Adventist Child Care Network 2005 Report

In early December, 2005, Washington was covered in snow and teaming with over 30,000 early childhood professionals from all over the world for the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference.

On Thursday, December 8, the Adventist Child Care Network (ACCN) met for networking and a membership business meeting. Tamara Libonati from the Southern Union Conference gave a report on the status of early childhood within the North American Division (NAD) and shared the goals and objectives of the newly appointed NAD Early Childhood Task Force.

Judy Olson and Barbara Trent from Friends-R-Fun in West Virginia shared several experiences from their center's community outreach programs including puppet shows about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use which the preschool children perform in local public elementary schools.

A new-comer among us was a gentleman from Nigeria named Joseph Izang Azi. His interest in graphic design and young children just might find its way into the world of Adventist early childhood education someday!

In addition, Gwendolyn and Liezel Dozier, owners of National Child Care Systems – who happen to be Adventists – visited with the ACCN group and explained how they have introduced a 16 course CD-ROM that provides one clock hour of in-service for each course completed as well as continuing education units and college credit for completed courses. Finally, early childhood professionals can meet in-service requirements, CDA mandates, or earn college credit for the coursework they complete within their own home or center! This is an answer to prayer! Especially with so many states moving toward universal pre-kindergarten and certification requirements for early childhood teachers. (For more information, we invite you to visit the NCCS website at www.nccsweb.com or contact them by phone at 1-800-477-4975.)

During vespers on Friday evening, additional Adventist early childhood professionals joined the ACCN group for sharing and networking. The worship service was casual yet powerful as Christine Gillan from the Pacific Union Conference outlined the goals necessary for Adventist programs that will help enable and empower the continuance of each center's mission for community outreach.

Attendees Mary Pulliam, Robin Aaron and Eunice Alexander shared a myriad of stories that aptly represented the evangelistic opportunities within Adventist early childhood programs reminding us once again of the high calling to which we have responded.

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Adventist early childhood teachers and directors all gathered for a day of training and networking. What an incredibly exciting and exhilarating day made possible by the Southeastern California Conference Office of Education.

The morning started with a combined worship and visionary outline for Adventist early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers by Christine Gillan. Miss Gillan summarized the mission of every Adventist program as expressed in their individual mission statements: “To proclaim the message of the three angels in Revelation 14 by first meeting the needs of our neighbors, befriending them and building bonds of trust.”

During the remainder of the day, excellence within the Adventist ECEC program remained the theme. In-service components included training sessions on emergency preparedness for child care facilities by Larry Hernandez and a puppet show demonstration about special needs inclusion practices by Inclusion Partners of Riverside County.

Dr. Ivana Guthrie-Heater, most recently from Loma Linda University, presented a detailed workshop on working with challenging behaviors. This unique presentation not only gave solutions and strategies, but most importantly, Dr. Guthrie-Heater explained the developmental milestones of why such challenging behaviors often occur.

At the end of the day, Stella Leonard presented “Building Successful Relationships – Staff Meeting Staff.”

Through the use of the True Colors personality identifier, Mrs. Leonard discussed different communication techniques and how to make the work environment a positive place for everyone. As part of her motivational talk, Mrs. Leonard spontaneously wrote new lyrics to the song “YMCA” and filled the room with music and laughter as the day concluded.

A special thank you of appreciation is in order. The SECC early childhood teacher in-service was made possible through the vision and hard work of Beverly MacLaughlin, Associate Superintendent, and the center directors within her conference: Edith Nwosu (Azure Hills Children’s Center), Laura Parker-Gervais (Children’s Discovery Center), Kathy Cartagena (Loma Linda Children’s Center), and Audry Railey-Whan (Sunrise Christian Preschool).

Thank you, Beverly, for the support and leadership. Thank you, for “raising the bar” for Adventist early childhood.
NAD Teacher’s Convention Includes Early Childhood!

For many years, early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals within the Seventh-day Adventist church organization have faithfully looked after the “little lambs of the flock” – and anyone else willing to entrust their children to our care and training. Recently, church administrators also demonstrated their willingness to be more involved; more active in assuming responsibility for the young.

In June of 2005, Seventh-day Adventist North American Division (NAD) union presidents and division officers addressed the question for determining what NAD entity should be responsible for early childhood education. The vote was to ask the NAD Office of Education to take responsibility for the development and supervision of all early childhood education and care programs (G. Kovalski, personal communication, June 2, 2005).

For those of us within the ECEC field, this is just the beginning of a very exciting time in Adventist history! We have the opportunity to be actively involved in developing the organizational structure of Adventist early childhood education and care.

The NAD has appointed an early childhood task force, lead by Tamara Libonati from the Southern Union Conference which will meet to discuss the needs of Adventist ECEC programs and move forward to accomplish the necessary organizational structure to meet those needs. The Adventist Child Care Network (ACCN) will also be involved: Christine Gillan, ACCN editor and Pacific Union Conference Coordinator for ECEC has been invited to be a member of this task force.

Be Involved!!

Adventist ECEC professionals are invited to attend the NAD Teacher’s Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, August 6-9, 2006 (see enclosed flier). The NAD has provided a track of breakout sessions specifically for early childhood teachers and directors. In addition, there will be two early childhood forums dedicated to listening and sharing. Your active participation is vital to the future of Adventist early childhood programs. It is a privilege and blessing to participate in the great commission of Matthew 28:19, 20. Please, initiate involvement and make plans to attend the NAD Teacher’s Convention in August, 2006.

For more information about the upcoming convention: http://nadk12teachersconvention.org/

Poland: First Adventist Day Care Center Opens

Source: Adventist News Network October 19, 2005 Podkowa Lesna, Poland [A. Kosowka/A. Pietka/ANN Staff]

In a one-story house on Parkowa Street a group of children are attending a first-ever day care center run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland. The center opened Sept. 2 in Podkowa Lesna, making it the second Adventist educational institution in the country.

This long-planned project was realized thanks to the efforts of Dawn Grant-Skiba and Agnieszka Kosowska, who wanted to ensure their children's development in a Christian atmosphere. Joe Smoczynski, president of Nadzieja.pl Limited, which is where it gets its name, "Nadzieja.pl Day Care Centre."

The house includes a large playroom, a dining room, sleeping room, kitchen and bathroom. There is a playground in the yard. Local church members donated some items for the center. "We did not want this [project] to be only our work," day care center director Kosowska says. "We wanted to encourage the church to participate in this endeavor. This is the reason why we made a list of the things that were necessary and placed it on the notice board. ... God has blessed us immeasurably."

"This idea can be fulfilled not only in Podkowa Lesna. There are several places in Poland where there is a lack of this kind of service," Smoczynski says. "All over the world there are numerous Adventist schools, universities and pre-schools. So why not finally start the same here?"

The idea is appreciated by those using the day care center's services. One child's father said: "For me, it is important that [my] children are growing up in a truly Christian atmosphere where God and prayer are not taboo."

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On Sabbath morning, Robin Aaron from Milpitas Discoveryland in central California, navigated a subway and (very cold) bus adventure to the Sligo SDA church in Takoma Park, Maryland. The Sligo church welcomed ACCN with open arms and blessed the small group with performances by the Takoma Academy band and chorale. Afterward, Eunice Alexander, the founder of ACCN, and Nilima Nowrangi, both from the Sligo Child Care Development Center, hosted a much appreciated potluck lunch of exquisite Indian cuisine!

The participative growth of the Adventist Child Care Network is exciting. Membership for 2006 is at an all-time high! This is both wonderful and necessary since the NAD has now appointed an Early Childhood Task Force for the purpose of developing an organizational structure for Adventist early childhood education and care.

For those of you who were not able to attend this year’s conference – you were missed! However, in 2006, ACCN will be meeting again in conjunction with the NAEYC conference in Atlanta, Georgia, November 8-11. Before NAEYC, though, be sure to look for us at the 2006 NAD Teacher’s Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, August 6-9! The NAD Teacher’s Convention and the NAEYC/ACCN conference are expected to draw large numbers of Adventist early childhood educators and providers. We are making plans for these two events and hope to make them meaningful to our Adventist early childhood colleagues.

Make plans to attend both the NAD Teacher’s Convention and the NAEYC/ACCN annual conference. We are looking forward to meeting with you!