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Let's Go!

Mission service is not a new concept. The early apostles were instructed to begin in Jerusalem—their home base—and then go to the uttermost parts of the world. And just nine years after the Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized, the first missionary—John Nevins Andrews—was sent to Switzerland to share the three angels’ messages. One of his earlier converts, John Norton Loughborough, followed suit, accepting a call to establish the work in California and later Great Britain. Daniel T. Bourdeau engaged in evangelistic efforts in Switzerland, France, and Italy, while Stephen Haskell pioneered the work in Australia, New Zealand, and London. Anna Knight, a graduate of Mount Vernon Academy in Ohio, will forever be remembered as the first black female missionary to India.

These are just a few of the many dedicated Adventist missionaries I read about when I was young. And I’m sure you can think of others. These individuals were paid missionaries with service credits. They spent years or even their entire careers serving in foreign lands.

A WAY OF LIFE

Mission service is no longer limited to those who can dedicate themselves full-time to the cause. More and more conferences, schools, churches, and ministries are engaging members in “short-term mission trips” close to home or abroad. And I’m glad to see that, among others, Allegheny East Conference members are doing their part:

During the past 10 years, Global Vessels founders, William and Virginia Mathis of the Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., have enlisted professionals and students to build churches, schools, and orphanages in Tanzania. During two to three intense weeks, they erect buildings and share life-changing messages. In 2006 the senior class of our Pine Forge Academy spent two weeks in Puerto Rico remodeling and renovating a youth camp. For many, it was a life-altering adventure. Delaware Valley area pastors William Hall and Stephen Boyce and their members have teamed up with our Adventist Community Services director Minnie McNeil to serve in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans. Their pilgrimages have helped restore houses, hearts, and communities.

Across the Columbia Union, many schools encourage and even require students to earn community service credit. This teaches children, early on, that service is a value, a tenet of the Adventist Church, and a way of life.

When we venture from our easy chair or church pew and make our way across town, across the state, or even across the ocean to lend a helping hand and spread the gospel, we see beyond our borders and develop a world view of God’s church. And we learn that in order to become fully engaged with Christ, we must become engaged with our “neighbors” as well.

In this issue of the Visitor, you’ll see how a number of Columbia Union members are doing that, one short-term mission trip at a time. My prayer is that you’ll not only enjoy their testimonies, but that you’ll soon have your own to share. What are you waiting for? Let’s go!

Charles L. Cheatham is president of the Allegheny East Conference, headquartered in Pine Forge, Pa.
Columbia Union College Appoints Provost

Susan C. Scharffenberg has accepted a call to serve as provost of Columbia Union College (CUC), effective July 1. Scharffenberg, who has 30 years experience in higher education, currently serves as assistant vice president for Academic Administration at the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Mission College in Thailand.

In the newly created provost position, she will serve as the college’s chief academic officer, review the undergraduate curriculum, recruit and retain faculty, and implement the college’s new three-school structure. “I look forward to joining the administrative team and working with the president and faculty while we realign the programs to meet the goals of the strategic plan,” she said.

Scharffenberg is familiar with CUC’s history, due to her father and brother’s attendance at the college. A graduate of Ohio Conference’s Mount Vernon Academy, she also has two degrees in biology and a doctorate in horticulture. Read more in The Gateway newsletter on page 35.

—Tanisha Greenidge

Longtime Editor, Administrator Dies

Kenneth H. Wood, who served for 16 years as editor-in-chief of Adventist Review and 28 years as chair of the board of the Ellen G. White Estate has died. He was 90. Until a recent illness, Wood was still a regular presence at the Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., and could be found three mornings a week at his White Estate office. “His contributions to the church he loved are incalculable,” said vice director Tim Poirier who worked with Wood for 27 years. “We will miss his Christian witness, spiritual wisdom, and fidelity to the Scriptural truths we hold dear.”

Wood was born in Shanghai, China, to lifetime American missionary parents. After matriculating a number of Adventist schools, he pastored in West Virginia and Ohio. In 1947 he accepted a call to serve as a ministries director for the New Jersey Conference, and in 1951 he was elected Sabbath School and Lay Activities director for the Columbia Union Conference. He pursued his interest in publishing and in 1955 joined the Review staff. He authored hundreds of articles and three books, including one with his wife, Miriam (a revered Review columnist who died in March). Longtime members of Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., the couple shared 56 years of marriage. They leave two grown daughters, seven grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WHITE ESTATE AND JOEL SPRINGER / ADVENTIST REVIEW

Partnership Expands Washington Adventist Hospital’s Services

Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) and Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Care, a federally qualified, comprehensive health center based in Washington, D.C., recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of a primary care center in the Long Branch area of Montgomery County, Maryland.

The 3,600-sq.-ft. primary care center will provide a full range of services to area residents—regardless of ability to pay—such as prenatal care, pediatric/adolescent health services, adult health services, women’s services, and social services.

“We believe our partnership will further expand access to healthcare services for the communities we serve—a key element in our Vision for Expanded Access initiative,” said Jere Stocks, WAH president. Bill Robertson, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare (AHC) said he was proud to add Mary’s Center to the many partnerships AHC has formed over the years, including Casa De Maryland, Mobile Med, and Impact Silver Spring.

County officials and leaders from Mary’s Center joined Robertson (third from left) and Stocks (fifth from left) in the celebration.—AHC Staff

mage
CURF Finances the Mission at Home

For 30 years, there had been talk of building a gym for the Crest Lane Adventist School near Westminster, Md. The small Chesapeake Conference K-8 school had 18 students and needed a place for recreation and classrooms. But all that talk couldn’t make coming up with the rest of the money a reality. Supporters from the conference’s Reisterstown and Westminster, Md., churches had raised $500,000—half of what they needed to complete the gym.

“We came to a point where we decided to either build the gym or stop talking about it,” Pastor David Newman recalls. “CURF, however, works with both churches and conferences to literally build up their ministries.”

—Peggy Lee

A $1.6 million CURF loan helped the New Hope church purchase this building.

Since the school served students from both churches, we decided to split the loan,” Greene said. “But how could we explain to a traditional bank that two different organizations were taking out a loan for a third organization?” Fortunately, they didn’t have to; they borrowed the needed funds from the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF).

“We already had savings in CURF,” Greene says. “They understood how our churches and school worked. It was a very simple process.”

BEST KEPT SECRET
CURF was established in 1968 by the Columbia Union Conference to “promote the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by providing cost-effective financing to churches, schools, conferences, and other entities in the union.” In 1992 the organization, which is governed by a board, became an independent, non-profit corporation able to make loans throughout the union’s eight-state territory.

From the beginning, CURF has been able to make loans to church-related entities by “selling promissory notes” to church members and institutions. The borrowing organizations obtain loans at reasonable rates. The “noteholders” receive quarterly interest checks at or above market rates. “CURF is the best kept secret in the union. We are able to make loans to churches who need our help because of members who invest in the fund,” says Peggy Lee, CURF’s secretary/treasurer.

We tend to talk about the mission abroad but by investing in CURF you play a part in the mission at home.”

In 2006, when Chesapeake’s New Hope church in Burtonsville, Md., became too small for its growing membership, they sold their building and moved to a larger location in Fulton, Md. The new facility is better able to accommodate its 600 members. “We needed $1.6 million to pay for the larger property, and they needed a place for recreation and classrooms.”

“You have helped our church rebuild after a devastating fire; answered Allegheny East Conference’s call to fund the new Pine Forge Elementary school building in Pennsylvania; helped Allegheny West Conference’s Hilltop congregation build a state-of-art worship center in Columbus, Ohio; and supported Potomac’s Farmville (Va.) church project.”

VANS, BUSES, AND ORGANS TOO
CURF’s work around the union has been more extensive than most members realize. Their funding has also helped start and build daycare and community services centers; purchase vans, buses, and organs; repair roofs and heating/air conditioning systems; and even build and renovate Potomac’s Adventist Book and Health Food Store.

“CURF currently has 241 loans out and 1,256 investors,” Lee says. “Technically noteholders may be required to wait 90 days to receive payment after making a request. However, we have never failed to give money back the same day someone requests it.”

Despite the blessing that CURF has been to the union over the years she worries that there will soon be a cash flow problem. “If members and institutions don’t invest, we won’t have any money to lend,” Lee explains.

Some church members faithfully continue to keep their money in CURF for decades at a time.

Herbert Perrine from Mountain View Conference’s Spencer (W.Va.) church has been investing in CURF all his adult life. “Yes I could put my money in a normal bank,” he says, “but the money I invest is being used to build up the Lord’s work and finish the gospel. To me that is far more important than giving it to a normal bank.”

Jeddie Hooker, who now pastors the New Jersey Conference’s Elizabeth English and Spanish churches agrees. He has benefited from using CURF loans at a previous church and continues to personally invest in CURF.

“I hope they continue to have success because I think they are doing a very good job,” Pastor Hooker says.

Greene, who looked to CURF to build the gym, says: “We don’t just take loans from CURF; we purchase notes, too, because we want to help other organizations just like us further the ministry.”

For more information or to invest in the Columbia Union Revolving Fund, please contact Peggy Jean Lee, assistant treasurer, at (866) 721-CURF.

The Crest Lane school gym in was recently completed.
**Books > Stop Laughing—I’m Trying to Make a Point**

Kim Peckham

It would be a understatement to say that Kim Peckham has a unique outlook on life. In his new devotional book *Stop Laughing—I’m Trying to Make a Point*, he not only puts the “ha-ha in hallelujah.”

This adult Sabbath School teacher of Chesapeake’s Willow Brook church in Boonsboro, Md., is most commonly known as the author of the “Man’s Mind” column in *Women of Spirit* magazine. His book, a compilation of past columns and published articles, features stories and humorous thoughts on a wide range of subjects, such as relationships, church life, finances, and even housekeeping. To enjoy Peckham’s quips and quirky insights, pick up a copy at your local ABC.

He Shall Lift You Up

Jim Ayer

Jim Ayer longs to share his enormous passion for Christ. That’s why the established author, who has preached the gospel in more than 45 countries, recently published *He Shall Lift You Up*. “My desire is to help readers discover greater joy and happiness in Jesus than could ever be dreamed possible in this lifetime,” he explains. Through inspiring messages and spiritual insights, this member of Chesapeake’s Trinidadia church in Clarksville, Md., more than adequately communicates his hope of a victory with Christ. “Christ gained the victory in the Father’s power,” he writes. “This is our key to victory as well. By surrendering our will, choosing the cross, and relying completely on the Father’s power, we can become conquerors.” Pick up a copy at your local ABC and begin discovering Christ in an exciting new way.

**Music > GRACEfull GRACE**

The members of GRACE have been spreading God’s message through minstrel song since 2000. They have ministered at area churches, universities, county and municipal programs, and concerts in the Washington, D.C., area and across the United States. Their third recording project, *GRACEfull*, contains a variety of tunes including the spiritual “Soon Ah Will Be Done” and a touching rendition of “I Love You Lord / My Jesus I Love Thee” arranged by director Samuel “Eddie” Cromwell. The CD package also includes a DVD of a 2006 performance in Costa Rica.

Their motivation transcends material gain, and the group’s 15 members say they’re just focused on sharing the message of God’s grace with audiences everywhere. Indeed the sincerity of their intent is evident in the results. To experience *GRACE* for yourself, visit thechristianjukebox.com.

**Keeping Score**

**WholeHealth**

Could You Use a Break?

Although the pace of modern life creates a huge need for occasional breaks from work and stress, fewer Americans are taking vacations. An annual survey by Expedia.com notes the growing trend of employed Americans (currently 31 percent) not taking all their earned vacation days. Why? People feel that they can’t leave their work. Many do get away end up taking work with them or staying connected through email and cell phones.

Yet those who do vacation say they come back feeling better about their jobs and are more productive. In addition, 53 percent of employed U.S. adults indicate stronger relationships with family and friends after a vacation. Health professionals also cite benefits of taking a break from daily stress.

Jesus modeled this truth when He pulled away from the daily demands to take a break (see Mark 6:31, 32). His wisdom reveals that regular rest and refreshment are needed in order to accomplish His Kingdom work.

So, whatever you do, don’t let this summer go by without taking a break!—Lilly Tryon, MSN, RN, Adventist WholeHealth Wellness Center

**Mission Stories > Looking for good mission stories? We’ve got you covered:**

**Best Ever Mission Stories**

Charlotte Ishkanian, editor of *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adult and Children’s Mission*, recently published *Best Ever Mission Stories*, a collection of 26 short stories about children like Steve, Vladimir, and Carlos who courageously tell others about Jesus. Featuring stories from every world division, this compilation will inspire children of all ages to experience what it means to be a missionary. “Who knows what will happen?” Ishkanian dreams. “Maybe our church will soon be full of people who say, ‘A child invited me to come.’”

*Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*.

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*Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color, Carol Hammond, PhD*

Through many touching letters and stories *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color* chronicles the lives of African-American missionaries serving in Jamaica, Liberia, England, Brazil, and many other parts of the world. The author, currently an adjunct professor at both Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Md., and nearby Bowie State University, thoroughly recounts the stories and experiences of these dedicated ambassadors for God. Her 460-page compilation also features a variety of documentary-style photographs ranging from the early 1900s to today. “There were some remarkable experiences that we felt had to be shared,” Hammond reflects. “The book is written for everybody, and I hope it will inspire others to share their faith and embark on mission trips of their own.”

*Adventist Mission DVD*

For generations Adventist Mission Spotlights featured world division missionaries and mission-related programs. Watch online at AdventistMission.org.

*What You Bring to the Table*

Only an Adventist ...

Your guilt trip ended the day Nabisco started using vegetable shortening in Oreo.
**A JOURNEY INTO MISSIONS**

**Six Columbia Union Members Take us on a Photo Tour of Their Short-term Mission Trips**

**Beth Michaels**

If you want to find the first reference to short-term missions, just open your Bible. Jesus introduced the concept when He told His disciples to go, teach, and baptize, and many other biblical characters followed suit. Two thousand years later, Christians around the world continue fulfilling this “Great Commission”—helping others in need and spreading His love.

Whether you’ve served the homeless at a soup kitchen in your town or helped build a school overseas, you have responded to God’s call. But while many Americans find it difficult to carve out time from their busy schedules to serve, the increasingly popular short-term mission trip offers an achievable opportunity. Short-term missions range from one-week to two-months of service.

As reported at lausanneworldpulse.com, the first recorded number of short-term mission volunteers in North America was published in 1965 by a student researcher. He claimed that 540 individuals were serving as short-term missionaries. Today some sources claim that well more than 1 million Americans do so.

Seventh-day Adventists can certainly be included in those numbers. The North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries (OVM) reports that more than 10,000 groups (more than 80,000 individuals) from our continent made a quick, but lasting impact on the lives of others last year. Columbia Union volunteers made up 351 of those groups, but “that figure only represents about a quarter of the actual number,” reports Ludi Leito, OVM Groups and communication coordinator.

The figure doesn’t include private, church, or school groups who didn’t register through the OVM.

“Your help is needed whatever your age, whether you’re fit or disabled, whether you want to build a church or orphanage, or teach another language,” adds Leito. “There is a position for everyone!” And there is a long list of Adventist-based organizations to find the job that’s right for you (see Resource Guide on page 21).

We asked six Columbia Union members to document their short-term mission experiences. If you’ve never been a missionary, we hope the following stories will give you a small taste of the exhilaration you, too, can experience by serving others.

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**Columbia Union Member Helps Found Largest Short-Term Missionary Organization**

Richard Bainum (pictured), a long-time member of Potomac Conference’s Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., had gone on his fair share of short-term mission projects when he decided to create his own organization. Launched in 1980, Volunteers International primarily sent short-term missionaries to Thailand. “I saw a need there where no one was doing anything,” recalls Bainum, who now attends the Conference’s Manassas (Va.) church. “We sent about 150 volunteers between 1979 and 1981,” he says. They drilled wells and taught English at Cambodian and Vietnamese refugee camps.

Impressed with Bainum’s work, an organization called Maranatha Flights International, founded in 1969 in Berrien Springs, Mich., contacted him. In 1989 the organizations merged their efforts and became Maranatha Volunteers International. Now based in Sacramento, Calif., Maranatha is the largest Adventist organization coordinating short-term mission trips. To date more than 60,000 volunteers have served in 63 countries.

Through his friendship with current organization president Don Noble, “I was able to spark Don’s interest in building more than one church at a time,” Bainum reports. As a result, the organization redirected its approach to construction in the 1990s, making them a powerhouse at planting Adventist churches and schools here and abroad. Learn more at maranatha.org.

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**If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?**

—David Livingstone

**The best remedy for a sick church is to put it on a missionary diet.**

—Unknown

**Lost people matter to God, and so they must matter to us.**

—Keith Wright
Very early one morning, I, and 17 other people from Kettering College of Medical Arts (KCMA), boarded an airplane in Dayton, Ohio. Our group of instructors, support staff, students, and volunteers was about to embark on the final project of the International Health class for the KCMA Vaughan-Beaven Service Learning Honors Program. Our final destination: the small Central American country of Belize.

The service learning program allows students that are already in a medically service-oriented career track to reach beyond the routine and push their limits of time, energy, and resources. They learn not only service, but also how to incorporate it into a learning/teaching focus.

The multiple plane rides came to an end as we disembarked on the sun- and heat-drenched tarmac of Belize’s international airport. We arrived at newly renovated La Loma Luz Adventist hospital—our host institution for the next 10 days—and found our sparse, but comfortable, quarters. We unloaded and prepared for the adventures that lay ahead.

Rick Williams

Kettering Medical Students Apply Class Work to Real Life

We spent a week traveling almost the entire length of Belize either in a tired school bus or by boat. We faced many challenges—lack of communication, time, and resources—but in the end, everyone felt they received more than they gave.

We did get some time to relax in the warm waters and enjoyed the flora and fauna of this tropical region. We also got to visit the Mayan ruins of Xanantunich. Although this vast civilization has disappeared, there are many Mayan descendants living in Belize.

We also held clinics in remote areas and did health assessments, dressed wounds, and gave them donated items such as vitamins, aspirin, and ointments.

Local attendees were very interested and asked lots of questions, and their children enjoyed the handouts. We also held clinics in remote areas and did health assessments, dressed wounds, and gave them donated items such as vitamins, aspirin, and ointments.

We held health fairs in which the students set up their makeshift booths and talked to locals about nutrition, prenatal care, dental health, and respiratory disease. They also tested blood pressures and performed blood sugar tests and general health assessments.

“No book or article was able to accurately prepare me for what I was about to see,” responded student Tara Jehn. “I feel that we have touched many lives through our efforts there.”

“Although this trip was amazing!” exclaimed student Ashley Brandt. “I loved being down there helping people. They were nice, and it was obvious that they really appreciated all we had to offer.”

“Although we came and go, I know our mission there was a blessing from God,” said student Mike Rosselot. “He allowed us to minister to the children of Belize. They will always be in my prayers.”

“Although we came and go, I know our mission there was a blessing from God,” said student Mike Rosselot. “He allowed us to minister to the children of Belize. They will always be in my prayers.”
Our nine Columbia Union representatives recently left the comforts of home to embark upon a three-part, weeklong excursion to Peru, sponsored by the Ohio Conference Youth Department. Our first stop was in the capital city of Lima to join the Peruvian Central Conference South (APC Sur) in a conference-wide, multicultural youth rally. The special Sabbath day was filled with 700 youth, special guests (including us), and an intense panel discussion. On Sunday our U.S. team visited with Adventist brothers and sisters near Lima who are still recovering from an earthquake that hit in August 2007. We prayed with and encouraged them and provided some clothing relief. We also met with a single mother and her family who have experienced a number of personal crises, including a bitter divorce and religious discrimination.

The last part of our tour was in Kawai, a small town by the Pacific Ocean. We participated and helped lead a four-day International Youth Congress, involving approximately 2,000 representatives from the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Peru, and Venezuela. Under the theme “I Live for Jesus,” we all joined in worship, seminars, dynamic cultural interaction, and a young, Christian atmosphere.

To participate in next year’s international youth congress and mission trip, contact me at (304) 312-8317 or abe.rivas@yahoo.es.—Abe Rivas, a bi-vocational pastor, is planting a Spanish church in Toledo, Ohio, and earning his Master of Divinity through the seminary at Andrews University (Mich.).

We visited several Adventist families affected by the earthquake, but were especially touched by a backslidden couple who had lost everything. We prayed with them, and their pastor recently informed me that they started going to church again. A second family was facing many crises, including religious discrimination from the local priest. The daughter was facing the risk of school expulsion for professing to be Adventist. We prayed with them, shared some clothes, and assured them about God’s never-ending love. That week the priest desisted from his previous actions.

We did get some time to experience the diverse Peruvian culture and people. We visited several Incan sights, including the highlands of Cuzco with the largest known temple. The most famous sight was 7,875 feet above sea level: Machu Picchu. This ancient stone city is hidden between mountains with views and structure everyone must see at least once. In Kawai we joined 2,000 delegates in our first International Youth Congress. Pastor Javier Donate (above with guitar) from Miami, the guest speaker, challenged the young people to live victoriously in the name of Jesus. There were a number of enriching seminars dealing with youth and secular society, peer pressure, Internet evangelism, and other topics. The highlight was when 56 young people gave their lives to Jesus through baptism, and many others decided to start a meaningful ministry in their communities.
When me and 11 other students—plus our chaperones—arrived in Carnegie, Penn., I was not feeling very “into” our homeland mission trip, especially when I saw our living quarters. However, I quickly decided that I better stop thinking about myself and try to have a good time. After all, I had raised money for the trip. I prayed that God would help me forget about myself. Boy does He answer prayers!

Our spring break trip involved volunteers from two Mountain View Conference schools: Highland and Summersville Adventist schools, both in West Virginia. The conference’s Office of Education sponsored us. Our hosts were staff from Pennsylvania Conference’s Adventist Community Services-Greater Pittsburgh (ACS-GP), led by executive director Pastor Andrew Clark.

We performed a number of services for a small suburb called Heidelburg, which is still rebuilding following the flood damage Hurricane Ivan delivered in September 2004. We held a book drive, helped remodel the ACS center, cleaned and organized books for ACS’s Conscious Café, helped renovate a flood-damaged home, and conducted Sabbath services. Of course, I found more things to complain about that week (the sack lunches, the showering schedule, etc.), but the experience led me closer to God. I got so into the work that I did not want to leave at the end of the week. I had stopped thinking of myself and thought of the lives we had touched.—Rebekah Ruediger

—Rebekah Ruediger just completed her sophomore year at Highland Adventist School in Elkins, W.Va.

Mountain View Students Help Rebuild the Flood-Damaged Region

Rebekah Ruediger

Opposite page: Our group helped refurbish the ACS-GP headquarters building, providing more staff office space. “The historic, decorative, ridged, and embossed metal ceiling made fitting the wall especially challenging,” said Cheryl Jacko, Highland Adventist School principal.

Top: One of the homes we helped renovate looked beautiful on the outside, but was ugly and disgusting on the inside—just like some Christians. Cleaning up the house was very time-consuming and messy. We scraped the mold and grime from concrete walls, removed old appliances, and shoveled out mud. I asked God to help me be patient, so He helped me think about the appreciative people who would live there someday.

Center: We hosted a local book drive through ACS-GP’s Conscious Café, with proceeds benefitting the local volunteer fire department. The drive involved passing out flyers around town, collecting the books, and then cleaning (that’s me in the photo) and organizing them for resale. Conscious Café is a local hotspot, created at the request of local residents, where ACS serves fruit shakes, herbal teas, and vegetarian sandwiches.

Left: All student volunteers helped plan and present the Sabbath morning divine worship at the ACS center. Stacy Blancy (pictured, speaking), a junior at Highland Adventist School, was the speaker. On our last day, a neighborhood restaurant treated us to a catered vegetarian breakfast. The ACS staff has been working with the restaurant owner to develop vegetarian options for his menu.
After a year of planning and fundraising, our Takoma Academy (TA) group of 11 students and nine adults was eager to fulfill an ongoing mission in Arusha, Tanzania. We went to lay the foundation for the fourth building of a Seventh-day Adventist orphanage. A previous TA group had helped construct the first building, with each one housing 10 orphans. We also helped Pastor Noah Washington, formerly of Allegheny East’s Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., conduct a week of prayer.

The trip was made possible through fundraisers, such as sending appeal letters to family and friends, hosting car washes and a concert, and selling various items. We worked hard to get there and hard while we were there, but were blessed tenfold by the experience.—C. Dunbar Henri is principal at Potomac Conference’s Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Md.

Takoma Academy Volunteers Lay Foundation for a Growing Orphanage

C. Dunbar Henri

TENDING TO TOTS IN TANZANIA

After 15 hours on an airplane—including an overnight stay and three connecting flights—plus a bus ride loaded with luggage, our group was ready to get to work in Arusha. To make a firm foundation for the building, we had to lay rock after rock, fill spaces with gravel, and then cover it all with plastic and wire mesh before the concrete could be poured. It was tedious and backbreaking but everyone, including student Whitney Hucks (below), kept smiles on their faces. We did it all for the orphans (below).

We did get a chance to enjoy the country’s beauty. We got our feet wet in a waterfall at Mount Kilimanjaro, took a safari to the Ngorongoro Crater, and visited a Masai village.

LENDING A HAND IN HONDURAS

Highland View Team Constructs a School Auditorium in Santa Barbara

Katy Yeary

I recently joined a group of 20 volunteers on an annual short-term mission trip to Santa Barbara, Honduras. Sponsored by Chesapeake Conference’s Highland View church in Hagerstown, Md., it also included Highland View Academy (HVA) students and members of the Martinsburg (W.Va.) church. Our task was to add block walls to the auditorium of a high school, Instituto REACH Internacional. The auditorium will become a multipurpose facility for the school and city, and will also serve as the Gualjoco Seventh-day Adventist Church. We worked hard making mortar and moving and laying blocks. When we weren’t building, we worshiped, ate, and socialized with children who lived in the adjoining orphanage, El Hogar de Niños. We had so much fun helping the community and felt satisfied by making a difference. The children and community still need help, but with trips taking place three times a year, progress is being made.—Katy Yeary just completed her sophomore year at Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md.

Our volunteers would take turns with the various jobs of sifting sand for mortar, mixing the mortar (or “mescal”), and making blocks. We were nowhere near as good as the local workers, but they were friendly and glad to help. By the trip’s end, the auditorium was ready for a roof! My sister, Apryl Kelley (above, right), and I enjoyed spending time with Nelson, the orphanage director. On Sabbath, our volunteers led the divine service, which the residents loved. The children especially loved spending time with us and appreciated the toys, books, and clothes we gave them. During one afternoon, some of the orphans accompanied us on a trip to the local waterfall!
Renovating new Orleans

Two Allegheny East Conference Ministerials Continue Katrina Cleanup

Stephen A. Boyce, Sr.

Twenty-one members of Allegheny East Conference’s Delaware Valley and Bay Area ministerials answered the Macedonian call as found in Acts 16:9 to go and help. We boarded airplanes in Philadelphia on our way to New Orleans. Our goal: to help at least six families still affected by the 2005 blow of Hurricane Katrina continue on the road to recovery.

There is still much to do in New Orleans. Many are still homeless and in need of assistance, others still have not been able to contact family members and don’t know if they are alive, and many others are depressed and in need of encouragement.—Stephen A. Boyce, Sr., pastor of Sharon Temple in Wilmington, Del.

Our team built fences and a shed, put on vinyl siding, remodeled a kitchen and bathroom, tiled and sheet-rocked a new room, and painted several home exteriors. Some houses were power washed to remove water stains and markings that identify if it’s been inspected by local police or military. We were blessed to have both young and older members of our delegation working side by side to complete the projects. A different member of our group shared a spiritual thought each day, which was followed by a rousing song service. Those who should be thanked for their participation and leadership are ministerial pastors William E. Hall, Pete Palmer, and Stephen A. Boyce, Sr., as well as the conference’s ACS director, Minnie McNeil (in red cap). Astley Shakes from Philadelphia served as project manager. The host organization for the trip was the National Association of Katrina Evacuees.

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Resource Guide

Short-term Mission Trips

Whether you’re a volunteer or trip organizer, here are some helpful resources to prepare for your journey into missions:

**DVD**

**Heritage Missions New Horizons DVD** – This video will show your youth group the great needs of people in developing countries and help them understand why missions are so important. Web: adventsource.org; Tel.: (800) 328-0525. Cost: $19.95

**EVENTS**

**Columbia Union Mission Trips** – Sponsored by the Chesapeake Conference and endorsed by the union, these trips are geared for high schoolers, homeschoolers (ages 13-19), collegiates, and young adults from any conference. Tel.: (410) 995-1910; email: areyolds@ccosda.org

**WEBSITE**

**HeSaidGo.net**, an online resource of the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries, provides a plethora of information. Request a free CD with instruction manuals and a fantastically comprehensive handbook that discusses communication skills, cross-cultural awareness, project development, and management.

**ORGANIZATIONS**

**Maranatha Volunteers International** – This oldest and largest short-term mission organization provides opportunities for ordinary people to make service a part of their lives. Watch videos, peruse blogs, order free resources, and read about the upcoming convention (Sept. 5-6) at marnanatha.org. Tel.: (916) 920-1900

**Adventist Frontier Missions** – They’re looking for young adults with a desire to share Jesus with unreached people around the world. Short-term volunteers are needed to assist career missionaries. Web: afmonline.org; Tel.: (269) 473-4375

**Reach International** – They exist to Render Effective Aid to CHildren around the world with food, shelter, love, education, and a chance for eternity. Web: reach.org; Tel.: (800) 869-1412

**Global Vessels** – This Clarksville, Md.-based nonprofit needs volunteers to help complete a five-year orphanage community in Tanzania. Web: globalvessels.org; Tel.: (301) 596-0945

**the Quiet Hour** – This 70-year-old ministry seeks people to preach, teach, heal, help, build, translate, and love. Join their next trip to Brazil, Sept. 10-29. Web: thequiethour.org; Tel.: (800) 900-9221

**Cruise With a Mission** – This is a unique spiritual retreat, social gathering, and service opportunity for collegiates and young adults all rolled into one fabulous Holland America cruise. Next ship launches December 14-21. Web: cruisewithmission.org; Tel.: (800) 968-8428

**Mission Serv International** – Join this Frederick, Md.-based organization for a “vacation with a mission” to Northeast Brazil, September 18-29. Web: missionserv.org; Tel.: (301) 662-5200

**Outpost Centers International** – They network and nurture more than 60 Adventist supporting ministries around the world who offer short- and long-term mission opportunities. Web: outpostcenters.org; Tel.: (423) 236-5600

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one Friday afternoon, I was rushing to finish my work so I could get home to prepare for Sabbath and out-of-town family that were arriving for the weekend. As I walked down the hospital hall, a dark-haired woman flashed me a smile. We exchanged greetings, and then we both suddenly stopped in our tracks. "You’re the doctor who came to my mother’s room six months ago to ask how things were going," she exclaimed. I immediately remembered that her mother was the petite Italian woman who had, at that time, just lost her husband and was now hospitalized herself. We spent precious minutes talking about her family, and I told her I would keep her in my prayers. I was saddened when she told me that her mother had just passed away.

The conversation was an interruption in an already hectic day, yet it proved to be a sparkling moment that nourished my heart. This woman expressed her appreciation for the nurses, physicians, and others who had lovingly cared for her mother. She said that because God’s love and grace were evident in all the interactions during her mother’s hospital stay, she was moved to inquire about becoming a volunteer at Kettering Medical Center! She wanted to join the team who gave her family a touch of grace when it mattered so much.

SMALL MOMENTS, ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE

Being director for clinical quality, I facilitate relationships between physicians, nurses, patients, and families, which means my days are a continual stream of unexpected interruptions. When I get busy and overwhelmed, I reflect on that special moment with the daughter of one of our patients, and feel wonder and gratitude at how God uses us to bless others each day. Experiences like these remind me that, to quote a favorite author, Henri Nouwen: “Interruptions are my work!” What a blessing to see the power of the Gospel expressed in so many ways each day, and to know that seemingly small moments have eternal significance.

Rebekah Wang Scriven, MD, FACP, a sought-after speaker on medical and spiritual topics, serves as medical director for clinical quality at Kettering Medical Center in Kettering, Ohio.
Recently, Rebekah Wang Scriven, MD, medical director for clinical quality at Kettering Medical Center in Ohio, and a team of volunteers from Pacific Union College and St. Helena Adventist Hospital in California, traveled to Nepal to support the medical outreach efforts of Scheer Memorial Hospital. Despite the political unrest there, they helped conduct a free community healthcare camp for people in the remote Nepali village of Dhunkharka and made many new friends along the way.

STARTED BY MEDICAL MISSIONARIES

Nestled in the dramatic mountains of Nepal, in the town of Banepa, which is 16 miles from Katmandu, Scheer Memorial Hospital has served millions of Nepali citizens for over 50 years. Started by Seventh-day Adventist physician Stanley Sturges, MD, in the late 1950s, it has become one of the most respected and renowned hospitals in the country. Dr. Sturges came from Loma Linda University (Calif.) with his wife, Raylene, and three children to direct the development of the hospital. At the time, no physicians were in the area and neither was an Adventist church or support system for the young missionary family. They lived with a local Nepali family and village elder for two years. The elder's grandson later became the assistant mayor of Banepa and a big supporter of the hospital.

It all began with a one-room clinic, where they compassionately cared for the urgent needs of the community. Funding for the hospital came from Clifford Scheer, who donated it as a memorial to his parents, Charles and Carolyn Scheer. Funding for equipment, room furnishings, and medical supplies came from an organization called CARE and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Within two years, a 20-bed hospital was built to serve the medical needs of at least half a million people in the Kavre district. Over the years, the hospital has grown and is now considered the premier provider of healthcare to well over a million Nepali residents. Dr. Sturges and his family later relocated to Ohio where he practiced medicine for many years at Kettering Medical Center.

Today Scheer Memorial Hospital continues to expand its outreach through medical missionary programs.

Dr. Scriven’s trip, highlighted in this feature, was sponsored by Pacific Union College, Scheer Memorial Hospital, and two Nepali government offices. Though it was not advised due to the current political strife in Nepal, the group prayed intensely and felt peace about proceeding. They had a very successful trip, were housed by local communist leaders in the Dhunkharka village, and were not exposed to any obvious signs of danger.

To learn more about Scheer Memorial Hospital and its mission opportunities, visit scheermemorialhospital.org.

Barbara Brown, speech pathologist at St. Helena Adventist Hospital (Calif.), joins the fun. Medical teams are enthusiastically welcomed by the villagers.

The volunteer medical team worked closely with nursing students from the Scheer Memorial Hospital School of Nursing.
Kettering Supports Stadium Renovation

Kettering Adventist HealthCare is deeply committed to providing community benefits above and beyond the legal requirements. This year, a large financial investment was given to a Dayton, Ohio, stadium that is in dire need of renovation. Welcome Stadium is shared by city high schools, athletic organizations, the University of Dayton, and hosts a wide variety of sporting and community events. “Kettering Adventist HealthCare’s contribution to this stadium was not a business decision, it was the right thing to do for our community,” said Fred Manchur, president of Kettering Medical Center (above).

The financial gift will be used, among other things, to improve the field (below) with modern turf that is less damaging to the athletes when they fall. “This upgrade of Welcome Stadium could never have happened without help from Kettering Medical Center,” said superintendent Percy Mack. Dayton Public School athletic director, Jonas Smith, commented, “We are grateful that concern for the safety of our athletes has always come first with Kettering Medical Center.” Renovations began last month.

Ceballos Joins Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Mario Ceballos, DMin, (right), vice president of Spiritual Services and Missions for Kettering Adventist HealthCare, has recently accepted a position with the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. He now serves as associate director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. In his new role, Ceballos will travel the globe providing leadership and inspiration to Adventist chaplains. He lived and worked in Kettering for five years and was a member of the Dayton (Ohio) Central Spanish church.

During his tenure at Kettering Adventist HealthCare, Mario Ceballos presided over the grand opening of Stonebridge Administrative Building, an historic facility that once belonged to the family of inventor Charles F. Kettering. It was renovated in 2006 to be used as the administrative offices for Spiritual Services and Missions, led by Ceballos.

Commissioned Painting to Hang in Kettering Facility

Kettering Adventist HealthCare president and CEO Frank Perez recently received a very special painting that will be hung in one of Kettering Adventist HealthCare’s facilities. The painting, themed “I Was Hungry …,” is the work of Christian artist Nathan Greene. It depicts a small girl reaching out to a homeless man, and is intended to encourage viewers to show compassion to their fellow man. “This painting is a beautiful illustration of God’s will for each of us to serve others by meeting their immediate needs,” Perez said. “It is our mission at Kettering Adventist HealthCare to do just that, to care for people when they are at their most vulnerable.”

Retired Columbia Union Conference president Ron M. Wisbey (right), who now serves on the board of Versacare, Inc., an organization that provides grants for creative ministry projects, presented the specially commissioned painting to Perez, on behalf of Versacare president, Robert Coy, and chairman, Charles Sandefur.

First Serenity Conference Unites Sisters Across the Union

Sixty ladies from across the Columbia Union territory—Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—and from as far away as Georgia recently met in Baltimore for the first Sisters of Serenity (SOS) Conference. The two-day event, held at Miracle Temple in Baltimore, was intended to recharge and connect sisters with Christ and each other. Sisters of Serenity are women from various denominations with a desire to be used by God to bring other women to Christ in order to be set free. SOS’s mission is to help women experience Christ and His unique purpose for their lives.

“We do this by providing an atmosphere of tranquility, solace, and friendship through the bonds of sisterhood,” says SOS president and conference organizer Louvenia Anderson (pictured above), also a member of Miracle Temple.

The conference was so well received, that SOS has decided to continue through monthly, toll-free “Fire Side Chat” phone conferences. The phone conferences are open to all Christian women. The dates and times are: July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, and December 15.

Every conference starts at 8:30 p.m. Call the following toll-free number—(712) 432-1699—and then push in the code number 228617 to be connected.

For more information about Baltimore ACS, call (410) 254-5757—Beth Michaels
**Germantown Congregation Burns Mortgage**

The Germantown church in Philadelphia recently celebrated the burning of their mortgage. During the weeklong revival themed “This Far by Faith,” former pastors took turns reminiscing and inspiring the nightly attendees, beginning with founding pastor Alfred R. Jones. On the last day, during a special divine worship service, the mortgage was officially burned.

“Certainly, we have come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord,” said Pastor Jackson M. Doggette, Jr. “We have arrived at a significant moment of reflection, celebration, and thanksgiving to God.”

The church was organized as a result of the Lord’s blessings in an evangelistic effort held by Pastor Jones. The property was purchased in February 1974 and now boasts a membership of 300.

—Taashi Rowe

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**Conference Holds 16th Spelling Bee and Science Fair**

The winning word was “exuberant,” which school officials said explained the general mood of students participating in the final leg of the 16th annual conference-wide Spelling Bee and Science Fair. Seven of 11 conference schools made it to the finals, recently held at Sharon Temple Adventist School in Wilmington, Del. Lawrence-Paul Williams, a seventh-grader at Sharon Temple, said, “I was so nervous but I prayed to God and was assured I was doing my best.” He placed third in the science fair portion.

The science fair was divided into three categories with top prizes going to the following projects: grades K-2, “The Sipper Spinner”; grades 3-5, “Food Digestion”; and grades 6-8, “Just Do It.”

Associate education superintendent Gloria Perry said the annual event is an activity that combines social interaction with academic excellence. “Independent science projects afford students the opportunity to develop skills that will help them to look at the world in new and creative ways that may lead to an improved quality of life for all mankind.”

As for the spelling bee, she said, it will help students to become effective communicators who think critically as they read, write, listen, speak, and view the world.

For this year’s science fair, first-place winners in the following categories included: grades K-2, Annie Carty from Trinity school in Hillside, N.J.; grades 3-5, Micaela Rivera from Sharon Temple; and grades 5-8, Selina Allen from George E. Peters school in Hyattsville, Md.

The first-place winner for the spelling bee was Kyre Samuda from G.E. Peters. —Taashi Rowe

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**Ramah Graduates “Reach for the Stars”**

Eleven graduates of Ramah Junior Academy’s (RJA) eighth grade are on their way to meeting their class theme of “Reaching for the Stars.” The school recently celebrated a graduating class of six girls and five boys. Riki Jones and Asya Shadedd-Bey graduated with honors. Christa White, the class valedictorian, graduated with highest honors.

Highlights of the graduation include: a solo by Alecia Johnson, the welcome by Raven Kamara, opening anthem and prayer by Ta’Nasia Winston, a poem by Nathaniel Montgomery, scripture by Brandon Mosley and Jacob Lett, a speech from Christa White, and a speech by Tranicia Martin, the class president. Kawayn Gules introduced the speaker.

Harry Jenkins, eighth-grade teacher and class sponsor, presented special awards. Students who attended RJA from kindergarten through eighth grade also received awards. Cliff Wright Jr., men’s dean at Mt. Vernon Academy announced scholarships for RJA graduates planning to attend that school in the fall.

The speaker was Pastor Randall Giles of the Madison church in Ohio. Also present was Pastor Collin Parkinson, superintendent of education for Allegheny West Conference, and Mary Cornwall, principal at Ramah.—Harry Jenkins

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**Columbus Academy Ends Sixth Year With Graduation**

Columbus Adventist Academy closed out its sixth year with kindergarten and eighth-grade graduation ceremonies. Eight kindergarteners and four eighth-graders marched in their caps and gowns and were awarded their diplomas. Three eighth-graders completed the school year with academic honors: Jasmyne Martin, valedictorian; Kristopher Owens, salutatorian; and Aaron Terrell, honor student. The school year was brought to a close with a picnic at The Homestead Park in Hilliard.—Sharon Lewis

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**Conference Congratulates Academy Graduates**

Allegheny West Conference congratulates its Mt. Vernon Academy graduates. From left to right: Teairsa Smith, Ashley Lovette, and Joshua Asamoa.

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**Ramah Junior Academy’s eighth-grade graduation ceremony included participation from the graduates, as well as awards, and scholarships to Mount Vernon Academy.**

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**Columbus Academy Students**

COLUMBUS ADVENTIST ACADEMY

PHOTO BY RODERICK BACON
Women of Melrose Church Host Prayer Breakfast

Food, fellowship, and prayer were on the menu as the women of the Melrose 1st church in Roanoke, Va., recently gathered for a prayer breakfast. The Women’s Ministries department under the leadership of Jean Mills hosted the breakfast with the theme “As Close as Sisters.”

The church’s two women elders Patricia Hatch and Hermania Ferguson, led out in the event. Hatch spoke on the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of relationships and Ferguson spoke about the importance of having a vibrant and active prayer life. The ladies reported enjoying the information and the interconnectivity of relationships to their faith experience.

Jean Mills says, “I hope this momentum will continue to build and flow over to all the ladies of the church.”

Calendar

**July**

11, 12 **Haitian Symposium**, Roanoke, Va.
13-21 **Summer Camp**, AWC Campground, Thornville, Ohio
25, 26 **Multi-Cultural Ministry Leadership Institute**, Columbus, Ohio

Victory Church Reaches New Audiences via TV

The Victory church in Delaware, Ohio, may be a small church—42 members—but that doesn’t stop them from doing their part to help fulfill Matt. 24:14, which says, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come.”

Recently, the Victory church, which is just north of Columbus, presented a concert at a local TV station. They brought in friends from the area churches: Patty Mosby, Frank Hale III, Pamela Graham, Cheryl Duncan, and Megan Mobly. Two of their own members also sang, Ernestine S. Mitchell and her daughter Linda Reynolds.

Following the concert they were approached by the station and informed of an opening in the programming schedule and asked if they would be interested in airing future programs. Lawrence Shepherd, a retired minister who pastors the church, along with Pastor Shepherd advises other small churches to do their part to bring the gospel to the world. “Being a small church should not inhibit your global impact,” he says.

Victory church members, Linda Reynolds (pictured) and her mother Ernestine Mitchell, evangelize through gospel music.

BMA Celebrates Alumni Weekend

A alumni weekend continues to be a time for nostalgia and renewing friendships as alumni and friends fill the halls of Blue Mountain Academy (BMA). The excitement of seeing classmates from 10, 20, and even 50 years ago is often accompanied by a fond embrace, screams of delight, and a tear or two. This year was no exception, as hundreds of alumni flooded the campus for a weekend filled with fun.

The festivities began with the annual golf tournament, which raised more than $3,000 for a special school project. Friday evening vespers featured graduates from Philadelphia Academy and the class of 1968.

“Philadelphia Academy was established in 1939 and we embrace them as our own,” said Kathleen Sutton, director of advancement for BMA. “The sale of the Philadelphia Academy facility supplied major funding for the purchase and building of BMA, which opened in 1955.”

Dave Ferguson, campus chaplain, was the Sabbath speaker, and the afternoon concert featured Bel Canto and the King’s Heralds.

Memorial Fund Benefits Students

Several BMA students received the J. Thomas Diller Memorial Scholarship on the Sabbath morning of alumni weekend. J. Thomas Diller, a 1967 graduate of BMA, was killed in Vietnam.

The memorial scholarship was established in his name to benefit students on the basis of need, citizenship, character, and scholastic endeavors. His classmates, family, and friends continue to support this scholarship fund and many, many students have benefited from it.

Jim Fazio, alumni president, presented the J. Thomas Diller Memorial Scholarship to Jacob Kondrath, Charlene Reid, and Cecilia Dias. Not pictured: Evan Anderson and John Richards.

At a recent prayer breakfast, the women of Melrose church were inspired to make prayer central and foremost in their daily lives.

**Catch the Vision** is published in the Visitor by the Allegheny West Conference 1339 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43205 Phone: (614) 252-5271 x President, James L. Lewis Editor, Bryant Taylor • seconf.org

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Forgiven as We Forgive

In the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer we are faced with a quandary—a conditional request: We are forgiven as we forgive. This is also the only petition that Jesus feels compelled to amplify (see Matt 6:14–15). Why is this? Does God begrudge His forgiveness? No, not at all. It is simply that by the very nature of the universe, we must give in order to receive. So when we forgive, it unleashes a flood of forgiving graces from heaven and among human beings.

Forgiveness does not mean that we will cease to hurt. It does not mean that we will forget, but in forgiving we will no longer use the memory against others. It does not mean that we pretend the offense did not really matter, but that we will not let the offense control our behavior any longer. What then is forgiveness? It is a miracle of grace whereby the offense no longer separates. We no longer use the offense to drive a wedge between us. Forgiveness means that the power of love that holds us together is greater than the power of the offense that separates us. Forgiveness frees us to receive God’s grace and to welcome each other back into the circle of fellowship.

That which tends to separate us from others is plentiful, however, our challenge is to make sure that in the myriad of opportunities we have to separate from each other, that we choose to forgive. It is a must for our own spiritual health.

Spencerville Pathfinders Finish First at Bible Bowl

After more than 20 Friday night practice sessions and four levels of matches, one number stood out for the Spencerville Pathfinder Bible Achievement (PBA) team from Silver Spring, Md., the number 1. They finished with a first-place standing at the North America Division (NAD) finals at Andrews University (Mich.).

A record-breaking 45 teams participated in the NAD Pathfinder Bible Achievement. Forty teams finished in the first-place tier. The remaining five teams finished at the second-place level. More than 800 Pathfinders and their sponsors were on hand as Terry Dodge, the creator of the PBA program (sometimes referred to as Bible Bowl) led the teams through 90 questions on the Gospel of Matthew.

To reach the division finals, teams had to achieve a first-place finish in their area competition, the conference finals, and the union finals. Chesapeake sent two teams to the NAD finals—Spencerville and Triadelphia. PBA organizers say the program is not just about winning. They say the study of the Scriptures inspires change and that is the greatest achievement of all.

Team captain Janet Mwebi receives the first-place certificate from “Mr. PBA” Terry Dodge.

The Spencerville team brought back a first-place win in the final round of the NAD Pathfinder Bible Achievement. Back row, left to right: Kueun Tran, Zachary Hess, and Tommy Varghese. Front row, left to right: Katelyn Juneau, Janet Mwebi, and Matthew Fennell.

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The Columbia Union College (CUC) Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, and invitees recently gathered for a three-day retreat that ended with a board meeting. Board chairman Dave Weigley opened the meeting with remarks. CUC president Weymouth Spence, EdD, gave a report that included his vision for the college’s future, information on the college’s three-school structure and development for the capital campaign. “I am pleased with your engagement, and I appreciate your support of CUC’s mission,” he told attendees. He also announced that Susan C. Scharffenberg, PhD, would join CUC’s administrative team as the new provost on July 1. “Dr. Scharffenberg’s credentials are impressive and, with her years of experience, she will be able to fulfill the role of provost efficiently and effectively,” said Gina Brown, PhD, dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies and a member of CUC’s Provost Search Committee. Scharffenberg has 30 years experience in higher education and previously served as the assistant vice president for academic administration at Mission College in Thailand.

The provost position will replace the academic vice president at CUC. Board members also shared their appreciation for the work that Joan Francis, PhD, interim academic vice president, gave during the time she served CUC in that capacity. “I’m looking forward to the future fellowship and partnership to build a substantial Christian institution near the nation’s capital,” Spence said. Plans were also received for a collaborative effort between CUC’s new School of Health Professions, Science and Wellness and Adventist HealthCare, Inc.

Music Groups Take Summer Tour
The Columbia Collegiate Chorale and New England Youth Ensemble will jumpstart their summer tour this month in Greece as participants in the opera, Festival of the Aegean, directed by MidAmerica Productions. After their performances in Greece, the group will also travel to Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Austria to perform choral works and operas in different venues and churches.

Free Capital Summer Session Program Offered
CUC’s Capital Summer Session is a three-week program that allows students to earn three free college credits. Juniors or seniors in high school, academy, or even those who have never taken a class at CUC can register for the July 21 to August 7 program. For more information, call (800) 835-4212 or email css@cuc.edu.

First Year Experience Encourages Students to “Reach for Change”
Incoming freshmen will receive an introduction to college life during CUC’s First Year Experience (FYE), a one-credit class designed to help them transition successfully. The program begins with “Gateway ’08,” which runs from August 20-25. The weekend will begin with a parent dinner and annual FYE ceremony. “Gateway ’08” culminates with the reading of a summer book that challenges students to meet the program theme, “Reach for Change.”

Board of Trustees Meets, Selects Provost
The Columbia Union College (CUC) Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and invitees recently gathered for a three-day retreat that ended with a board meeting. Board chairman Dave Weigley opened the meeting with remarks. CUC president Weymouth Spence, EdD, gave a report that included his vision for the college’s future, information on the college’s three-school structure and development for the capital campaign. “I am pleased with your engagement, and I appreciate your support of CUC’s mission,” he told attendees. He also announced that Susan C. Scharffenberg, PhD, would join CUC’s administrative team as the new provost on July 1. “Dr. Scharffenberg’s credentials are impressive and, with her years of experience, she will be able to fulfill the role of provost efficiently and effectively,” said Gina Brown, PhD, dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies and a member of CUC’s Provost Search Committee. Scharffenberg has 30 years experience in higher education and previously served as the assistant vice president for academic administration at Mission College in Thailand.

The Challenge is published in the Visitor by the Chesapeake Conference • 6800 Martin Road, Columbia, MD 21044 • Phone: (410) 995-1910 • President, Rob Vandeman
How Important is Your Health?

Looking for an affordable, nearby, quality, live-in wellness program? The Mountain View Conference Health and Temperance Department, under the leadership of Pastor Daniel Morikone, is offering a 16-day, live-in Wellness Camp at Valley Vista Adventist Center (picted) in Huttonsville, W.Va., August 15-31.

Here's what to expect at this camp: lifestyle change that will enhance vitality and overall wellness; superb plant-based meals; two complete blood tests at the start and finish of the program; physical, spiritual, and mental renewal; hands-on cooking demonstrations; walks; instructive talks; socialization; support in the common objective of lifelong benefits from the program. Mail registration forms and checks (payable to Mountain View churches) to Mtn. View Wellness Camp, 1460 Liberty Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101. “Men and women should be informed in regard to the human habitation, fitted up by our Creator as His dwelling place, and over which He desires us to be His faithful stewards” (Our High Calling, p. 267).

—Brian Jones

Conference Presents Wellness Program

Is it possible to enjoy your food and lose weight? Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 6:19). How important is your health? Are you interested in having revitalized health that you may glorify the Creator? Then please read the next article on this page to find the scepter of sure hope held forth.

—Brian Jones

Communication Director

Pioneers Win National Baseball Championship

CUC’s Pioneers baseball team recently won the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) National Championships after a four-day tournament played at the War Memorial Stadium in Hampton, Va.

The Pioneers secured the first-place title after winning four games to reach the championship event. In the final game against The Apprentice School, the Pioneers were down but rallied in the third inning with three hits to win the game 8-1.

In 2007 the team ranked fourth in the USCAA, and according to Pioneers head coach Michael Ricucci, the seniors vowed that 2008 would be their year to win. “The seniors’ goal was to make it to the championship, and it was inspiring to watch,” he said. “I’ve never been so proud of these guys.”

Senior first baseman Matt Acevedo was chosen as the tournament’s Most Valuable Player. In addition, CUC players Hector Sepulveda, Kendall Hurst, and Jason Fischer were voted to the All Tournament Team.

According to Ricucci, Acevedo has a chance of making it into a professional league. Earlier in the season, another CUC player signed to a professional team. The Pioneers ended the 2008 season with a record of 30-23.—PR Staff

CUC’s Pioneers baseball team is over-joyed with their win to become the 2008 USCAA Division II National Champions.

Community residents Alice Sims and Seth Grimes recently received CUC’s Gateway to Service Award.

The Gateway is published in the Visitor by the Columbia Union College, 7600 Flower Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912 Phone: (800) 835-4212 x cor-466; Weymouth Spence, President + Editor, Tamsha Gwemide

Pioneers Recognize Great Community Service With New Award

CUC recognized two community organizations with the Gateway to Service Award, a new honor created to express appreciation for community residents who provide services and demonstrate caring to those in need. Award recipients were recognized during Tastes of Takoma, a CUC community festival.

The first award went to Alice Sims, founder of Art for the People, a nonprofit organization that provides support and encouragement for people without opportunities for self-expression. Sims says the organization enriches the lives of children, those in homeless shelters, at-risk teens, the developmentally disabled, and senior citizens.—Daniella Daley

The winning team celebrates. Later team members received a victory party with supporters at the college.

How to Register

• 304-422-4581, or send an email to wellnesscamp_mvc@yahoo.com.

Mail registration forms and checks (payable to Mountain View Conference) to Mtn. View Wellness Camp, 1460 Liberty Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101. “Men and women should be informed in regard to the human habitation, fitted up by our Creator as His dwelling place, and over which He desires us to be His faithful stewards” (Our High Calling, p. 267).

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Highland Adventist Eighth-Grader Wins State Award

Joel Grey, an eighth-grader at Highland Adventist School in Elkins, W.Va., recently became a Knight of the Golden Horseshoe. As a Knight of the Golden Horseshoe, Grey joined 221 West Virginia students who earned top marks in the Golden Horseshoe test, which evaluates students' knowledge of the state’s history, citizenship, civics, government, economics, geography, and culture.

The test has been administered to eighth-graders in West Virginia every year since 1931. This year 22,000 students took the test. The program takes its name from the golden horses given to the early explorers of West Virginia.

Students were recognized in a special pinning ceremony at the state capitol in Charleston. For more information about Highland Adventist School, visit the website at highlandadventistschool.org.—Cheryl Jacko

Lewisburg Member Shares Him

Last summer Delsie Pack went with Stewart Pepper (pastor of the Lewisburg, W.Va., church) and several other people to an evangelism outreach team meeting in Beckley, W.Va. By the time she left the meeting a couple hours later, the Holy Spirit had impressed her to do an evangelistic meeting in her own church.

In September she went to Valley Vista, the conference’s camp, for several other people to an evangelistic meeting. She then bought a computer to access the program. She then used the computer and the program.

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One by one the evenings came and went. Pack shared the Sabbath, the state of the dead, Jesus’ Second Coming, and more. The people came back each evening to hear the messages.

They came to the exciting Sabbath morning when two of the attendees took their stand for Jesus.

Both attended the meetings faithfully and wanted to commit their lives to doing what God wanted them to do. Pastor Pepper baptized Jessica McCoy and Lloyd Richmond on May 17. As she watched the baptisms, Pack beamed with a smile on her face and tears in her eyes.—Kathy Pepper

Joel Grey, pictured with his Golden Horseshoe award and certificate, outscored thousands of students statewide in a test that gauged students’ knowledge of West Virginia.

NEWS

Indonesian Pioneer Church Celebrates 15th Anniversary with Baptisms

The Indonesian Pioneer Church in Edison recently marked its 15th anniversary with a three-day celebration that included two baptisms. The new members, Raymond See and Marianne Mirasol, studied the Bible for nine months with one of our members.

Approximately 150 people came to support the anniversary events. As they celebrated, members of the church recalled six of the many who have joined the church over the years: a former Muslim, another from a different Protestant denomination, two siblings from the Catholic church, one who had never read the Bible, and a young man who was one of the founders of the first satanic church in Manado, Indonesia.

On the last day of the celebration, family and friends gathered at Merri Park in Iselin for a bit of fun in the sun. That same night, a young lady approached one of the church members to inquire about Bible studies. With no time wasted, the member introduced her to Hepburn and had their first Bible study the next day.—Jane Pai

Conference Welcomes New Women’s Ministries Director

Amalia Aguero (below) is the new Women’s Ministries director for the conference. She, and her husband, Pastor Jorge Aguero, has served in ministry for more than 25 years. Before coming to the conference, she served as a teacher, secretary, and Children’s Ministries director.

As Women’s Ministries director, Aguero says she would like to focus on three concerns facing the average Adventist woman: “enlivening her spiritual walk and relationship with Jesus, raising an awareness of the importance of her physical and mental health, and encouraging her to take a more active role in soul-winning through Bible study groups and preaching.”

Aguero says some of the ways she plans to meet those objectives include: spiritual retreats, reading clubs, the “Intimacy with God” program, health fairs, and evangelistic meetings.
I was born Roman Catholic in Rwanda, a country that became infamous for the atrocious killings that took place there in 1994. I was 12 years old at the time and soon became disillusioned with people in general. I also could not understand the teachings of the church about the nature of God, so I left the Catholic Church to search for the truth.

In my quest to understand truth on my own terms, I did not know where to begin, so of course I followed the “path” that most take and studied Eastern religions (Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and even a bit of Egyptian esoteric mysticism). But even before I started, there were two Adventist young ladies in the same program I was in, one of whom was from Rwanda. Only God can provide a nurturing environment like that for a brand new Christian.

When I came back from Boston, my friend referred me to the New Brunswick English church nearby. The Sabbath I went, there was a call for baptism, and I alone stood up. An elder Vilas took my name and took me under his wing, not only as a new disciple but also as a son. Because of the Ilas family, I also became an ambassador for the church.

When I was accepting the salvation story, I knew that I was nowhere near peace of mind that Christians possessed. I did, however, respect a Christian friend from high school. He was a very intelligent fellow and one whose opinion I always valued. We never talked about his denominational background, but when I had a question about faith, I could trust him to give me a good explanation. Little did I know that he was praying for me to give my heart to Jesus. Like millions around the world, I also read The DaVinci Code. I enjoyed it so much that I set out on a quest to prove that the Bible was wrong. So I went out and bought myself a Bible and tried to read it from cover to cover, as one would read a regular book.

Although I love the old English of the King James Version, and greatly appreciate the works from the Shakespearean era, my dismay I could not keep focused on the Bible. One day, my friend invited me to watch the first of a series of seminars that dealt with prophecy, and I accepted. As I attended the seminars I discovered that the Bible is not a boring book, and that it is supported by historical findings. Thus began my love for the Bible and, instead of me proving that its contents were misleading and contradictory, the Bible proved itself right and progression true.

Seeking a good explanation, our school acquired the DaVinci Code. I was back home after graduation from college, and my friend invited me to his church, the New Brunswick Spanish church. They were welcoming, and I enjoyed a great meal and fellowship with his family. I also returned a few times.

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Ordinary Missionaries

I must’ve been 7 or 8 years old when our neighbors invited all the kids in the neighborhood to attend a “Good News Club” in their yard. For five days, a couple of teenagers came and taught us Bible stories and songs. On the last day, those teenagers reminded us again of how much Jesus loved us and invited us to give our lives to Him. I committed my life to God that day, and from that point on, I knew I belonged to Him.

I don’t remember their names or even what they looked like but those young missionaries changed my life—and are a part of the impact my life has had.

This month young people from across our conference are becoming missionaries who may never know the difference they have made. They will be serving as literature evangelists, holding Cool Camps in three locations, and some of our local youth groups are even planning mission trips in and outside of the conference.

You may feel like an ordinary person, but you have a God who can do extraordinary things through you if you allow Him. As we commit to God, He invites us to tell others what He has done in our lives.

Pathfinders Place First in Bible Achievement

If you quiz Pathfinders from the Harrisburg Diplomats or the Reading Hampden Hawks clubs on the book of Matthew, you’ll find that they know their stuff! This is not surprising since club members won first place in a North American Division (NAD) Pathfinder Bible Achievement competition recently held at Andrews University (Mich.). The two clubs were among the 45 clubs from the NAD that competed. Pathfinders were asked 90 questions on the book of Matthew. All clubs that came within 90 percent of the highest score earned a first-place award.

If you’d like more information on next year’s competition, please contact Pamela Scheib at papathfinders@verizon.net.—Pamela Scheib

Adventurers Attend Family Retreat

Some 65 Adventurer-age children and their families recently gathered at Laurel Lake Camp in Rossiter for the annual Adventurer Family Retreat.

Over the weekend, the Adventurers worked on the Camper award, which involved learning the safety rules of camping, how to pitch a tent, and how to build a fire. They also made trailmix. For their outreach project, they made 52 fleece blankets for the Punxsutawney Hospital. Saturday night the Adventurers had a “pajama party” in the lodge with their families and enjoyed trailmix!

The speaker for the weekend was LeAnn Austin, director of the Steel City Adventurer Club. She spoke about God’s leading and protection.

Adventurer clubs came from Allentown, Distant, Easton, Gettysburg, Lehigh Valley Spanish, Pittsburgh, Pleasant View, Valley View, and Waynesboro.—Pamela Scheib

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Mission Story: It’s Who You Know

When RiLinda Fetherolf started working at the Becker Subaru dealership in Allentown, she wasn’t looking for anything more than a job. However, after noticing some Christian literature placed in the waiting room of the dealership, she hesitantly accepted Rodney Becker’s invitation to attend a Doug Batchelor series at the Allentown church where he was a member.

As a result of those meetings, Fetherolf began attending the Allentown church and a small group meeting at the Beckers’ home. A year later, she hadn’t really made a commitment, but, when Becker told her he would be going to Kenya with ShareHIM for a mission trip, she signed up to help with children’s or health ministries.

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The first night of the meeting, the pastor of her location asked if she was ready and if she had done this before. She told him that this was her first time speaking in public.

Fetherolf was nervous, but as she stepped on the platform and prayed her first public prayer, she felt a great peace and knew that God was leading. Using the ShareHIM script and slides, she shared Jesus with more than 2,000 people.

God blessed the series with 112 baptisms. Back home from Kenya, Fetherolf continued to learn as she continued to share Him.—Paul Wasmer

A group of ordinary people, just like RiLinda, Rodney, Ed, and Josephine Varley left for Kenya, Pastor Paul Wasmer baptized Fetherolf. He also had a commissioning service for Becker and Fetherolf. In his sermon that day, he hesitantly accepted Rodney Becker’s invitation to attend a Doug Batchelor series at the Allentown church where he was a member.

As a result of those meetings, Fetherolf began attending the Allentown church and a small group meeting at the Beckers’ home. A year later, she hadn’t really made a commitment, but, when Becker told her he would be going to Kenya with ShareHIM for a mission trip, she signed up to help with children’s or health ministries.

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Some 112 people joined the Adventist church as a result of the series.

Who You Know

“IT’s Not What You Know That Counts,” Wasmer emphasized that you don’t have to know everything in order to share your faith—it is Who you know and your willingness to be used by Him that is the most important thing.

When they arrived in Kenya, the team learned that the organizers needed volunteers to speak in some locations. Fetherolf felt God urging her to volunteer to speak. After obeying His prompting, she was assigned a location.

The prayer gave her the peace she needed to share Jesus’ love with crowds of more than 1,000 people.

Potomac Pastors Meeting Focuses on Discipleship

Potomac Conference pastors recently returned from their three-day meetings in Montebello, Va., with a deeper understanding and passion for disciple making and disciple training.

The meetings included intense seminars and stirring devotions from speakers like Bill Miller, conference president; Jose Rojas with the North American Division and pastor for Maryland’s Millennium Ministries; and Dave Buehning a nationally recognized expert in discipleship training.

The meetings ignited in me a passion to practice and teach discipleship. I now have the desire to continue and resist my shadow mission and be about God’s true mission for my life.—Will Johns, Pastor, Ways Cross (Va.) Church

“This was a vision for every sector of this country, where character was to displace skin color and where every culture could be distinct yet unified in freedom. Today that speech is still casting a vision.

A motivating vision is the song in the heart that elicits incredible joy in the lives of organizational participants, shapes the rhythm of their work, and demands to be shared with strangers. We need inspiring vision in our churches today. In Potomac we have a vision of bringing one of life’s greatest joys to each member: equipping them to bring someone to Jesus. We envision doubling our membership by 2020.

Sound like too big a goal? Good! God loves impossible goals. I want to challenge every congregation and every school to start planting a song in their hearts by casting a powerful vision for the kingdom. I challenge you to join me in the mission to bring new vitality and the promise of eternal life to your local communities. By His Spirit we, together, will pursue this vision and will rejoice when he says, ‘Well done!’

Mission Statement: It’s Who You Know

It was August 28, 1963. Martin Luther King Jr. stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and with passion and vision gave one of this generation’s greatest vision statements: I have a dream today to let freedom ring.

This was a vision for every sector of this country, where character was to displace skin color and where every culture could be distinct yet unified in freedom. Today that speech is still casting a vision.

Years later, Apple Computer, Inc., chairman Steve Jobs recruited John Sculley from PepsiCo to become Apple’s CEO. Jobs is reputed to have asked Sculley: Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?

King, Jobs, a teacher, pastor, a preacher, an employee—wherever in each of our lives, someone showed us a horizon we wanted to reach. We were motivated to reach for the unknown because of a thing called vision.

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Potomac People

Potomac Conference pastors recently returned from their three-day meetings in Montebello, Va., with a deeper understanding and passion for disciple making and disciple training.

The meetings included intense seminars and stirring devotions from speakers like Bill Miller, conference president; Jose Rojas with the North American Division and pastor for Maryland’s Millennium Ministries; and Dave Buehning a nationally recognized expert in discipleship training.

“IT’s Not What You Know That Counts,” Wasmer emphasized that you don’t have to know everything in order to share your faith—it is Who you know and your willingness to be used by Him that is the most important thing.

When they arrived in Kenya, the team learned that the organizers needed volunteers to speak in some locations. Fetherolf felt God urging her to volunteer to speak. After obeying His prompting, she was assigned a location.

The prayer gave her the peace she needed to share Jesus’ love with crowds of more than 2,000 people.

What’s happening

July

6-13 Junior Camp Laurel Lake Camp

13-20 Teen Camp Laurel Lake Camp

20-27 Teen Camp Laurel Lake Camp

August

29-31 Hispanic Youth Retreat Camp Hebron

September

19-20 Fall Camp Meeting Laurel Lake Camp

26-28 Community-based Ministries, New Cumberland

Pennsylvania Pen is published in the Visitor by the Pennsylvania Conference 720 Museum Road, Reading, PA 19611 Phone: (610) 374-8331, ext. 210 President, Ray Hartwell • Editor, Tammy Horst • pacconference.org

Visitor : July 2008

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Amicus Seminar Shows How Lifestyle Affects Health

Members of the Amicus church in Ruckersville, Va., are rejoining for the 10-plus persons that recently attended their eight-week lifestyle seminar. Each evening attendees were welcomed with a delicious, vegan meal (right) and demonstrations of some of the recipes. The real “meal” of the seminar followed with science-backed presentations showing that diet and lifestyle can affect chances of developing lifestyle-related diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Physicians Agatha Thrash and James LeVos joined the seminar by teleconference to address specific concerns.

“Table Talk” was the last item on the agenda each evening. During this time, participants were divided into smaller groups, each with a group leader. They reviewed their progress in following the recommended program during the preceding week, asked questions, and shared concerns. “We praise God for the opportunity we were given to share with members of the community the truths we have been given regarding healthy choices and the wonder of the God that created each of us,” said Sue Endres. Several of the attendees to this seminar who were not members of the Adventist Church came to the seminar during young people in a Christian atmosphere. 

Shenandoah Valley Academy's (SVA) centennial. While it is difficult to know an exact number, it is estimated that between 1,400 and 1,600 people attended the events throughout the weekend, starting with Friday’s annual golf tournament and ending with Sunday’s Worthy Student Benefit Brunch.

Music permeated the campus the entire weekend with alumni presenting music for the Sabbath School program, an afternoon concert of alumni singing in a reunion choir, an afternoon Christian music festival featuring the musical talents of SVA alumni, and an evening concert just for the children.

One of the Sabbath afternoon highlights was the open house and tours of the newly remodeled dorms. Attendees to the Amicus church’s lifestyle seminar learned how a healthy diet reduces the risk of lifestyle-related diseases. They also get a chance to eat healthy, delicious vegan meals.

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The weekend also meant saying goodbye to J.J. Henline who had been a physical education teacher and athletic director at SVA for 40 years. At his retirement open house, former students and staff filled the cafeteria to capacity to wish him well and pay tribute to his years of service.

Alumni said they especially enjoyed visiting the archive museum that had been set up for the weekend. The mini-museum gave visitors the opportunity to look at old yearbooks and school newspapers and to see archived materials that have been donated to the school through the years. Visitors also watched a his-

Potomac People

SHENANDOAH VALLEY ACADEMY
HAPPENINGS
www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org

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It's All About Service

Have you looked at Takoma Academy’s (TA) mission statement lately? Did you know it was all about our service to Him? It reads: “TA is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian high school, which welcomes all races, cultures, and religions for the purpose of leading young people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, providing excellence in academics, which will promote serving others in this world as they prepare for the world to come.”

God calls each of us to serve wherever we are. In Matthew 25’s parable of the talents, we learn that even the smallest talents can be multiplied through service. It is an honor to serve at TA and to work with such wonderful young people who are striving to serve God’s other children.

Drama Students Cruise to Serve Others

For most people, the only reason to go on a cruise is to take a vacation. However, for Timothy Vandeman, music director and cruise organizer, TA’s spring break cruise would be different—it would be a unique mission trip for students.

Some 13 TA drama students, three parent chaperones, and three faculty members recently set sail for ministry.

Students were able to go sight-seeing and enjoy the ship, but at every port of call the students shared the gospel through skits and mime performances that they developed with drama director Myrna Candelaria. Students performed on Grand Cayman Island at the Adventist school; at the public square on the beach at Islan Roatan, Honduras; and for children at an orphanage in Belize. It was hard to tell who—audience members or performers—got the most pleasure from the performances.

Many of the public even joined the students for Sabbath services, which included more performances on board. Students said the trip was stimulating and eye-opening. Jade Callahan (‘10) came home with a renewed appreciation for her comfortable life. She said, “I had a humbling experience, mainly because of the children who were happy despite their circumstances.” Erica Singh (‘09) said she would never forget the families she met. “They were satisfied with family and the love they had for each other. They showed me that you can be rich in different ways rather than being rich materially.”

Students Pledge Pennies for Patients

TA has pledged to raise more than $1,000 for Pennies for Patients, a campaign to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. TA student Alcira Groomes (‘09) brought in more than $200 in honor of her grandmother, Alcira Bonet, who died in January from leukemia.

“When she passed away, I made a promise to myself that I would carry on her name by giving back to others in every way that I could,” Groomes said. “Pennies for Patients was my opportunity to give back, in honor of my grandmother, to those who suffer from the very disease that killed her.”

Leukemia continues to affect the TA family. In March, leukemia took Allen Duncan’s (‘87) life. He leaves behind a wife and a son.

Register your student for the 2008-09 school year on Sunday, July 27 from noon-4 p.m.

TA Today is published by Takoma Academy
8120 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912 • Phone: (301) 434-4700 • Principal, C. Dunbar Henri • ta.edu

Visitors - unusual: 48
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For classified advertising and recommendations (if applicable) to Sandra Jones, Columbia Union Visitor, 5427 Town Knoll Rd., Columbia, MD 21045, and display advertising to Beth Michaels at the same address.

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I Didn’t Want to Go

I didn’t want to go. But for the first time, our academy’s annual mission trip to Belize was not just your typical church-sponsored trip—it was a mandatory select-church tour. I was required to go.

I had already experienced a mission trip to Belize the previous year, and I didn’t see the point in going again. Why would I put myself through that unbearable heat for a second time? I thought. And why should I give up my spring break two years in a row? After all, we were going to the same city, ministering to the same people, and playing with our same friends. Why should I be required to do this?

AN UNEXPECTED BLESSING

God ministers in amazing ways, especially when you’re least expecting it. After a few days on our trip, I realized that not only was being incredibly selfless, but I was also utterly and completely wrong. The Belizean people joyfully joined along with our more familiar songs, which brought a new uniqueness to our experience. Music like they did. I soon discovered that not only were they a blessing to us, but we were a blessing to them as well.

After our singing, the pastor made an appeal. At first, there appeared to be no outward response, and I could see that this was not an easy decision for them. Several minutes had passed when finally one woman bravely made her choice to stand. Then another. Soon, there was an entire group standing to show their commitment to Jesus. By the end of our trip, 22 local people—and some of our own—decided to give their lives to Christ. Suddenly, the heat didn’t matter as much as it did the year before, and the absence of comfort through that unbearable heat for a second time. I thought. And why should I give up my spring break two years in a row? After all, we were going to the same city, ministering to the same people, and playing with our same friends. Why should I be required to do this?

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