Adventist Heritage Center

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Governor of North Santander state commends Church for its health impact

June 08, 2015 | Cúcuta, Colombia | Shirley Rueda/IAD

Governor of Colombia’s North Santander state Edgar Jesús Díaz, commended the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its health impact across the city of Cúcuta during a two-day impact earlier last month. During the event, more than 20,000 books on health and hope were distributed,
a health expo on the eight natural remedies was held, dozens of disabled individuals raced on their wheelchairs and dozens of fruits and grain sacs were distributed on May 9-10, 2015.

"I want to thank you immensely," said Governor Díaz. "What we seek is to take a solution to the most needy communities and today we have seen the hand of the Adventist Church taking hope and better health to the citizens of North Santander through exercise habits and healthy foods," he added.

Governor Díaz said it was the second time the government joined the church’s initiatives to benefit communities across the state. "There are many people in jail who need psycho-social support, and health and physical activities, and we have been able to, with the Adventist church, aid the most needy in communities like single mothers and children.

The governor also invited other churches to join in these types of activities.

"We are calling all the churches, from whichever religious background, to support and be witnesses of the results of these actions expressed in the visible joy and gratitude of those benefitted," said Governor Díaz.

Church members led creative activities like mime performances, a health train activity led by children, a drama performance of members carrying a coffin representing the short life of someone who does not take care of his/her health, held up positive health messages at traffic lights and more.

More than 200 people engaged in the health expo which featured eight main stations on the eight natural remedies “I Want to Be Healthy” initiative led by the church throughout the Inter-American Division territory.

The church joined the efforts with Jesus Romero, who is a Colombian Paralympic champion and former national gymnastic champion in the 1990s and early 2000s. Romero became wheelchair-bound after suffering an accident in 2002 and led dozens of people to race in their wheelchairs at Cucuta’s Patinodromo track.

Winners of the race received a medal, a cash bonus and a bag of goodies from the Adventist Church.

The health and hope impact in Cúcuta was an evangelistic one which falls under the world church’s evangelism during this year, said Pastor Joel Jaimes, president of the church in Northeast Conference, and organizer of the event.

“I am so glad because the church is understanding that we need to get out of our four walls and head to the streets to share the message of hope we have," said Jaimes.

Church members went early to church and left their pews at 10 in the morning to distribute some 20,000 books featured this year across the Adventist world church called “Health and Wellness: Secrets that will change your life,” edited by Mark Finley and Peter Landless.

“Our fellow citizens are so happy because they have a program that helps them and fills their moral, physical and spiritual needs," added Jaimes.
Manuel Hernan Cuevas, one who benefited from the health expo activities, said that more health activities need to take place in his city of Cucuta “so that we can be conscious of what health really means in our lives.”

Alexander Mendoza and Beatriz Silva also enjoyed a massage during the activity and said they would love to see more organized initiatives in the city. “Having more alternatives for a healthy lifestyle is exceptional, said Silva.

Church leaders said the activity was not only for the public but a valuable experience to church members as well.

“My heart is filled by helping people and teaching them about health,” said Sandra Ropero who joined the church a year ago and participated in the health impact activity for the first time.

Iris Maya, a church member, was also excited to take part in the activity. “The Lord really used us as instruments so that others could learn of the eight natural remedies and make the right changes and choices for a healthy lifestyle,” said Maya.

The activity in the city of Cúcuta, which borders Venezuela, becomes the fourth city-wide health impact to be organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North Colombia during the past three years. The church has done impact in the cities of Bucaramanga and most recently in Medellin this year where thousands took to the streets to offer hope and a healthier lifestyle through a number of activities.

In Southeast Mexico, Church inaugurates first model church building

First step for new churches that represent the Church uniformly across the region

June 08, 2015 | Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico | IAD Staff

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southeast Mexico, recently inaugurated its first model church in Riviera del Carmen, in the state of Quintana Roo, thanks to the faithful donations of church members, and funds collected by the local conference, union and the Inter-American Division (IAD).

El Pedregal Adventist Church became the first among many planned churches in Southeast Mexico to follow a standard model bearing the corporate logo of the church and that has a set look for the sanctuary section for small, medium and large churches, according to local church leaders.

The church building initiative comes after a strategic plan was voted in 2013 in the region to build new churches that represent the church uniformly across the region, said Pastor Isaias Espinoza,
president for the church in Southeast Mexico which oversees the states of Campeche, Quintana Roo, Yucatan and southern portions of the state of Tabasco.

Inter-American Division President Pastor Israel Leito cut the ribbon when the new church was dedicated on May 17, 2015. Pastor Leito challenged the 47 members of El Pedregal Adventist Church to continue to shine a light in the surrounding community.

“Spread the message of salvation and hope to your community here,” said Pastor Leito. “The message is spreading fast in this part of the country and we are sure that in a few years this church will be filled with believers ready for the second coming of Jesus.”

The church has a seating capacity of 140, a baptistery, a pastor’s office, a deacon’s room, Sabbath school classrooms and restrooms.

Pastor Leito thanked dozens of regional and local church leaders during the inaugural program and shared greetings from IAD staff. IAD staff and their families helped mix and pour cement blocks when the church began construction last summer during a spiritual retreat in the area.

“All is a day of celebration for all of the members of our church in El Pedregal,” said Pastor López, president of the North Quintana Roo Conference which oversees the new church, during the program. “We are so happy because God has blessed this church abundantly.”

More than 15 visitors were brought into the church and three baptisms took place during the inaugural celebration as church leaders and members gathered in the new church.

According to Otoniel López, the new El Pedregal Adventist Church became a reality for the group of 10 church members who began making payments for the property on the Playa del Carmen 2 district. Land in this district is expensive and there were few plots available.

So far, the church has cost about 155,000 US dollars, including the cost of the property said López. The new church will soon have air conditioning units installed.

The Southeast Mexican Union is one of five major church regions in Mexico with 86,507 church members worshiping in 1,096 churches and companies.

For more information on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southeast Mexico, visit unionsureste.org.mx

**Adventist Church in Britain releases statement regarding child cruelty case**
Leaders decry all forms of abuse and family violence

June 08, 2015 | Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts, England | Victor Hulbert, British Union Conference

A court in Nottingham today [May 5] sentenced Kay-Ann Morris to eight years in prison for child cruelty, and her mother, Juanila Smikle to four years.

Kay-Ann was acquitted of the charge of murder against her niece, 7-year-old Shanay Rihanna Walker, who tragically died in July 2014. Ms. Morris was her legal guardian at the time.

A number of media outlets have noted that Ms. Morris is a Seventh-day Adventist. Until her arrest she was attending the Adventist church in the St. Ann’s area of Nottingham.

Members and leadership at the church were both shocked and saddened to hear of the tragic death of Shanay, who was a valued child within the church family. Since her death, local church members have provided support to all members of the family and their friends through a very difficult period and have kept them wholeheartedly in their prayers. It is especially important for people going through difficult times to be offered spiritual and physical care.

The Adventist Church believes strongly in positive family values and affirms the dignity and worth of every human being. As such, we strongly feel the pain of this particular situation.

In recent years the Adventist Church has also invested heavily in Keeping the Church Family Safe (KCFS), including training child safety representatives and ensuring that those working with children and vulnerable people are checked by DBS. Ms. Morris’ church in Nottingham has participated in this process in addition to running an active family ministries department.

In responding to today’s sentencing the St. Ann’s minister, pastor Curtis Murphy, stated, “Our aim is to create an environment in the church and in the home that is safe for healthy minds and relationships to develop to their full potential. We decry all forms of abuse and family violence. Our prayers are with all who are hurting.”

The Adventist Church in the U.K. serves some 35,000 members and their surrounding communities, offering health and lifestyle programs as well as providing Biblical answers to life’s questions. More about the church can be found by visiting the Seventh-day Adventist website: adventist.org.uk.