly, two of our public elementary schools took a direct hit from this devastating tornado. One of the volunteers, Gratiela Sabangan, came from Ardmore, Oklahoma, with her mother and son. Their burden was to reach out to the families that lost children. However, it was a difficult task to know just where to find those with children that were directly affected. Praying for God to lead them as they went out into the neighborhoods, they met with a family who lost two of their children at the elementary school.

As they ministered to them, Gratiela’s mother felt a deep need to give them some monetary gift, but they had no cash. Praying as she walked back to the car, a \$20 bill tumbled by her feet. As she bent down to pick it up, another came fluttering by. Praising God she was able to give the family the \$40!

There are countless stories of how God used various people to bring resources, comfort, prayers, and hope. And the work continues to go on. All it takes to touch the lives of those around us is the willingness to go, and allow God to lead!



Top: Volunteers deliver food and supplies to tornado victims.

◀ This woman found a cat in the rubble left by the tornado.



Manos Amigas Sirviendo a la Comunidad

Una de las necesidades que abundan a nuestro alrededor es la falta de alimentos. En Mateo 25:35 podemos ver que en los tiempos de Jesús tenían problemas comunes a los nuestros, “Porque tuve hambre, y me disteis de comer; tuve sed, y me diste de beber,” (La Biblia de las Américas). Ver esta necesidad y poder satisfacerla conlleva estar atento a la voz del Espíritu de Dios y a la cooperación de cada uno de nosotros. De manera que la pregunta es, ¿Te gustaría poder ser un recurso en tu comunidad? Por este medio deseo compartir contigo el gran secreto a la mano para ayudar al prójimo; ¡pedir ayuda!

de alimento. Ruth nos comentó que fue bajo la mano amiga de la iglesia de habla inglesa de Alvarado que pudieron desarrollar un lindo programa en la comunidad; un banco de alimentos. Una vez al mes, la iglesia involucra a los miembros y amigos de todas las edades con responsabilidades como repartir comida hasta ayudar a cargarla a los vehículos, para aquellos que necesitan. La motivación fue no sólo proveer alimentos pero “poder ser un impacto en nuestra sociedad,” dijo Ruth. Así qué, con la ayuda de Juan Balta-



Jóvenes ayudando a su comunidad con una sonrisa y manos amigas. Izquierda: La iglesia abre las puertas del comedor para servir a personas de todas las edades. Arriba: Los miembros de la iglesia motivados a servir.



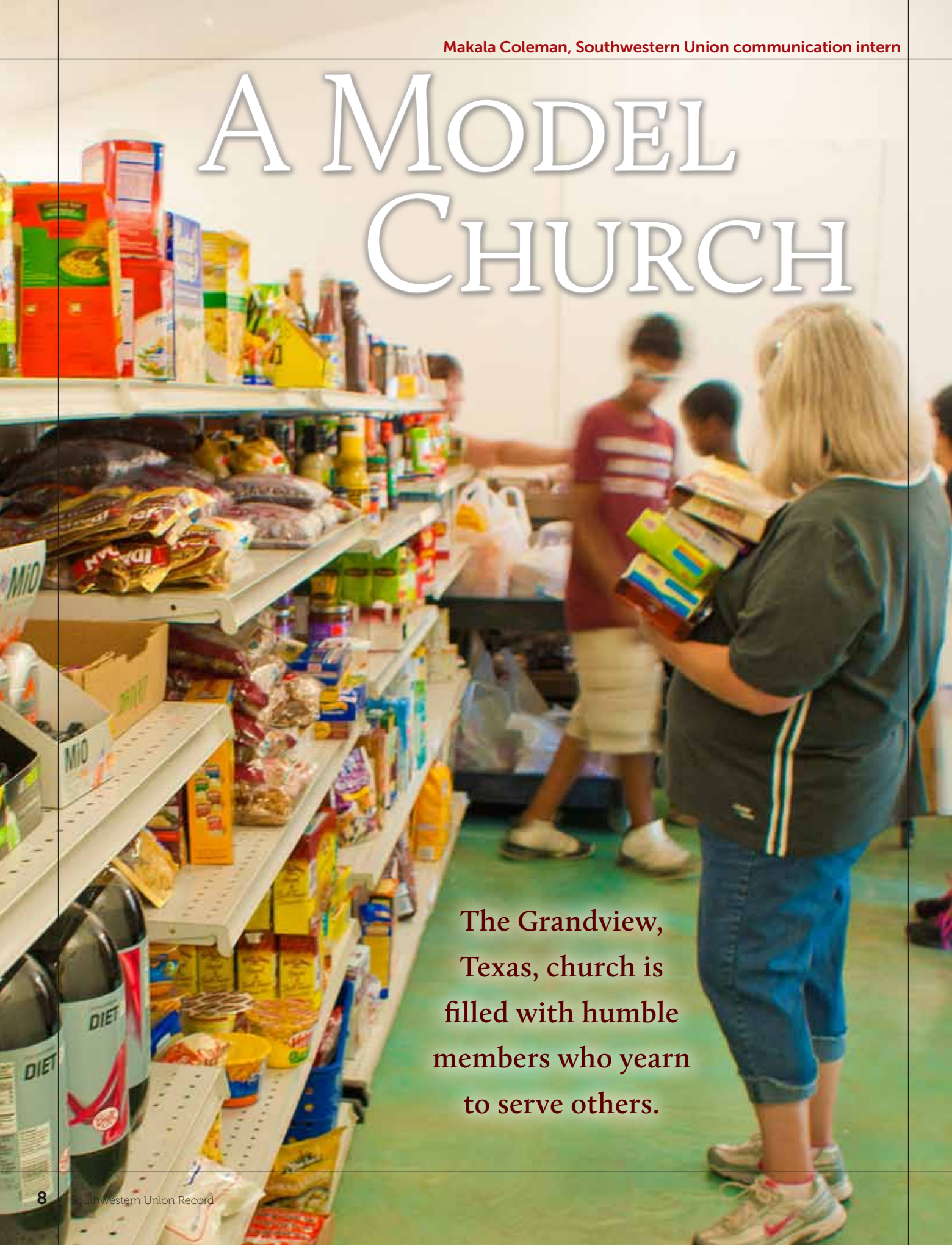
La Iglesia Adventista Hispana de Alvarado en Alvarado, Texas, es un buen ejemplo.

Bajo la dirección de la hermana Ruth González, Directora del Departamento de Dorcas, y con el apoyo de la directiva de la iglesia, se propusieron crear una solución al problema de la falta

de alimento. Ruth nos comentó que fue bajo la mano amiga de la iglesia de habla inglesa de Alvarado que pudieron desarrollar un lindo programa en la comunidad; un banco de alimentos. Una vez al mes, la iglesia involucra a los miembros y amigos de todas las edades con responsabilidades como repartir comida hasta ayudar a cargarla a los vehículos, para aquellos que necesitan. La motivación fue no sólo proveer alimentos pero “poder ser un impacto en nuestra sociedad,” dijo Ruth. Así qué, con la ayuda de Juan Balta-
zar, Verónica Reyes, Delber y Mary Tayler, y muchos otros, pudieron tener su propio banco de comida. Ruth declara que “por 3 meses fuimos voluntarios en su iglesia de habla inglesa de Alvarado y fuimos instruidos en todos los aspectos para poder llevar a cabo nuestro propio ministerio que abrió sus puertas en diciembre del 2010 hasta hoy en día. Comenzamos sirviendo a 50 familias y hoy tenemos la bendición de servir al doble de ellas. Gracias a Dios podemos servir a nuestra comunidad y tu también puedes empezar un ministerio igual, sólo ¡pide ayuda! Dios te ayudará y te rodeará de manos amigas.”

Rocío Alejandra Rodríguez

A MODEL CHURCH



The Grandview, Texas, church is filled with humble members who yearn to serve others.

The Grandview, Texas, church is motivated for mission work. Though they're small, only 100 members, they make a big impact. A few years ago, Grandview realized that they only got new members from other Seventh-day Adventist churches. Right then, the church set out to change that through community service. They want to be missionaries to those who have never heard the gospel.

"Our mission, to 'feed, seed, and lead,' begins with meeting the needs of the community," says Jonathan Armstrong, pastor. "We build relationships with people, then teach them about the gospel."

Total Choice Food Bank

Each week, the church opens a "total choice" food bank. In a total choice food bank, food is set up like a grocery store. Visitors take as much as they want, and no ID or proof of income is required.

"We actually have to encourage people to take more food, rather than ask them to take less," says Armstrong.

Last year, the food bank fed about 65 families a month. This year, they feed about 150 families a month, including pets. Some volunteers donate vegetables from their garden.

"The food bank is such a blessing," says Marcia Dyche, food bank director. "When you see people truly hungry, it changes you."

Grandview purchases food from the Tarrant Area Food Bank. They bought \$5,500 worth of food for \$330. They're one of three food banks in North Texas that operate with total choice.

"The volunteers and I say 'I'm here to be blessed,' not 'I'm here to bless you,'" says Armstrong. "We pray and talk to people. Those that come to our church from the food bank are there based on friendship."

Prison Ministry

When a prisoner is released, it's hard for that person to get started. Former prisoners rely heavily on family and friends. Parole officers refer these people to the Grandview church for help. Volunteers feed, clothe, and love families of former prisoners.

"We just want to help make the transition as easy as possible," says Armstrong.

"We have a mandate to live like Christ," says Dyche, "And Christ took care of people. At the end of the day, we're all family, and that's how we treat people."

Car Show Fundraiser

Grandview holds an annual car show, and all proceeds support the food bank. This year, it will be held on September 15 at Beaumont Ranch in Grandview. Car owners pay \$25 to enter their vehicle.

The church expects over 100 vehicles. Carter Blood Care will set up a donation booth and blood pressure station. There will be live

music, a chaplain's area, and vegetarian tacos and hot dogs for sale.

"We want it to be a day to relax," says Rich Schram, car-show coordinator. "Car owners tell me it's awesome to not worry about drunk people at a show."

"People come for cars, but find other resources, as well," says Armstrong. "We give them *Steps to Christ*, and offer fellowship."

Christmas Gift Ministry

Grandview gives holiday food boxes at Thanksgiving and Christmas. In addition, they open a gift store. It's similar to the food bank, but rather than food, it offers toys.

The sanctuary displays \$6,000 worth of toys. Parents can have three per child. Church members wrap the gift, and parents sign it.

In the fellowship hall, children decorate stockings and cupcakes, watch and learn gymnastics with Southwestern Adventist Univer-



sity's acrobat team, take Christmas photos, and enjoy a live nativity scene. Last year, they gave toys to about 175 kids. They hope to double that this Christmas.

"We want to improve the store by giving away bikes," says Armstrong. "We hope to purchase about 150. In addition we'll have a store where a child can shop for his or her parents."

Last year, a woman came to the Christmas store with her teenage



daughter. They hadn't really talked in a year, but while decorating stockings, they talked for nearly three hours.

"You're truly blessed when you give," says Dyche. "Three toys may not seem like much, but it can make a huge difference."

Itasca Mobile Food Service

On June 27 in Itasca, south of Grandview, the Grandview church hosted a mobile food pantry. Volunteers fed about 500 people in two hours.

"There's not much community service in that area," says Armstrong, "but it's targeted as high need. Many people can't afford to feed their family."

Grandview worked with the Second Missionary Baptist church in Itasca.

"Pastor Armstrong and I had trouble finding a church to work with," said Dyche. "Then I looked over an open field and saw a tiny church with cars out front."

Inside, church members were feeding chil-



dren. It was part of a lunch program for students who usually eat at school. When Grandview asked to work with the Baptist church, the Baptist church was thrilled.

Six months before, the church decided to host a food outreach. They were too small to do it alone, and prayed that someone would offer to help. Now, they hope to make this a monthly event.



“God takes those who are willing, smallest and most humble, and He does amazing things,” says Dyche.

A Church of New Believers

In everything, Grandview’s first goal is service, and then church members bring people to the Lord through friendship.

“My mission is to create a church of people that have never met the Lord before,” says Armstrong. “We don’t want people to feel unwelcome simply because they don’t own a nice shirt and tie. We encourage people to come as they are.”

Church members do their part to make visitors feel welcome, whether it’s through conversation or helping the sermon run smoothly.

“Our church has a different feel than any other church I’ve been to,” says Annette Hoerner, soundboard director at Grandview. “The church members are very welcoming. They don’t care what

a person looks like.”

Armstrong tries to use everyday words in his sermons. He considers that not everyone has been around Seventh-day Adventist terminology.

“I don’t ‘dumb down’ the doctrines,” says Armstrong, “But I try to speak in a way that everyone can understand. I also try to make my sermons interactive so people stay engaged and interested.”

All in all, the Grandview church has a heart for service, and is blessed with the capability to serve. Whether “feeding, seeding, or leading,” they are a small church that makes a big difference.

IN THE MIDST OF DISASTER

Reggie Johnson, assistant director, communication, Southwestern Union

On April 17, 2013, an ammonium nitrate explosion occurred at the West Fertilizer Company storage and distribution facility in West, Texas, 18 miles north of Waco, while emergency services personnel were responding to a fire at the facility. Fifteen people were killed, more than 160 were injured, and more than 150 buildings were damaged or destroyed.

On May 20 an EF5 tornado struck Moore, Oklahoma and adjacent areas with peak winds of 210 miles per hour, killing 23 and injuring 377. The tornado was part of a larger weather system that had produced several other tornadoes over the previous two days. Touching down west of Newcastle around 3:00 p.m., the 1.3 mile-wide tornado stayed on the ground for 39 minutes over a 17-mile path, crossing through a heavily populated area of Moore.

On June 14, a torrential downpour began over Eagle Pass, Texas, dropping 16.65 inches of rain during a 36-hour period of time, cre-

ating flash floods across Maverick County throughout the weekend. (The average annual rainfall for that area is just 17 inches.) More than 560 homes in the city and county were affected by the rain and subsequent floods and more than 140 Eagle Pass homes were destroyed. Maverick County Judge David Saucedo said, "This is probably the worst flooding situation that I've had to be a part of."

In the immediate aftermath of each of these disasters, Adventist Community Services and Disaster Response (ACS DR) was on the scene to show Christ's love by providing much needed supplies, assistance, and overall relief to the victims of the tragedies. Many schools, clubs, and local church congregations organized collection operations and what they could to see that money, supplies, and volunteers helped to meet the immediate needs of the suffering.





◀ Sherry Watts of ACS DR distributes supplies to victims of the West, Texas, disaster.

Top: Southwestern Adventist University students volunteered to help with the relief effort for West, Texas.

▲ ACS volunteers unload a trailer full of supplies to be distributed to victims of the West, Texas, tragedy.

Above right: A truck full of relief supplies arrives at the Hope Adventist Fellowship in Moore, Oklahoma.

West, Texas

After the explosion in West, the state asked ACS DR to set up a collection center in Hillsboro to accept and organize donations coming from Dallas-Fort Worth. Area coordinators from Dallas, Keene, and Austin all came out to help, and about 30 students from Southwestern Adventist University made the trip to provide the needed labor. The county judge paid a visit to the ACS DR collection center and gave his heartfelt appreciation for how well-run the center was, specifically for not needing help from the judge's office to sort out problems. "The warehouse keeps saying, 'We want more stuff from the Hillsboro collection center because it comes in organized and all ready to go,'" says Sherry Watts of ACS DR. "That's what we do is donation management. And what we're teaching people and showing them is that it really works."



▲ The fellowship hall at the Hope Adventist Fellowship in Moore, Oklahoma, was turned into a makeshift warehouse to supply the distribution center set up by the church to assist the victims of the EF5 tornado that hit Moore.

Top right: A team of youth from Oklahoma Academy helps with distribution efforts at the Hope Adventist Fellowship in Moore, Oklahoma.

► Volunteers at the collection center in Moore sort goods to be distributed to those in need.

Bottom right: ACS volunteers aid in the massive cleanup effort in the aftermath of the Moore, Oklahoma, tornado.



With needs at multiple locations, the volunteers and supplies were spread to the max and after four days in Hillsboro the needs were met. Volunteers distributed personal care items, diapers, paper products, first aid supplies, blankets, clothing packages, school supplies, food, clothing, pet food, and many other items. Joe Watts, Southwestern Union ACS DR director, shares a touching story of a giving heart: “A mother and her young son brought some items for the survivors, including a Toy Story sleeping bag. When asked if the child had outgrown it, the mother replied that it was one of his favorite things, but he wanted to share with a child who had lost everything in the explosion.”

Moore, Oklahoma

Hope Adventist Fellowship (HAF) in Moore was instrumental in opening up a collection and distribution center, serving people right out of their fellowship hall immediately after the tornado hit, while six other churches in Oklahoma started collecting items and feeding them to HAF. Personal care items such as toothpaste,

toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, and deodorant allowed victims the chance to get cleaned up, while five-gallon buckets of “much needed cleaning supplies gave people what they needed to get their homes cleaned in the aftermath,” according to Sherry Watts of ACS DR. Volunteers from across the Southwestern Union provided much-needed labor. As distribution continued, Watts said they discovered that some people weren’t coming for assistance because they were working on their homes and didn’t want to leave their houses to be vandalized or looted. “So we loaded up some vans and pickups with items and took them out to the neighborhoods and distributed out there,” says Watts.



▲ Adventist Community Services and Disaster Response cleanup buckets. These filled buckets can be used in a local church ministry to respond to house or apartment fires, floods, or other local disasters, and they can also be stockpiled by local conference ACS DR leaders for use following larger disasters. For more information on how your church or group can get involved, contact your conference ACS director.

◀ ACS DR volunteers assist victims of the flooding in Eagle Pass, Texas.

Several months later, ACS DR officials wanted to see how things were going in Moore. “They are doing just great,” says Watts. “Michael Smith, the pastor of the Hope church, has caught the vision of how they can serve their community. They have started going on mobile distribution trips into surrounding neighborhoods and little towns that have not gotten as much assistance that Moore received. Smith has said that they are in it for the long haul.”

Eagle Pass, Texas

After the Eagle Pass flood, Gerald Mohr, Keene area ACS DR coordinator, and truck driver Bill Wetmore deployed with a mobile distribution unit while Mary and Frank Jeys, ACS DR coordinators from San Antonio and other volunteers who accompanied them, set up a distribution center in Eagle Pass. Along with the Eagle Pass Spanish church pastor, Pedro Guzman, and volunteers from his church, they distributed clothing packs, personal care kits, and blankets to 1,027 flood survivors, making the front page of the local newspaper and earning the accolades of the Eagle Pass Mayor,

Ramsey Cantu, who expressed his appreciation for what the ACS DR volunteers did quickly to help the displaced families.

Adventist Community Services’ motto is “Serving Communities in Christ’s Name.” After the Moore tragedy, Stan Buckmaster, Oklahoma Conference ACS DR director, said he was impressed by the willingness of the people to help in Moore, and that the church in Moore did a great job providing relief supplies. Buckmaster emphasized that in a disaster response situation, what is sometimes needed most is monetary donations. According to Buckmaster, such donations are the most effective way of helping the victims. “Money can be quickly converted into the most needed relief supplies for the fastest implementation of relief,” says Buckmaster. To donate, simply write “ACS DR” on your tithe envelope or visit www.CommunityServices.org. Donations are not just needed during a disaster and its aftermath. “It would be very helpful if we had the financial support ahead of time so that we could have available the supplies that we know are going to be needed,” says Buckmaster. A donation during a “time of peace” will go a long way in helping the victims of the coming disasters and will allow the disaster response arm of the Adventist church to continue serving “in Christ’s name.”

Are We Visible Enough?



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

There are two realities we face in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: In Louisiana we are subject to hurricanes, and in Arkansas we are subject to tornadoes. It is not a matter of “if” but simply “when.” Last year, Louisiana was visited by Hurricane Isaac, which inflicted pain to New Orleans and much of the southeastern part of the state. One weather forecaster described that part of the state as getting a “relentless beating” from Isaac. Also in 2012, Arkansas had 18 tornadoes rip through various parts of the state. This was a much lower than usual number as in 2011 there were 75 tornadoes and in 2008 there were 81 tornadoes that visited the state. These devastating forces of nature always leave their trail of destruction, hurt, and pain.

Individuals from Seventh-day Adventist

churches in both Arkansas and Louisiana, as part of Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, VOAD, provide much needed response and relief following these natural disasters. I am most grateful for church members who are willing to give of their time and resources to bring relief and hope to those who have had their lives so drastically affected.

However, I’ve heard suggested that our church just isn’t visible during times of disaster. Other well-known organizations are recognized and seen on the evening news, but no mention is made of Adventist Community Service, ACS. Does that mean that our church is not involved?

One of the designated functions of ACS is warehouse management of multi-agency donated goods. This is a very critical part of meeting the needs of those who have experienced loss, but it is a “behind the scenes” function.

Seldom does the media do a story on this part of the response effort, but if there is write-up, rarely is it as glamorous as the story and picture of people being handed food, water, or personal care kits by some other organization. So the perception is that we as Adventists just aren’t responsive.

The truth of the matter is that scores of church members are personally responding to assist; tens of thousands of dollars are being spent in disaster relief; and hundreds of prayers ascend for those who are in need. Even if the response is not visible to everyone, it is not for the notice that we work for others. Thank you for giving your support to bring blessing, visible or invisible, to those who desperately need it.

Steve Orian, president

The Perfect Storm

ROGERS, ARK. » The Hyatt Place was the site of a unique, nine-night, lay-led evangelism series, “The Perfect Storm: A Seminar That Keeps You Informed and Safe.” The seminar was conducted by the Rogers church, April 12 through 21. With casual seating around circular tables and healthy refreshments each night, the environment lent itself to conversation and socializing as guests gathered for the meetings. Each night featured an intriguing topic, such as, “The State of the Union,” “The State of the End,” or “The State of the Living.”

The participants were given free Bibles with Bible studies in the back. They could easily reference Bible texts for themselves directly from God’s word at the nightly meetings. Ovidiu Radulescu, pastor, began and ended each meeting with a unique object lesson, video clip, or story which tied the theme of end-time events.

Current events and practical applications piqued audience interest and tied in

to the evening’s message. A local elder brought the biblical message for the evening. Topics included Jesus’ second coming, Daniel 2, the state of the dead, Israel, health, judgment, the Sabbath, and the



▲ Laura Weyer receiving her certificate of completion during a fellowship dinner.

◀ Guests enjoyed a vegetarian dinner after the meetings.

gifts were given to guests, and they were also given an invitation to continue studying the truths of the Bible with Radulescu.

three angels’ messages.

There were a variety of guests, all interested in knowing what the Bible says about the times in which we are living.

The meetings ended with a vegetarian dinner. Certificates of completion and

The women’s ministries department held a Victorian tea the following Sunday, and several of the women who attended the seminar attended the tea.

Laura Weyer

Louisiana Pathfinders' Honors Festival

MARTHAVILLE, LA. » Pathfinders and Pathfinder staff enjoyed beautiful April weather as they arrived and set up camp for the Louisiana Honors Festival Camping Skills Weekend. It was held near Marthaville, in a church member's pasture. Pathfinders from New Orleans Crescent City Saints, Baton Rouge Red Sticks, and the Shreveport Tornadoes enjoyed visiting friends as they set up camp and arranged the campfire bowl area. The Baton Rouge Red Sticks led the evening vespers.

Bright and early on Sabbath morning, the clubs joined together for Sabbath School. They performed a skit depicting the three angel's messages, then drove to the Marthaville church. They marched into the church in full dress uniform, and then led out in the church service. Lloyd Clapp, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Pathfinder director, was the morning speaker. At the beginning of the service, Clapp presented a plaque to pathfinder Bill Grant, showing

that he had been voted into the Arkansas-Louisiana Pathfinder Hall of Fame.

After lunch, the Pathfinders had a class in Poultry and Poultry Raising taught by Angela Grant, who raises chickens. Then, they took a nature hike, where they climbed trees and enjoyed the Lord's cre-

highlighted by a wonderful jambalaya dinner with all the clubs together, followed by roasted marshmallows and hot chocolate.

Sunday morning, the Pathfinders had to build their own fires and cook their own breakfast as part of the seven camping skills honors they earned that day. Some Pathfinders also earned their animal tracking and archery honors.

Debra Decker, South Louisiana Area Pathfinder coordinator



◀ Several Pathfinders earned an archery honor.

▼ Pathfinders filled the Marthaville church.



ation. The Sabbath ended with a vesper program led by the Shreveport Tornadoes and the Crescent City Saints. The evening was

Conway Church Outgrows Present Site

CONWAY, ARK. » The Conway church has outgrown its current facilities, and looks forward to building a new church in the next two or three years.

Four years ago, the church purchased six acres just north of Conway. The new church site will have great visibility from the highway, U.S. 65. The facility will be on top of a hill with fantastic views, both north and

south. In June, the agreement was made to purchase two more acres that will allow for a better entrance to the building site. Conway members are excited to see the growth in the church.

Richard Hall, pastor



Church members gathered together on the new property to make building plans.

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Bible Study at State University Leads to Baptism

ARKADELPHIA, ARK. » It was commencement day for the class of 2013 at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, when Chris Espinoza walked across the gym to receive the diploma for a bachelor's degree in business administration. It was a milestone moment for Chris, but one of his greatest moments was yet to come. The following day, Chris would be baptized at the Arkadelphia church.

During his junior year, Chris started attending an Adventist Bible study group

at Henderson State after an invitation from a close friend. The group met every Tuesday night and went over the Amazing Facts study guides. Espinoza says it was God's will that he came into contact with the Bible study group. "I had prayed that I was going to earnestly seek God,



Chris Espinoza was baptized by Carroll Graybeal, pastor.

and then this opportunity was presented."

As Chris faithfully attended the Bible studies every Tuesday night, the Bible truths began to change his life. After prayers and personal studies, he made the decision to fully commit his life to Jesus through baptism, and became the first Adventist in his family. "Despite having been raised in a Christian home and listening to the messages, I always felt as if something was missing. A piece of the puzzle wasn't there. Through the campus ministry, God led me to the missing puzzle piece, and afterwards everything started to come together. I fell in love with, value, and treasure the Adventist message," says Espinoza.

After personal research and conversations with the local church elders, Chris has started the application process with Adventist Volunteer Missions. "I will be going wherever God leads," he says. Chris is praying that God will use the mission trip to identify and pinpoint His exact will for his life. Although the mission site is not confirmed, he plans to be overseas for one year.

Chris realizes that the details of his future may vary, but he knows what he wants to accomplish. He says, "I want to love God with all my heart, mind, and soul, love others as myself, and serve as an instrument to lead others to Christ."

Izhar Buendia

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The Silver Lining



Within minutes after the devastating EF5 tornado roared through the Moore region, my wife and I emerged from our makeshift bunker in our bathroom and drove less than five miles to the carnage. We drove by our church, Hope Adventist Fellowship of Moore, and it was covered with debris as if someone had taken a giant blender filled with trees and buildings and spewed it on the church and parking lot. Thankfully, there was no damage to the building!

The air was filled with sounds of car alarms and sirens blaring as emergency vehicles and first responders raced to those in need. Within a few minutes of driving through the devastation, our brains were trying to wrap our minds around the magnitude of destruction and apparent monumental needs that would arise from this tragic event. A few hours later, I spoke with Stan Buckmaster, the Oklahoma Conference's Adventist Community Services director, and he advised me on how to launch our church as a disaster relief distribution center.

How would our church meet the enormous needs of our community? How will

we get enough volunteers to serve long grueling hours seven days a week? These were some of the questions various people asked.

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20, NLT). There's a silver lining to this horrible situation. God revealed that when all our churches work together, we're able to accomplish the impossible. Churches from across the union, and our sister churches from various states, rallied in unity under the banner of Jesus.

Our relief center is managed by Julie Pulley and Dara Haley, who have worked tirelessly! We have worked 9,227 man hours, had more than 959 volunteers working in the center, and have served 865 families.

This devastation has taught me a few key lessons. First, God is our refuge and strength. The most powerful tornado ever to hit this planet, spending the longest duration on the ground, was the "tornado" that ripped through the Garden of Eden. From our first parents, Adam and Eve, all the way down to our present day, the winds of strife from this violent storm has

affected every family—broken homes, divorce, addictions, abuse, death, violence, and even natural disasters. But praise God, Jesus is our refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble!

Another lesson—we are the "hands and feet" of Jesus. Interestingly enough, it was Jesus' hands and feet that were pierced. To be His hands and feet also means we must labor sacrificially, endure hardship, be patient in trials and instant in prayer. We are called to serve sacrificially as our Savior did.

The final lesson is that the work of God will be finished when His workers unite. Ellen White says, "The secret of our success in the work of God, will be found in the harmonious working of the people. There must be concentrated action. Every member of Christ must act his part in the cause of God according to the ability that God has given him. We must press together against obstructions and difficulties, shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart," (*Review and Herald*, Dec. 2, 1890).

Maranatha!

Michael Smith, pastor, Hope Adventist Fellowship

Baptisms at Yukon Church

YUKON » The Yukon church was blessed the day Chris and Joyce Watson walked in. With the leading of the Holy Spirit, they had prayed and studied their way to the Sabbath. Both were raised in strong Christian homes, but they felt something was missing in their relationships with Jesus. When they discovered the Sabbath truth, they were eager to learn more. After Bible studies and faithfully attending the church for a year, they were baptized. It was indeed a high Sabbath!

Mary Wilson

Bristow Adventist School Graduation

BRISTOW » In mid-May, the Bristow Adventist School (BAS) held a graduation for one eighth-grader, Danielle Hammond, and two kindergarteners, Anthonie and Makayla Ontiveros. Hammond had attended BAS from kindergarten through eighth grade, and her memories reflected the dedication of her teachers through the years. The Ontiveros siblings were captivated by the stories of Jack Francisco, Oklahoma Conference education and



health ministries director, which he told on his knees, at their eye level. Many past BAS graduates attended the graduation ceremony, a testament to the church family's focus on keeping its youth involved in Christian activities.

Caroline A. Fisher

Hosting “Front Line Soldiers” in the Battle for Hearts

ARDMORE » The Ardmore church is at war, yet “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

For three weeks, the Ardmore church hosted a group of “front line soldiers.” A group of nine students from Ouachita Hills College went door-to-door and business-to-business colporteur. The students sold about 1,500 books and gave invitations to a health expo. They visited almost every home or business in Ardmore and surrounding areas. The church will continue the battle as the members follow up with more than 75 Bible study interests.

Elders, doctors, children, and any members available then teamed up and held a free community health expo. “We are so thankful for the more than 75 individu-

als that came out to learn more about God’s perfect plan,” says Mary Burnt, owner of the restaurant “Veggies,” where the expo was held. The Ardmore church wants to lift up Jesus to the community as the ultimate healer.

Join us through prayer as we battle to hasten the Lord’s return. “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours,

but God’s” (2 Chronicles 20:15).

Miriam Popovski



Ouachita Hills College students worked in the Ardmore community doing business-to-business colporturing.

Spreading the Fragrance of God Women’s Ministries Day at Bristow

BRISTOW » In 1898, a women’s ministries department was started by a female church member’s desire, fueled by Ellen White’s encouragement. However, it didn’t become an “official” General Conference department until 1995. According to the General Conference’s Women’s Ministries Web site, the department was created to “address the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of women in the church,” (<http://adventistwomensministries.org>). The women’s ministries department also “recognizes that women have many Gifts of the Spirit and it attempts to help women discover and use these gifts to the glory of God.”

Our own small church in Bristow also has an exceptional number of capable women who weekly carry out many unseen duties: cleaning the church, cooking for our weekly potluck, visiting handicapped

members and friends, teaching Sabbath School lessons, sorting through donations for needy neighbors, and the list goes on.

On women’s ministries Sabbath in early June, the impact of women’s contributions was felt as each part of worship was led and assisted by women of all ages. Chantee Fisher was the pianist; Lexy Fisher and Allyson Fisher led song service; and the majority of the Sabbath School classes were taught by women that day also.

During the worship hour, Patricia Perez, Bristow’s women’s ministries leader, served as the platform elder. Adrienne Hammond led the congregation in scripture, Laura Weber sang a hymn solo, and Macy Fisher told the children’s story, sharing how Jesus cared for students while

she was a student missionary in Pohnpei, Micronesia. Later, the stories of Mary, Martha, and Esther came to life as Sherry Fisher shared some life lessons she has learned from these Old and New Testament heroines. Sherry recalled how she always has felt like Martha and she asked the congregation, “Do you cry to the Lord, telling Him what to do?” as Martha did. Esther’s lesson is that we should say “yes” to God because He calls us, rather than try to determine if we are capable of doing His will.

The leadership of our adult women is an excellent model for our younger female members also, as many called women serve as Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders and assistants. Through these godly role models, we may say, “But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere” (2 Corinthians 2:14, RSV).

Caroline A. Fisher



Sherry Fisher spoke about Mary, Martha, and Esther on Women’s Ministries Day at the Bristow church.

Tulsa Academy Students Give Up “Fun Day” For Disaster Relief

TULSA » The day after the terrible Moore tornado disaster on May 20, 2013, Tulsa Adventist Academy (TAA) sent out a call for tornado relief supplies to all students and church members. Project “Students Helping Students” was born. “Today was amazing!” This is the beginning of a comment made by a student of TAA. The night before, Mark Griffin, principal of TAA, had students assembled together for the start of school the morning after the tornado. The staff took the opportunity to talk to the students about the disaster and ask

what the school could do for those students in Moore.

One student said, “Today was amazing! We didn’t do any school work! When we got to school grades 5-10 were brought together for an announcement (water day is tomorrow and we were going to get 18 foot water slides). The water slides cost about \$500. So my school is fundraising for all that was lost in the Moore tornado. We were told we could give up the water slides to use the \$500 to help or we could keep the water slides for fun. *Every single person* in grades 5-10 voted to get rid of the water slides and help. After going to the class for about 45 minutes, we had another meeting.

We were told that the water slides were canceled for good and we did a good thing. Then they said “The \$500 you gave was a good start, but over the last 45 min., we as a school have raised \$4,200!”

And the students didn’t stop there. What started with pocket change and class party funds grew until more than \$6,000 had been raised by noon. Students secured transportation and were driven to Sam’s Club to make relief supply purchases for disaster kits. But the best part was seeing the students experience God. Another student commented, “So today TAA students decided to give up our water slides for water day, which were going to cost \$500. Our teachers went to all our classrooms and students gave up some of their things

to raise money for Moore, Oklahoma. We raised a good \$5,000 or more! We went to Sam’s and we bought stuff for Moore! We feel so blessed to have done this. And God gave us back something. Those water slides that I mentioned, the company is letting us use them for free! How awesome is that?”

Over the next week, students spent time handing out fliers in the rain, standing on the street corners asking for change, shopping, putting together disaster kits, loading semi trucks, sorting clothes, packing boxes, making phone calls and taking

donations. What started out as a desire to help resulted in over two semi-truck loads of supplies, over \$12,000 raised, sponsors from the community and the best end of the year party ever! It always pays to put God and others first.

Marilyn Griffin



TAA students, led by their teachers, gladly gave up their “fun day” to help Moore tornado victims. Many parents and local church members also assisted in the effort.

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

A Life of Christian Service



“The Christian’s life will testify that he is governed by other laws than those which the world obeys—laws of a higher order than those that control the lovers of the world. The will of God, our Creator, is to be made manifest in us, not only in the name we bear, but in our life of self-denial. We are to give evidence that we are influenced and controlled by unselfish principles. All our purposes and pursuits should stand in distinct contrast to the selfishness of the world.

“Oneness with Christ enables men to wield an influence far above that of the renowned of this world. While copying

the example of Christ, they have, with His grace, power to benefit the church and the community. Their influence is felt just in proportion to the distinctness of the line of demarcation which separates them in spirit and principle from the world.

“As union is strength, the Source of all power, of all goodness, mercy, and love, takes finite, human beings into copartnership with Himself for the purpose of imparting His divine power to human agencies, to diffuse His influence and extend it far and near. When one is allied to Christ, a partaker of the divine nature, his interest is identified with that of all suffering humanity. As we look aright to the cross of

Calvary, every nerve of heart and brain will thrill in sympathy for the human misery in all parts of our world. Those who are created anew in Christ Jesus will realize the wretchedness of sin and the divine compassion of Christ in His infinite sacrifice for fallen man. Communion with Christ imparts to them tenderness of heart; there will be sympathy in their looks, in the tones of the voice; and earnestness of solicitude, love, and energy, in their efforts, which will make them powerful through God in winning souls to Christ” (*Welfare Ministry*, p. 296).

Ellen G. White

Empowering Women with Prayer

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. » May 18, 2013 was a monumental Sabbath day for the women of Tenth Street church in Oklahoma City as we joined together for our women’s ministries retreat at the Embassy Suites. Our theme “Empowering Our Women Thru the Power of Prayer” was facilitated by our guest speaker, Janice Johnson Browne, from Nashville, Tennessee. Her spiritual background and professional training as a Ph.D. in educational

leadership and psychology encouraged us to share, cry, bond, and pray together, as “Sistas in Christ.” Taking time “away” for the day was very relaxing and much needed, as we focused on our need to understand the “real power of prayer.”

Sheila Shavers



The Tenth Street church hosted “Empowering Our Women Thru the Power of Prayer” on May 18.



SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

The Heart Truth for Women:

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women.

HAMMOND, LA. » In keeping with the February 2013 American Heart Month national campaign, the Adventist Community Services department of the Emmanuel church hosted a Red Dress Day weekend celebration on February 2 and 3, 2013.

They joined with the health ministries and women's ministries departments to make an impressive presentation for women of the church and surrounding communities to foster awareness of women's heart disease, and to encourage making healthier choices to protect the heart.

Many hours of hard work and planning went into making this event a success. Lucinda Keller, Adventist Community Services director, solicited giveaways for the event from Lakeview Regional Heart Center's Community Outreach Department in Covington, La. They responded with numerous donated articles, including items for gift bags, health information, and 240 bottles of drinking water. Keller also requested donations of canned goods and red-colored vegetables from other sources for the community service food pantry. The response was enthusiastic.

Emilye Grant of Emmanuel's health ministries department solicited the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's Health Information Center for handouts and items for gift bags. The items received were used for attractive décor in the foyer, for greeting guests at both entrances, and in the fellowship hall.

Shirley Bennett and others used their decorative skills to brighten up the facility in red décor that was warm and healing. A special team was selected as greeters to accompany the hospitality team, who were all dressed in red with happy smiling fac-

es. *Outstanding* is the word that describes this team! Sherlette Burkhalter, Adventist Community Services treasurer, designed pin-ons that eloquently accented the women's red dresses and the men's red ties.

The 11 a.m. worship service began with high adoration to God as praises rang throughout the sanctuary. Grant presented a health moment, cautioning the women that heart disease is the number one killer of women, and that they should know their risk factors, and what risk factors can be changed or treated to prevent a heart attack. She encouraged them to consult with their doctor about the "Heart Truth."

Linda Bradley introduced a visual to the children at storytime, entitled "Mr. and Mrs. Heart," in which the Hearts exhibited poor eating habits. The lesson was that healthier choices have to be made to protect the heart.

Vessels of Praise and the music ministry department delivered heavenly melodies of praise to set the tone for an awesome message from Charlotte Cornish.

Carrie K. Cyprian, member of the Glad Tidings Adventist Church in Slidell, La., offered a special treat after lunch. Home-made smoothies and strawberry pie were served from a table decorated with a white linen cloth.

Private health assessments and counseling were offered by Emilye Grant, PAC-MPAS. The evening continued to be very informative as the AY department presented a Bible quiz on the heart. Marvel Jenkins delivered the vespers sermon.

The women's ministries Sunday-morning prayer breakfast was presented by Shannon Williams and staff. The delightful morning festivities began with a cheerful

icebreaker led by Ethel Martin. Opening song was led by Charlotte Turpin, followed by prayers and testimonies, directed by Martin. Gayla Turner spoke on how we should guard our spiritual heart, avoiding even the appearance of evil.

The weekend was power-packed with praises to God. Valuable information was shared that will go a long way toward helping women to be mindful of their health.

Gift bags of water and the Heart Truth information were provided at Emmanuel Adventist school for the students' mothers at the Covington Boys and Girls Club. The gifts of bottled water with Heart Truth information that Keller distributed in the community of Covington were appreciated by the women of four churches. Rosehill Missionary requested more information about Red Dress Day, and invited Keller to do a presentation at their women's ministries event called "The Dinner Table Discussion" on February 7, 2013. Twenty-five women attended, and were excited about the information they received about making better choices for heart health. Members from Bethel Reformed Methodist Church Women's Ministries attended Red Dress Day, and were so impressed with our speaker, Charlotte Cornish, that they extended an invitation for her to bring the message of the hour at their annual Women's Day program in May 2013.

Red Dress Day weekend at Emmanuel was truly a successful effort that brought our members, communities, and churches together, and enlightened them on women's heart health.

Lucinda Keller

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE



Berean Hosts “Investigation Station” VBS Program on Creation

BATON ROUGE, LA. » The Berean church recently held its Vacation Bible School. The theme was “Investigation

Station,” and each evening featured the sub-themes “The Nature God Created,” “Erosion Without the Sabbath,” “Sin Af-

fects Nature,” “God Cleans the World,” and “The World After the Flood.” Even the refreshments reflected the theme as evidenced by “creation stew” (fruit and nuts), “happy hearts” (people made out of fruit), and a banana boat representing Noah’s ark. The closing program held Sabbath evening gave the children and staff an opportunity to share what students had learned during the week.

Evelyn M. Edwards

The Berean church in Baton Rouge recently held Vacation Bible School and investigated creation.



Berean Creates Young Adult Worship Group

BATON ROUGE, LA. » It was a year ago that the pastor of Oklahoma’s Tenth Street church, Stephen Brooks, reintroduced the Berean church to the concept of a young adult ministry that caters to ages 18 through 40. However, it took several months to implement the program. Inspired by Brooks, as well as an Oakwood University Friday night Adventist Youth program, *Friday Night Live*, Paula Adams began the groundwork for Berean’s own “Friday Night Live” program.

According to Adams, “Friday night was chosen to combat what some view as the need to fill the void before Sabbath worship, a way to begin the Sabbath in worship with other Christians.” The captivating title, “Friday Night Live,” speaks for itself.

Many in the young adult age bracket did not want to identify with singles’ ministry, but were willing to embrace a program that reached out to singles and young married couples. Even the pastor, Robert Davis, and his family are involved,” says Adams. “It is like an upbeat prayer meeting for the younger set; taking youth ministries to the next level.”

With “Friday Night Live” boldly projected onto a large screen in a complementary setting, the program begins with the praise team leading out in worship. They meet once a month, with plans to increase to twice a month. From there it’s the theme song coupled with a “greet your neighbor” segment. Then, social media takes over with team leader Walter Campbell direct-

ing all to take out their cell phones, send an e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter message of God’s love to someone. Testimonies, praise reports, and a season of prayer follow.

Because each session has its own theme, the recent one highlighted the graduation season, honoring Berean’s graduates and their many levels of accomplishments. Participants got an opportunity to express God’s role in their success. Of course, prayer and a song precede the trip to the multipurpose room where all gather for fellowship and potluck, bringing the proceedings to an eventful close.

Evelyn M. Edwards

A Community Ordained to Serve



The Bible tells us that as God's chosen people, we were ordained to serve those nations and communities that surround us. Notice the promise of God to His people found in Malachi 3:11,12, "Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field says the Lord of hosts. And ALL of the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land."

In being faithful stewards of the Lord's resources here on earth, we cheerfully serve others in need. It is the spirit of Christ and the slogan of heaven. We are reminded of the "open table" ministry, which began with a chance encounter between a group of young Christians and a homeless man named Ernie. He simply asked the youth group serving him if he could come and worship with them on a weekly basis at their church. The leaders of the group were moved to pick Ernie up whenever there were services in the church, and return him to the shelter afterward. Over the course of the next several months, they began to comprehend the entwined and complex set of circumstances that had kept Ernie in poverty and need for so long. They decided to convene a group of their very

own church members who had the professional gifts and life experiences related to the specific challenges that Ernie faced. The table met every week for the next six months to develop and implement a "stability plan" to help Ernie access opportunities and overcome obstacles in areas such as employment, housing, healthcare, and transportation, enabling him to successfully re-enter the community. Soon Ernie became economically stable, and a productive member of the community. Today, Ernie lives on his own, has a job, a home, his own car and a community of friends.

As churches, are we a genuine blessing to our communities? Do we show up on a daily basis as well as in moments of disaster? The philosophy that the apostle Paul puts forward in 1 Corinthians 9:19 is worthy of repetition, "For although I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more." Called to serve, and through service extend a call! As representatives of the Most High God, who made Himself of no reputation and served humanity to the utmost, we should live our lives in such a way that we become a continuous blessing to humanity.

The word "servant" in our English New Testament finds its roots in the Greek—

"*doulos*," meaning bonds slave. At times it is defined as deacon or minister. Both words denote an individual who is not at his or her own disposal, but is his or her master's property. Purchased to serve his or her master's needs or purposes. Likewise, we have been purchased by the blood of our Master, Christ Jesus, to serve at His beck and call in the world around us in representation of His heavenly biddings and creed.

An analogy that may accurately describe the plight of the Christian is that of a reservoir as it produces electrical power. When we accept Christ, construction of our reservoir is complete. We now have the potential to be useful and affect lives for the better. But it isn't until the floodgates are opened, and the cascading water of life pours through our soul, that power is realized! When the Spirit of God baptizes us, we become most effective in God's service. As with the reservoir, this power generating experience is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. It needs to be a life-long process!

Carlos J. Craig, president

Grandview Church Hosts Disaster Preparedness Seminar

GRANDVIEW » The Grandview church recently held a seminar on disaster preparedness, hosted by Gerald Mohr, Keene Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) coordinator.

Mohr also has an extended history of being a volunteer fireman and was director of the Johnson County Emergency Preparedness team.

The focus of the seminar was having a family plan, emphasizing the importance of knowing where to go and where to meet up if family should become separated during a disaster. The seminar also encouraged knowing how to help family or neighbors until help arrives. Finally, Mohr also

taught participants how to create a small backpack survival kit to meet basic needs until a disaster is under control.

He emphasized that each church in the community needs its own plan to assist the church family as well as others in the community, providing food and shelter and meeting basic needs. Being prepared is the ounce of prevention to keep a bad situation under control. It's been said, "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear." And remember, it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark, but he was prepared for the disaster when it came.

Jhan Beaupre



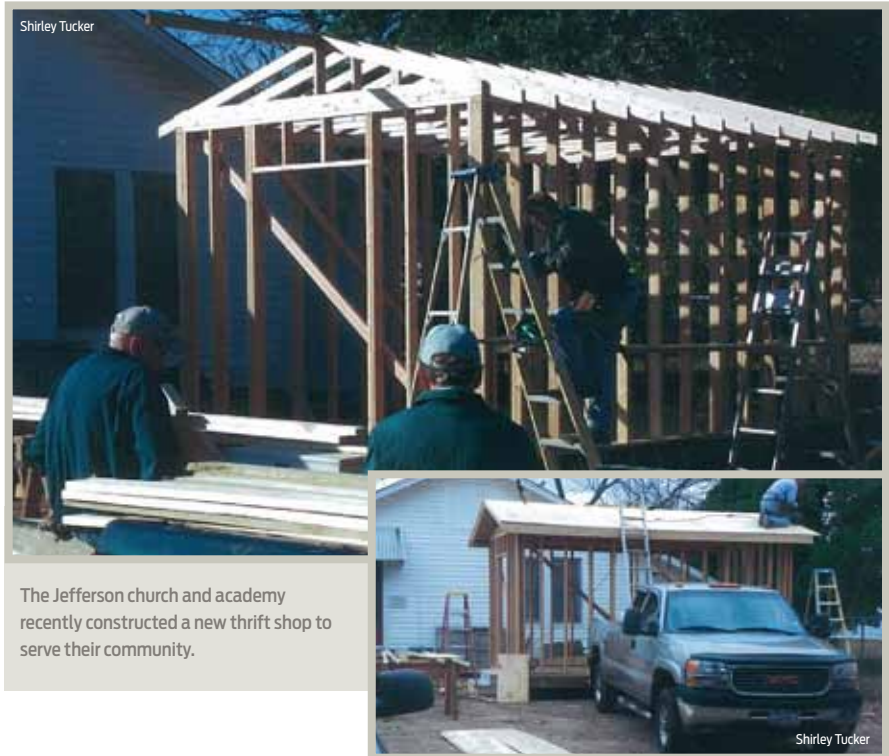
Gerald Mohr holds up a disaster preparedness pamphlet emphasizing what families and churches need to know in order to be prepared.

Jefferson Builds New Thrift Shop Warehouse

JEFFERSON » A bigger and better Adventist Community Services thrift shop has been constructed in Jefferson. The previous thrift shop was small and overflowing, so volunteers from Jefferson Academy and the Jefferson Central churches constructed one. Each year they are able to send approximately 100-150 bags of excess clothing to the ACS Depot in Keene, Texas.

The thrift shop in Jefferson sells clothing, books, furniture, household goods, and miscellaneous items. They serve 200-300 customers per month and are able to help families in need due to burn-outs, flooding, utility assistance, and more. The center is also able to deliver food baskets at Thanksgiving to approximately 50-60 families.

Yvonne Blewett



The Jefferson church and academy recently constructed a new thrift shop to serve their community.

Edinburg Castles Win Again

EDINBURG » The South Texas Edinburg Castles Pathfinder Club excelled in this year's NAD Pathfinder's Bible Experience Competition (formerly Bible Bowl). For the eleventh time, the Edinburg Castles were one of the clubs to win first place.

The club has participated in the Bible Experience Competition 12 times, and has placed first 11 out of 12 times. This makes it a very unique experience for the kids who, together with their club leaders and parents, dedicate time, effort, and prayers to accomplish this for the honor and glory of God.

This year the finale was held at College View church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Each team is made up of six Pathfinders and one alternate. They look forward to preparation for next year's competition.

Peter Weber

The Edinburg team, including staff members and guests are (from left to right), Angela Noval; Manny Cruz, associate director for youth and young adult ministries at the NAD; Margarita Gomez; Omar Gomez; Javier Gomez; Ray Chavit; Jerrel Tamayo; Marina Pagdilao; Amethyst Noval; Euleth Cameron; Jeanelle Arguelles; James Black, director of youth ministries for the North American Division; and Gene Clapp, Texas Conference Pathfinder's director.



Mobile Food Pantry in Itasca

GRANDVIEW » Recently, the Grandview Food Bank, in partnership with the Tarrant Area Food Bank, held a mobile food pantry in Itasca, Texas. They were able to serve 555 families in about two hours, and gave away approximately 28,000 pounds of food. They were blessed with volunteers from Grandview, Keene, Fort Worth, Itasca, Blum, Covington, Cleburne, Maypearl, and elsewhere, who came to help in any way possible.

Ministers from several denominations volunteered as well. Jonathan Armstrong, pastor of Grandview church, and George Demmeritte, pastor of the Second Missionary Baptist Church, led out in the event. The Tarrant Area Food Bank is attempting to reach out to more rural areas. Currently, it covers 13 counties with 300 partner agencies. Statistics show that 52 percent of people being served by the Tarrant Area Food Bank



have to choose between buying food and paying utility bills. Thirty-nine percent of the people they serve must choose between paying for medical care or buying groceries. Children are not always responsible for these decisions, but they represent over

half of all the people Tarrant Area Food Bank serves.

The Grandview Food Bank was approached by at least four other towns to see if they could have a similar event in their cities. If you would like to join this effort or have questions, please call Marcia Dyche, Grandview Food Bank director, at 817.648.1022. No local donations of food or goods for Grandview residents were included in this food giveaway. Donations that are made locally to the Grandview Food Bank are given away during regular food bank hours.

Marcia Dyche and Jhan Beaupre

The Greatest Disaster



TEXICO CONFERENCE

Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. . . And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke

21:10, 11, 25-28).

We live in a time when disasters are on the increase. These disasters are affecting more and more people. Within the Southwestern Union we seem to have our share of hurricanes, tornados, flooding, fires, and droughts. I am always pleased when I see Joe Watts and people from all over our union territory ministering to people who have sustained great loss. It makes me proud to be a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are a church that is dedicated to lifting up people.

We all know from our study of prophecy that these disasters are going to increase until the end of time and Jesus comes. His coming will bring the greatest natural disaster known to mankind, when the mountains and islands will move out of

their places and hailstones weighing 75 pounds will pummel the earth from the sky.

But this is not the greatest disaster. The greatest disaster will be people who have not given their lives to Jesus so they can be lifted up from this earthly disaster by the holy angels and taken to live with Jesus for all eternity. When we see disasters, and we will see more as the coming of Jesus nears, let us remember that the greatest disaster will be people who are unprepared for Jesus' return. You can give your friends, family, and neighbors disaster relief by getting them ready for the coming of Jesus. Let's prepare a people for the earth's greatest disaster.

James L. Stevens, president

Young People Demonstrate Christ's Love in Action

CORRALES, N. MEX. » Last October, the world watched in awe and fear as Hurricane Sandy became the largest Atlantic Hurricane on record, spanning more than 1,100 miles across. In its wake was left a trail of devastation. Over 285 people died

in the seven countries it passed through. Students of Sandia View Academy spent their senior class trip serving Far Rockaway, New York, a community devastated by the hurricane.

Far Rockaway is a coastal suburb com-

munity of New York City (NYC). People found themselves wading through six to eight feet of ocean salt water as the storm surged through their homes. In the morning, people awoke to find cars washed away, and in their place, three- to four-foot sand dunes covering streets and yards. Electricity was cut, gas service was sporadic, and water was not drinkable for over a month.

Amidst all the devastation was Jane (not her real name), a young teenager, who lived in Far Rockaway. As her family recovered from the damaging effects of the hurricane, Jane decided to help neighbors around her. After school each day, she would go from house to house assessing the needs of her neighbors. The immediate needs were for food and water. As winter rapidly set in, those immediate needs changed to repairs to the windows and doors, so the home would be habitable for the winter. Jane posted those needs in blogs and forums across the Internet.





Previous page: NAD president Dan Jackson and his wife, Donna, join the students as they deliver a couch to one of the recipients.

Top: The students sing God's praises in Time Square.

- ▲ After a delivery at this home, the group stopped to have prayer with the family.
- ▶ SVA students unload boxes and distribute items to those in need.

Very quickly donations began coming in for the items she requested, which she would then share with the families in need.

Greater New York Conference Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (GNYC ACS DR) immediately set up portable power supplies around NYC. This allowed people to charge their cell phones and other electronic equipment. Soon GNYC ACS DR heard of Jane and began to direct assistance also.

The Texico Conference ACS DR leadership was eager to take trained volunteers to help the disaster victims. The earliest plan developed in March 2013. Fifteen students from Sandia View Academy (SVA), two teachers, and one parent chaperone volun-

teered to be a part of the Texico ACS DR team. For totally selfless reasons, the entire senior class dedicated their senior trip to help with the disaster response.

Texico's ACS DR project was simple, to help people in Far Rockaway, New York, whose needs had evolved into more long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation. Rather than food and water, things like furniture, kitchen cabinets, and appliances were now the priorities. Even though their homes were in the process of being repaired, and in many cases looked restored from the outside, many still lacked insulation and sheetrock in the interiors.

The student team visited homes in the

area and completed a survey by asking the homeowners questions to determine what items they needed. This greatly impacted the team as they could see the effects of the devastation and hear how the families were working to restore their homes.

Then the students met together to plan for a solution and make a list of the items that were needed. The students had fun shopping at various national stores, selecting items that fit the needs of each of their beneficiaries. Each item was then personally delivered to their client's home.

The team responsible for that family would ask if they could sing a song about God, and share a short testimony. Afterwards they offered prayers of comfort and blessing over the family and home. It was truly a life-changing experience for the students who had a part in this project, and a very emotional time for many of the grateful recipients of these gifts.

Thank you to the Greater New York Conference, Adventist Development Relief

Agency (ADRA), and the North American Division, as well as a private donor who supplied funding for the project. An additional gift of \$30,000 was received from the Michigan Conference to support the victims because our students went across the country to help.

Also, we would like to thank the young people who have a passion to serve others and make a difference by demonstrating Christ's love in action. We are reminded that we are never too young or old to make a difference in the life of someone who is hurting, for whatever the reason.

Sean Robinson, Texico ACS DR director

The Godsend of Aiding Others

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. » While living in Arizona in 2008, I became interested in volunteering at a nursing home to help people, so I made an appointment with the volunteer services director at the Life Care Center of North Glendale to inquire about a volunteer position. My interview ended with an offer for a volunteer position in the activities department. After being introduced to my new supervisor, she said, "Aren't you the one who plays cards with Wilbur?" That surprised me because I didn't know who Wilbur was.

I met Wilbur my first day on the job. Shaking hands, I told him my name and he told me his. In the days following, I assisted him and the other residents with activities. Wilbur and I became instant friends. I noticed he had a cheerful countenance and I was eager to know the origin of his happiness. One day when I came he was singing and yodeling hymns out of his hymnal. I became convicted by the message of each song he sung. I glorified God as I joined Wilbur in song. When we were not singing, we enjoyed our conversations together. He gave me insight of what it was like to grow up in Kansas during the Great Depression and also about the Dust

Bowl. It amazed me to hear his stories. He even read books to me about things I never knew. We played card games or spent time together outside.

In the fall of 2009, my family and I moved to Albuquerque. The friendship that Wilbur and I had would now be tested by distance. I began writing handwritten letters to him so we could keep in touch. Being churchless, I asked Wilbur in one letter to please pray that God would help me find a church. God answered that prayer in the spring of 2010, when my grandma, brother, and I were in a laundromat and found a flyer for an upcoming prophecy-seminar lying on the floor. Attending the seminar then directed us to a Seventh-day Adventist church. Inside the church I noticed the same hymnal that Wilbur had used. That sealed the fact this was no mistake, God had set this up.

My grandma, brother, and I were baptized after attending the seminars. I took notes during each Sabbath sermon and prayer meeting, which became the bulk of my letters to Wilbur. I was excited to share the new truths from the Bible that I was learning from week to week. Long before I found the Adventist faith or Wilbur,



Wilbur Alexander and Rico Martinez became fast friends at the Life Care Center of Glendale, Arizona, in 2009.

God had a plan for my life and was working things out for me to find Him. Wilbur can no longer read my letters, so I call him every other day on the phone and I praise God he still knows who I am, because from his medical standpoint it is a miracle.

It has been three years and counting since I became a Seventh-day Adventist. I now have the privilege of serving in my church as an ordained deacon. God is molding my life and mending me every step of the way.

Rico Martinez

El Paso Meraz Pathfinder and Adventurer Week of Evangelism

EL PASO, TEX. » The Pathfinder club of the El Paso Meraz Spanish church presented an excellent week of evangelism from April 20 through 27, concluding with the baptism of seven members of the club. Many interests

have been generated as a result of this campaign. We are visiting a family of four for Bible studies. Two parents of the Pathfinders and Adventurers who are not part of our ranks have accepted Bible studies, as well.

In addition, two young people are preparing for the next baptism.

The program began each evening with a film on the life of Jesus according to Matthew, then selected Pathfinders led the theme song. The Adventurers presented a health nugget, while other Pathfinders presented various parts of the program, including the sermon. The church supported our youth with an average attendance of 50 each night, including several visitors that were brought by Pathfinders, Adventurers, or church members. It was a blessing to those who attended. Currently, 20 people are taking Bible studies.



Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs of the El Paso Meraz church conduct Week of Evangelism.

Lorenzo Domínguez

Where You Are **Sometimes the best opportunities for helping others are right in your own backyard.**

When tragedy strikes, tradition says you'll likely remember where you were. Almost any person can tell you where they were when the Challenger shuttle exploded or when the World Trade Center was attacked.

Do you remember where you were when you desperately wanted to help victims of a tragedy but had no idea what to do or how to help?

Gavin remembers. He was lying on his bed in his dorm room at Southwestern Adventist University, wishing there was something he could do to help the April 17 fertilizer explosion victims in West, Texas. But what could one college student do?

"My good friend Keith came bounding into my dorm room and told me to get ready," Gavin recalls. "We rushed out to my car and met up with the chaplain and the other students and staff. We spent the rest of the day sorting and gathering donations of water, food, blankets, and clothes."

"We had a fantas-

tic group of helpers," says Southwestern's chaplain, Islem Matthey. "For several days afterward I received calls from the Red Cross, Adventist Community Services, and several local churches thanking us for our help and marveling at the students' industry and cheerful attitude. After such community loss, it was wonderful to be part of the healing process."

For Gavin and Keith, the day in West, Texas, offered a moment of clarity. "We were sitting under some trees, taking a dinner break," Gavin explains. "We joked about being disciples eating under a tree

in the grass, and then it hit me. We were disciples!

"Later when I was back on campus I reflected on the experience. I decided that I'd been doing too little activity and too much complaining about being bored. Through this one experience I made new friends, felt closer to God, and helped those in need. It's an experience I won't forget and I'll be looking for new ways to lend a hand!"

A month later, a rash of tornadoes struck even closer to home. Granbury and Cleburne were the hardest hit. Southwestern staff and students responded the very next

morning as they dispersed throughout the county, answering the many calls for help. The different groups helped clean up debris at a local RV park and made temporary repairs on windows and roofs.

"I was out of town when the tornado hit," says Enga Almeida, Southwestern's vice president for enrollment, whose house stood in the path of the May 15, Cleburne tornado. "The next morning several of my co-workers went to my house to survey the damage. They boarded up my broken windows and cleaned up the glass that exploded everywhere."

"It's such a blessing to be part of a family that looks out for each other."

Glen Robinson



Top: Any age can help! A Southwestern student helps a young volunteer with a heavy box.

▲ Southwestern students and staff help sort the donations.

► Gavin helps load the truck with supplies for West, Texas.

Study of Publishing House Restructuring Ends Without Merger Recommendation

SILVER SPRING, MD. » A commission announced June 19 to consider a merger of the Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho, and the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland, will cease its work, officials of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and North American Division

said today. The General Conference owns the two organizations.

Citing “differing perspectives as to the interpretation” of Spirit of Prophecy writings about the independences of the two units, a statement issued by church leaders said: “It is felt in the best interest of the publishing work of the church at this

time for there to be no change to the governance of the two institutions.”

However, the statement noted that leaders of the General Conference and its North American Division have “requested that the two publishing houses continue to operate under their current structures but that they try to find ways to realize economies through closer cooperation and possible shared services.”

Additionally, “The publishing houses are also encouraged to work very closely with and respond to the North American Division’s mission-driven publishing needs and cooperate in developing more division-oriented and efficient delivery and distribution systems,” the statement indicated.

As noted in an earlier report, “Review and Herald Publishing Association is the successor to the first publishing house, The Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, incorporated in 1861. The Pacific Adventist Publishing Association, established in California, was organized in 1875. It was renamed as the Pacific Press Publishing Association in 1904. A third General Conference-sponsored publishing house, Southern Publishing Association, merged with the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1980.”

In the July 31 announcement, church leaders asked Seventh-day Adventists to “please pray for the public sharing and personal use of printed and electronic materials as we lift up Christ, proclaim His three angels messages of Revelation 14 and announce His soon second coming.”

The full text of the statement can be found at www.news.adventist.org.

Mark A. Kellner, Adventist News Network

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New Editor Signals Change at *Insight*

For the first time, the editor of the church's weekly youth magazine, *Insight*, will be a trained counselor. Omar Miranda came to youth ministry from a career of counseling adolescents and their families. He has seen it all. "My heart breaks for our youth," he says. "Many times our youth are getting themselves wrapped up in bad habits, sinful behaviors, and deadly addictions all because they don't know Jesus."

Omar speaks from experience, telling how he "went off the deep end" as a teenager. "I was raised in the church, but turned my back on my family, my church, and my God," he says. Research indicates that about half of children in the church will leave in their twenties.

"I find it interesting that Jesus knocks on the doors of our hearts," says Miranda. "But many times His call to us is drowned out by all we think the world has to offer: money, sex, power, position, and prestige."

"It's important that we give youth the truth that they can only find what they truly desire and need in God alone."

"I'm excited about Omar leading this ministry because first and foremost he loves the Lord," says Dwain Esmond, the former editor of *Insight* who now is vice president of editorial services at the Review and Herald. "He knows youth ministry. He has a special gift for understanding young people and a passion to see them saved."

"Omar's vast experience counseling teens provides him with a street-level view of their

deepest needs," adds Randy Fishell, editor of *Guide* magazine.

Miranda says his title will be "Director of Insight Ministries" instead of simply "editor," which indicates a more broad-based effort than just producing the magazine. He plans to make the Web site, www.InsightMagazine.org more immediately responsive to teens looking for answers to specific questions or affirmation of their prayer requests. He envisions



Omar Miranda, new *Insight* magazine editor.



training events to coach parents and youth workers on how to better connect with youth.

Insight magazine features stories to help teens grow close to God. Advice columns help them find answers to their deepest questions and give them wise solutions to big problems. Miranda wants to put a special emphasis on practical Christianity—the experience he missed as a young man. "It is simple," he says. "Our mission is to help kids know Jesus, love Jesus, and live Jesus."

"I truly believe if our youth truly understood the significance and power of knowing Christ and being found in Him," says Miranda, "they would be standing in line to get into church the way people do to get the newest iPhone!"

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Announcements

Take health ministry to the next level with CHIP—the Complete Health Improvement Program! Become a certified CHIP facilitator and change lives in your community. Training will be in Tucson, Ariz., November 6-7, followed by the inspirational CHIP Summit, November 7-9. For information or registration, visit www.CHIPhealth.com/ChurchLanding, or call 909.796.7676.

Sandia View Academy

Alumni Weekend: Celebrating 70 years since being established, Sandia View Academy Alumni Weekend will be held October 10-12, 2013 in the Sandia View Elementary gym. For information go to the alumni Web site at www.sandiaviewacademyalumni.org for details, or email svarocks@gmail.com. Honor classes this year are: 2013, 2008, 2003, 1998, 1993, 1988, 1983, 1978, 1973, 1968, 1963, 1958, 1953, 1948, 1943.

Learn how to conduct Creation Health seminars

in your church or community. Choose one of two upcoming one-day training sessions: October 6 at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, or October 20 at the Oklahoma City Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. Cost of \$30 includes lunch and textbook. For more info and to register, call Jim Landelius at 918.706.8733 or visit www.SouthwesternAdventist.org/Health.

Obituaries

AUSTIN, Leona Pearl Ortner,

born November 22, 1921, in Nashville, Tenn., and died June 5. Growing up, Leona and her family lived in Clifton, Mo., and Broadview, Ill., as her father, Sol, attended college. After his graduation, the family lived over the years in Shattuck, Okla., Keene, Tex., Laredo, Tex., San Antonio, Tex., and Oklahoma City, Okla. Leona graduated from academy and attended one year of college at Southwestern Junior College, Keene, TX. After an assortment of jobs, her most memorable were teaching one-room schools in Ponca City and Enid, Okla., and working at the Kinder Cookie Shop in Oklahoma City. It was at the cookie shop that she met the love of her life, Kenneth Vaughn Austin, and they were married on May 5, 1946. Leona worked hard to put her

children through Christian education. She gave music lessons, sewed many of their clothes, baked bread, and practiced other economics. She faithfully practiced the piano every day, and enriched the lives of her family with her love of music. She planted flower gardens everywhere she lived. Like her father, she kept track of family history and family connections. Though she would have denied it, she was highly organized in every aspect of her life; she even kept lists of the birds she saw each day at her kitchen window. In later years, she assembled the scraps from her many sewing projects into quilts for each of her children and grandchildren. As a life-long member of the church, Leona served in the children's classes for many years and as church pianist/organist for more than 35 years. She was preceded in death by

her husband, Kenneth, and her daughter-in-law, Lois Austin. Survivors: Jerry W. Austin, son, of the home; Delmar E. Austin, son, and his wife, Marcia, of Bolingbrook, Ill; daughter, Linda Finster, and her husband, Vic, of rural Woodward County, Okla; daughter, Kenna Lee Carlson, and her husband, Rich, of Lincoln, Neb.; daughter, Connie Roque, and her husband, Robert, of Rio Vista, Calif.; two brothers, Lester Ortner and Max Ortner; 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and many friends.

BRAZIER, Nannie Lee, born March 18, 1926, in Silsbee, Tex., and died May 29, 2013 in Arlington, Tex.. She was a member of the Mansfield church. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank. Survivors: daughter, Georgia and son-in-law, Charle Greenhill, of Jefferson, Tex.; daughter, Barbara Smith of Arlington; son, Frank Brazier, of Bulverde, Tex.; sister, Annie McCormick, of Orange, Tex.; 15 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and a host of relatives and friends.

BURNS, Muriel Ruth, born October 2, 1932 near Tupperville, Ontario, Canada and died May 14, 2013 in San Antonio, Tex. After graduating from high school, she worked in a bank for a few years and then for a year at the Canadian Union office. She was baptized on August 29, 1953. During her life she served her church as a clerk, head deaconess, Sabbath School secretary, and as a teacher in different children's divisions. She graduated from Hinsdale School of Nursing in 1957, and also married her husband, John Burns, in 1957. They have a daughter, Julie Sepulveda. Muriel especially enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and jigsaw puzzles, traveling, and camping. Pussycats were a favorite pet of Muriel's.

BUTLER, Nola, born June 9, 1932 in Mobile, Ala., and died March 31, 2013 at the Huguley Hospice Center in Fort Worth, Tex. She was a member of the Fort Worth First church. Survivors: daughters: Sheryl Turnbull, Barbara Boulter, Cora Hedrich, Pamela Michaels, Lynn Burgess, and Mary Fisher; sons: Lloyd Waltman and John Waltman; brother; Arthur Smith; 17 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren.

CARR, William Albert, born October 28, 1930, and died May 31, 2013 in Hot Springs, Ark. William was the president and owner of a portable x-ray company in California for many years, and x-rayed many famous people. He was a non-combatant medic in the Korean War and received the Purple Heart. As a member of the Bonnerdale, Ark., church, he was a religious liberty leader and choir member. He also was a gracious greeter and friend of all visitors and members. Survivors: wife, Delores Carr, of Hot Springs, Ark.; son and daughter-in-law, Gregory and Cheryl Carr, of Meadow Vista, Calif.; son and daughter-in-law, Steven and Priscilla Carr, of Hot Springs; son, Rick Carr, of Stevenson Ranch, Ark; five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

EWING, Edith, born March 5, 1918 and died April 11, 2013 in Collegedale, Tenn. Edith was a life-long member of the Bonnerdale church. Her life of service included teaching Sabbath school class, serving as church clerk and treasurer. Because of great need, she even taught the church school for one year. She was an LPN who worked at Mercy Hospital for many years, but also helped out with neighbors who were ill. She was especially devoted to her family and her grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry Ewing,



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and daughter, Charlene Ewing Farnsworth. Survivors: grandson, Randy Farnsworth, and his wife Shelly, Collegedale, Tenn.; and granddaughter Cyndi and her husband Ed Higgins, of Savannah, Ga.

GALLO, Dawn Irene, born April 1, 1966 in Grand Island, Neb., and died June 22, 2013 in Ardmore, Okla. She was a beloved teacher at Beaver Academy and Conroe Adventist Academy. Dawn was almost finished with her masters degree in education when she passed. Survivors: parents, David and Marilyn Parker; sons Eric Andrew Gallo and Gregory Davis Gallo of Ardmore, Okla.; brother, Kenneth Parker and his wife, Xiaomi, and their son and daughter of Leesburg, Va.

MYLES, Monroe Sr., born January 26, 1926 in St. Francisville, La., and died July 18, 2013 in Baton Rouge, La. For 50 years, he was a member of the Baton Rouge Berean church where he served as an usher, deacon, and community services member. He was especially noted for being the first to arrive on Sabbath morning and thus given the title "the door opener." He was preceded in death by his wife, Eleanor, sons, Michael Myles and Monroe, Myles, Jr., and seven sisters. Survivors: daughters, Denise Green (Donnell) of Baton Rouge, and Rosalind Ellis (Arthur) of Marbury, Md; son, Udall Myles (Wanda) of Baton Rouge; 11 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren; a sister, Vallie Myles; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

OGUINYE, Barbara McGowan, born October 11, 1960 in Independence, La., and died July 21, 2013 in Baton Rouge, La. She was a member of the Baton Rouge Berean church. Barbara was preceded in death by two sisters and two brothers. Survivors: husband, Simon

Oguinye; daughter, Robyn; brothers, Johnny McGowan of Hammond, La., and Emmitt McGowan of Ponchatoula, La.; five sisters, Julia (Eldrid) Palmer of Hammond, La.; Audrey (Clarence) Kirk and Carolyn McGowan of Toledo, Oh., Ida (Leroy) Austin of Killian, La., and Christine McFarland of Baton Rouge; two aunts and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.

RISK, Donald James "Jim," born June 21, 1930, in Lansing, Mich., and died July 12, 2013 in Rosston, Ark. Jim passed away at his home in the Waterloo Community. He served as an elder at the Magnolia church. His parents were Clare Dale and Eleanor Ruth Stickney Risk. Jim worked as a lineman for Consumer Power, was a wonderful literature evangelist, and retired as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He worked after retirement for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. Jim Risk was preceded in death by a son, David Risk, one great-grandchild, one brother, and one sister. Survivors: wife of 63 years, Mary Ann Smith Risk; son, Jim Risk of Greenbrier, Ark.; daughter, Ruth Ann Roys of Waldo, Ark.; seven grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, numerous other family members, and a host of friends.

SIEBENLIST, James Barry, died July 16, 2013 after a courageous journey with cancer. Barry was the eldest of five boys born in Shattuck, Okla., to parents Carl and Eloreen Siebenlist. During his 78 years, he was an OB/GYN and provided healthcare services for women at Hillandale Hospital and Metroplex Health System in Central Texas. He enjoyed the outdoors as a cattle rancher and horseman at JBS Ranches. He considered it his privilege to volunteer as a hos-

pital chaplain at Rollins-Brooke Community Hospital, and serve as a short-term missionary in six foreign countries. He actively served on the Metroplex Adventist Hospital/Scott and White Healthcare Corporate Board of Directors and Killeen Adventist Junior Academy, Valley Grande Academy, and Southwestern Adventist University school boards. He strongly supported education and afforded numerous students the opportunity of quality education. He was honored to serve his country as Major J. Barry Siebenlist, M.D. in the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. But most of all, he treasured his wife, loved his children, adored his grandchildren and was a friend to all. Survivors: wife of 47 years, Joan; daughter, LaShel (Shelly) Siebenlist Villanueva and family; son, John Barry Siebenlist, M.D., and family; brother, Bud Siebenlist, M.D. and his wife Debra; brother, Don Siebenlist; brother, Dick Siebenlist and his wife Carolyn; brother, Lou Siebenlist and his wife Nancy; aunt, Josephine Steinert; and many other relatives, friends, colleagues, and patients.

STEVENS, Juanita Grace, was born July 11, 1911, in Gainesville, Tex., and died December 12, 2012, in Irving, Tex., where she had lived since 1944. Grace, who grew up in Denton, was a charter member of the Irving church and taught the kindergarten children for many years. After receiving a teaching certificate from Denton Women's College and Teacher's College, she enjoyed a long teaching career and had a great love of music. Grace had a relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior and led her family in His ways. Survivors: daughter-in-law, Alma Lou Staniford, and children, Lois Jackson, Marvin Eugene Stevens and wife Margie, John Michael Stevens and wife Sue; 18 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great grandchildren.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Sep 6	Sep 13	Sep 20	Sep 27	Oct 4	Oct 11
Abilene, TX	7:59	7:49	7:40	7:31	7:21	7:12
Albuquerque, NM	7:28	7:19	7:08	6:58	6:47	6:38
Amarillo, TX	8:09	7:59	7:49	7:39	7:28	7:19
Brownsville, TX	7:46	7:38	7:30	7:22	7:14	7:07
Dallas, TX	7:47	7:38	7:28	7:19	7:09	7:00
El Paso, TX	7:25	7:16	7:07	6:58	6:48	6:40
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	7:49	7:40	7:31	7:21	7:11	7:02
Gallup, NM	7:37	7:27	7:17	7:07	6:56	6:46
Galveston/Houston, TX	7:40	7:31	7:22	7:14	7:05	6:56
Gentry, AR	7:41	7:31	7:20	7:10	6:59	6:49
Little Rock, AR	7:31	7:21	7:11	7:01	6:50	6:41
Muskogee, OK	7:44	7:34	7:23	7:13	7:02	6:53
New Orleans, LA	7:19	7:10	7:01	6:52	6:43	6:35
Oklahoma City, OK	7:52	7:42	7:32	7:22	7:11	7:01
Roswell, NM	7:19	7:09	6:59	6:50	6:40	6:31
San Antonio, TX	7:52	7:43	7:35	7:26	7:17	7:09
Shreveport, LA	7:35	7:26	7:16	7:07	6:57	6:48
Tulsa, OK	7:47	7:36	7:26	7:16	7:05	6:55



On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Service Isn't Only About Serving

EVERY SPRING AT THE SOUTHWESTERN UNION OFFICE, during a special time that we call Home Week, our staff gets the privilege of doing some kind of community service project. This past April we spent a morning at the North Texas Food Bank in Dallas, where we sorted what seemed like tons of food. When we first arrived at the facility, we were given an orientation and, as a part of that experience, we watched a video about some of the people who benefit from the food bank.

Watching that video turned what could have been a very mundane chore into the reality that what we were doing would actually make a difference in people's lives. But even more striking is that I also came away from that experience recognizing that community service is about more than simply doing something to help others—it's about respecting people, not looking down on them because of their circumstances, and making every effort to preserve people's dignity and self-worth as you help them.

We are pleased to highlight in this issue of the *Record* some of the work that

Adventist churches in the Southwestern Union are doing to respond with loving compassion to the needs of others around them. The mission of Adventist Community Services, which I believe our churches represent well, is to "serve communities in Christ's name." If you really think about it, serving in Christ's name isn't just about handing out supplies or food. Serving in Christ's name means serving as He would, exemplifying His character, attitude, and method of doing things. It means having respect for others and allowing them to make choices, rather than heaping upon them what we think they need.

I really like the idea of choice that drives the Grandview church's food bank ministry. It fits well with the philosophy at the North Texas Food Bank and best of all, it embodies Christ's commission for us to truly love others. Think about it. Having a food bank that allows people to choose the foods they want and need respects their freedom and individuality. Encouraging people to take whatever and as much as they want, rather than handing out identical pre-sorted boxes of food, sends a clear message: "We really care about you. We respect your individuality. We understand your needs. We want to make you happy." Isn't that what Jesus asks us to do as we serve others? Isn't that the attitude He wants us to have? And isn't that what Christianity is all about? I sure think so!

Pat Humphrey

Record

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*Catherine, Senior
Psychology Major*

In the picture: Catherine's grandfather, William, was one of the first in her family to attend Southwestern in 1941.



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