An Unbelievable Christmas gift

Two years ago, the Adventist church in Lubbock, Texas purchased their new building from the Second Baptist Church. As part of the agreement, the Second Baptist Church leased about 17,000 square feet of the building for their highly successful Child Development Center.

In 2003, the Adventist church was approached with an offer it was unable to refuse. The Second Baptist Church wanted to entrust the child care ministry to them. This meant they would transfer the entire operation, furniture and equipment, including two minivans used for collecting children from school for their after-school program, as a free gift. It was an unbelievable offer; all for no cost!

At the child care center’s Christmas program, with more than 400 parents and friends gathered to watch the children perform, Stephanie Nash, Second Baptist Church children’s ministry pastor, formally handed the Child Development Center over to Seán Robinson, senior pastor of the Lubbock church. A rock, a plaque, and a special tree mark the cooperation between these two churches.

The children were exceptional, representing the excellent Christian curriculum that has been a hallmark of this Child Development Center for more than 40 years in Lubbock. After running one of the very best child care programs in Lubbock, the Second Baptist Church decided to move into another area of children’s ministry.

The timing was impeccable. Lubbock members had just set a goal to develop a Christian education and school program for children age K-12. Here was the foundation, beyond the wildest dreams of any of our church family, for such a program. The daycare, which has been renamed the Children’s Orchard, has an enrollment of over 150 students and over 45 teaching and administrative staff. The result of this transfer is that more than 200 Christians of other faiths visit our church building and are exposed to our presence in Lubbock every day!

The plan will not end there. The church intends to use the Children’s Orchard as a springboard to launch a church school program. In 2005, we plan to open a kindergarten, and the year after, the church will begin an elementary school by adding grades annually. Our prayers for a school have been answered, years ahead of our schedule.

Both churches have very clearly indicated their belief in the direct leading of God. The Adventist church is grateful for the trust being placed in them as they take on this new mantle. We ask you to pray with us for God’s leadership as we make His plans in children at the Children’s Orchard Child Development Center a reality!

by Catherine Robinson
Southwestern Union Record

Online Resources!

CIRCLE
Resource materials and articles for Adventist early childhood educators. Updated quarterly.
http://circle.adventist.org or http://circle.adventist.org/browse/?browse_node=250

Pacific Union Conference Education Web-site
Resource materials for opening and operating a child development center. Updated quarterly.
http://www.puconline.org or http://www.puconline.org/article.php?id=33
In November, 2004, Anaheim, California was buzzing with approximately 30,000 early childhood professionals from all over the world for the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Convention and Adventist early childhood educators were there in full force to participate.

On Thursday, November 11, the Adventist Child Care Network (ACCN) hosted a dinner for all Adventists attending the annual convention. There were no less than twenty-four teachers, directors, administrators, college educators, as well as conference and union representatives. Unfortunately, through some mix-up, the restaurant failed to provide a private room so ACCN President, Kayla Sanderson, had to wait until Friday to make her presentation on assessment procedures and resources for early childhood programs.

During vespers on Friday evening, additional Adventist early childhood professionals joined the ACCN group for sharing and networking, bringing the number of known attendees to over thirty. This was the largest number of Adventist attendees ever in the history of ACCN. It was thrilling to meet and learn about the various venues in which the Lord has placed His willing servants.

Sabbath morning, the Anaheim SDA church welcomed ACCN with open arms and hosted a much appreciated potluck lunch. Afterwards, a small group drove to the Crystal Cathedral for an informative two hour tour and group pictures.

The participative growth of the Adventist Child Care Network is exciting and encouraging. In 2005, ACCN will be meeting again in conjunction with the NAEYC convention in Washington, D.C., December 7-10. The 2004 convention was a wonderful and rare opportunity for Adventist early childhood professionals and plans for 2005 are already in progress.
Since the first week of January, 38 governors have given their 2005 State of the State Addresses. Following is a compilation of those who mentioned early care and education and the early grades in their addresses as of January 27, 2005.

**Alaska** Governor Frank Murkowski (R) spoke about the need for the Legislature to approve an additional $126 million over the next two years in order to create a two year education budget that gives teachers, administrators, school board members, and parents budget certainty. “Our children need a strong educational foundation to fully participate in our state’s expanding economic base...We want our children and their children to live and prosper in Alaska.”

**Arizona** Governor Janet Napolitano (D) proposed funding so that children of low-wage, working parents can obtain quality childcare without spending months on a waiting list; having the Arizona School Readiness Board to continue its work with both the private and non-profit sectors to create a quality rating system for childcare centers; extending all-day kindergarten so it is available to every child at every school in every community; and implementing a statewide Master Teacher program to ultimately put at least one Master Teacher in every school. “Our first priority, today and always, is education...But as our state is changing, our economy is changing, and our schools must change.”

**California** Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s (R) State of the State Address proposed that teacher pay be tied to merit, not tenure. "Let me say this to every California teacher who is opening the minds of our children and nurturing their lives: I want to reward you for your hard work. I want to reward you for the sacrifices you make. I want to reward you for the learning that you instill.”

**Delaware** Governor Ruth Ann Minner (D) proposed full-day kindergarten across the state by 2008. “My belief in the potential granted by each child’s education is a result of having to obtain my own the hard way. An inspiring education system is the most important seed we can sow for our state’s future.”

**Hawaii** Governor Linda Lingle (R) launched the Early Childhood Education Initiative in her State of the State Address. This initiative would allow 3,000 additional children, ages 3 and 4, to attend high-quality, fully accredited preschools. The initiative would give financial assistance for “gap group” families, monetary incentives to preschools that adopt quality content standards, incentives for providers who attend training beyond existing licensing standards, and support for more adults to enter the early childhood education profession. “State, federal and private funding for child care and preschool programs in Hawai’i totals nearly $100 million a year, and yet many working families forego quality child care because they simply can’t afford it.”

**Idaho** Governor Dirk Kempthorne (D) said that his budget projects a $117 million surplus in the current fiscal year and recommended an increase in general funds for public schools - an allocation of $999 million for K-12. “Long before a child enters school, the learning process begins. We all recognize that if we can provide a solid foundation in early childhood health, education and development, our children will grow up with more opportunities and chances to succeed.”

**Indiana** Governor Mitch Daniels, Jr. (R) promised to direct the Department of Local Government Finance to impose a 120-day moratorium on any new school bond issue. During the moratorium, which began on January 19th, the agency is mandated to draw up guidelines related to size, cost, and the ratio of academic to non-academic spending in school construction. “Education, both K-12 and postsecondary, must play essential roles in fiscal recovery by managing temporarily with current levels of state funding, no less but no more.”

**New Mexico** Governor Bill Richardson (D) set an agenda of taking the first step in his pre-kindergarten initiative; fully funding full-day kindergarten; investing in before- and after-school programs; and boosting professional development for pre-kindergarten teachers. “Our children deserve the chance for an early start on success. And this is proven to be the best investment we can make to give them limitless opportunity.”
The Adventist Child Care Network seeks to provide support and nurture for Adventist child care providers and to reach out with information and encouragement to churches and individuals who are starting an Adventist child care center.

Through this newsletter we seek to facilitate and develop a communication network among Seventh-day Adventist Child Care providers in North America.

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North American Division

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Iowa Governor Vilsak wants to move an early childhood education agenda that includes expanding home visitation and parent education programs; expanding financial assistance so that parents can afford quality child care; beginning to create a rating system to identify and define what quality child care is; increasing the number of children having access to accredited preschools every year; and having a state budget that significantly increases funding for the state’s teacher compensation and student achievement program.

“Let this be the General Assembly that challenges schools, Head Start, faith-based efforts, private providers to expand access to preschool so that we reach the day that every child in our state, every child in our state, has access to quality preschool. Let it begin now” he said.

Mississippi Governor Barbour spoke about working through Head Start and private child care to get children ready to learn by age 5; the Upgrade Education Reform Act of 2005, which funds the final 8% pay raise due school teachers for the next school year and increases funding for classroom supplies and textbooks; and establishing Home Rule for “successful districts” to create more innovation and efficiency in Mississippi schools. “Students in our schools become the workers in our economy, and workers in our economy are the taxpayers who fund our budget.”

Washington Governor Gregoire, in her inaugural address, says that she intends to name a broad-based bipartisan commission to find and propose efficiencies and long-term funding solutions for early education, kindergarten through 12, and our colleges and universities. “When children start kindergarten already behind because they didn’t get early education, we have work to do... We must provide early childhood education and coordinate our early learning programs so that every child starts kindergarten ready to learn.”

Wisconsin Governor Doyle says he will submit a budget that includes a program to rate the quality of child care providers by creating a five-star rating system, with higher levels of state reimbursement for providers with the highest ratings for quality; funding for grants to help make up the difference in state aid in communities that lag in the school funding formula that applies to the state’s prekindergarten program; continue support for class size reduction; fund grants to work on innovative ways to reward teachers for skills and knowledge that enhance student achievement and incentives to recruit teachers to challenged schools. “Quality childcare ... early education ... smaller class sizes ... higher standards ... and a strong university system. Now that’s an education agenda for the 21st Century.”

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