Laughing Out Loud
Toledo Members Learn That Humor Can Heal

Plus: Have We Become Carbotarians?
ON THE WEB

HEALING THE BROKEN
Ilse Eisele, a member at Potomac Conference’s Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., remembers her first day as a volunteer at The Samaritan Women, a recovery center for sex trafficking victims. Visit columbiaunion.net/samaritanwoman to discover what she has learned from helping these girls heal.

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER
Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., is host to this year’s ABC TV Christmas special Peace on Earth. The show, directed and produced by the Voice of Prophecy, will be telecast across the nation on Christmas Eve. Get more details at columbiaunionvisitor.com/abcchristmas.

LEARN FROM THE EARTH
In his new self-published book Nature, Rocks & Minerals: A Biblical Perspective, Rick Streight, a member of Chesapeake’s Blithedale church in Perryville, Md., wants to remind us that our Creator loves us far above diamonds and rubies. Read our interview with the nature lover at columbiaunionvisitor.com/rocks.

YOUR STORY COULD BE HERE
Want to see a story about your church or school in the Visitor or one of our online platforms? Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/yourstory to see what we’re looking for and how to submit them.

REMEMBER LOVED ONES
Visitor is a great place to remember your recently deceased loved ones. We publish obituary announcements of members and former members. Visit columbiaunion.org/obituaries for a submission form and further submission instructions.

WHY CHRISTIAN TV?
“Like” facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor and tell us why Christian television is important. The pay off? Hope Channel will enter you to win a Roku.

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A Note of Appreciation: This is the last issue of Visitor magazine to be printed by the Review & Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md., which closes this month after 153 years of dedication to the publishing work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!
Know Nothing Adventists

One of most unique political parties to arise in American history was the Know Nothing Party in the 1850s that championed several causes. When a member was asked about its activities, he was to say, “I know nothing.”

Members of this group included Massachusetts and Pennsylvania congressmen as well as a former United States president. While their secretive nature was not admirable, they demonstrated great concern for America’s safety.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church grew up during that era of causes, issues and reform movements. Our own spiritual history was influenced by the Millerite movement, health reform, dress reform, the temperance movement, the fight to educate former slaves and the opposition to Sunday laws.

In the 1880s, as reported in *The Ellen G. White Encyclo­paedia* (p. 333), the Adventist Church faced a major division over law and grace, with long-time church officials appealing to delegates at the 1888 General Conference Session to “stand by the old landmarks,” while younger men like A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggone presented “righteousness by faith.” To some it appeared the church might divide over this issue and fall apart.

I remember studying for the ministry and the question over the sanctu­mony message and the investigative judgment was hot and heavy. Some of my seminary classmates followed a charismatic teacher from Australia and decided they could no longer serve for a church that held the message of an investigative judgment or taught the 2,300-day prophecy. My wife and I carefully studied the sanctuary message again and saw Christ and His redemptive work flowing through this message.

Even today members ask me where the church stands on passionate issues. Perhaps it’s time for the Adventist Church to revive an early Christian church movement.

**LET’S START A MOVEMENT**

At this season of the year, when we especially dwell on the birth of Christ, let’s remember that the crèche that held the incarnate, infant Lord holding His hands up to His earthly mother was just the first step toward a cross where He held His hands out for the world. That is the message, the cause, the issue that this world needs to be more passionate about than anything else. That is why the apostle Paul said, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except with Christ Jesus and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2, NIV).

Today, as Adventists, let us take up the mission of Jesus and commit to anything that furthers His mission. And, let us affirm and encourage anyone—young or old, male or female—who will put their hands to the task of spreading the message of the next Advent of Jesus Christ. No one should be exempt from that important work: “Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed” (Review and Herald, July 9, 1895).

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we became known as Know Nothing Adventists? Our “knowing nothing” wouldn’t be about secrecy. Instead, when people tried to engage us in debatable issues, we would simply say, “My ultimate position—that I am willing to live and die for—is to ‘know nothing except Christ and Him crucified.’”

Ray Hartwell is president of the Pennsylvania Conference.
NEW HOPE PACKS MEALS FOR HAITI
Members and volunteers at Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., participate in the No Child Hungry meal-packing event organized by the church’s SOS International ministry. In five hours, more than 200 volunteers packed 41,875 meals, which are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and contain the nutrition a starving child needs. The meals will go to children in Haiti.—Caryn Wooster

18.14 million
The number of Adventist members around the world, as reported by G.T. Ng, executive secretary of the world church, during Annual Council

NEW JERSEY ADMIN RETIRES
Jim Greene (below), New Jersey Conference executive secretary, retires at the end of December.

Greene served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in many capacities around the North American Division and abroad. In the Columbia Union, he held positions at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., then finished his last nine years in New Jersey. "After so many years working together, it is not easy to say goodbye to somebody like him," says José H. Cortés, conference president. "Jim has had an outstanding service record of 48.82 years!" Greene will continue to work for the conference part time. Read more on page 28.—Paulo Macena

CHESAPEAKE OPENS NEW SCHOOL
With a $203,000 trust fund from longtime members of Chesapeake Conference’s Dover First church in Dover, Del., and a loan from the Columbia Union Revolving Fund, the new Dover First Christian School became a reality this fall. The school started with 14 students and two teachers. They operate in a newly constructed building adjacent to the church. Read more on page 20. —Samantha Young

NEW JERSEY, POTOMAC ABCS POST CHANGES
Retired pastor Kermit Netteburg (above) recently stepped in as interim manager of the Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Center (ABC) in Silver Spring, Md. He replaces Lisa Myaing, who worked at the store for 23 years, serving the past 11 as manager.

While the Potomac Conference store is challenged by the growing trend of online book and music purchases, the ABC’s sales have been growing in vegetarian foods, natural foods and vitamin supplements.

Netteburg says the store is looking for new ways to generate revenue and serve people. “We want to become a location for people to
learn more about healthy lifestyles and then be able to find resources for new lifestyles," he says. Read more on page 33.

The New Jersey Conference’s Revive ABC—previously owned by Review and Herald Publishing Association—also saw some changes. The conference shut down the Revive store at the end of August and opened a smaller version of the store under its Adventist Community Services Department, combining it with an already existing thrift store. The Second ACTS ABC, as its now called, provides support to the conference’s community food pantry.—Tiffany Doss, Beth Michaels

WAU GRADUATIONS HIT 5-YEAR HIGH

With a record number of graduate students enrolled this fall and a five-year graduation rate increase that is matched by fewer than a dozen universities in the nation, Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, Md., is making progress in its “Vision 2020—Growing With Excellence” plan. The increase over the past five years in both the number of enrolled graduate students and the graduation rate of students is 67 percent.

“We are pleased that more students are discovering the convenience and accessibility of the classes that we offer,” says Nicole Currier, dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. “This university takes a holistic approach to education that nurtures mind, body and soul, which is something that busy adults value.”

Contributing to the graduation rate increase is a variety of support programs for students, faculty and staff, and the growing culture of excellence based on the Baldrige program. The new 8th Semester Free program is expected to further boost graduation rates, as it motivates students to complete their undergraduate degrees on time.—WAU Staff

CHESAPEAKE, POTOMAC CO-HOST YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

More than 40 young adults from the Chesapeake, Potomac, New Jersey and Allegheny East conferences recently converged at the Mt. Aetna Camp and Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md., for the “iThirst” Spiritual Retreat.

Potomac and Chesapeake conferences co-hosted the weekend, where Sonia Perez, youth pastor of Potomac’s Beltsville (Md.) church, facilitated activities focusing on the story of blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52. She urged attendees to meditate on the passage and observe 10-12 hour periods of silence each day and participate in nearly four hours of faith-building exercises blindfolded.

“Often growing up, you have a distorted view of God, and like Bartimaeus, some of us have things that keep us from seeing Him clearly,” says Perez (pictured above, far left). “I wanted people to have the chance to be ‘blind’ … [Then] you aren’t relying on yourself. You have to take the moment and go away from your busyness and look at things another way.”—V. Michelle Bernard

WAH OPENS BREAST CENTER

Last month Adventist HealthCare (AHC) Washington Adventist Hospital opened a new, comprehensive women’s breast center in Silver Spring, Md. The center offers access to a state-of-the-art facility with a team of experienced physicians, a breast navigator, technologists and staff; skilled in providing high quality, specialized services focused on breast cancer prevention and early intervention. Pictured are AHC staff at the ribbon-cutting. The new center is located at 12210 Plum Orchard Drive, Suite 209.—AHC Staff

BY THE NUMBERS: Hope Channel U.S.

4 Number of languages available (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French)

6 Number of ways to watch: DirecTV Channel 368, Glorystar Satellite Channel 104, online streaming, Roku, mobile apps and free-to-air television in select cities—now including Philadelphia

PHOTO BY ROSS PATTERSON
**Noticias**

**MOUNTAIN VIEW CONTRATA A UN LÍDER PARA MINISTERIO**

Walter Cárdenas es el nuevo coordinador para ministerio hispano de Mountain View Conference. También sirve como líder de jóvenes y jóvenes adultos en el distrito de Elkins y Parsons (W.Va.), además de ser el director del campamento de verano. Anteriormente, Cárdenas y su esposa Yasmi trabajaron en el distrito Franklin, Moorefield y Romney en el este de West Virginia.

**CAMBIO DE CARGOS EN EL ABCS**

El pastor jubilado Kermit Netteburg entró recientemente como gerente interino de Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Center (ABC) en Silver Spring, Md. Él reemplaza a Lisa Myaing, quien trabajó en la tienda más de 23 años, desempeñándose como gerente los últimos 11 años.

Netteburg dice que la tienda busca maneras nuevas de generar ingresos y servir a la gente. “Deseamos ser un lugar donde las personas aprendan más acerca de estilos de vida saludable y luego encuentren recursos para nuevos estilos de vida”, dice él.

Revive ABC de New Jersey Conference—antes propiedad de Review and Herald Publishing Association en Hagerstown, Md.—ha visto algunos cambios. La asociación cerró la tienda Revive a fines de agosto y abrió una versión más pequeña de la tienda bajo el departamento de Servicios Adventista a la Comunidad, combinándolo con una tienda benéfica ya existente. Second ACTS ABC provee apoyo a la despensa de comida comunitaria que pertenece a la asociación.

—Tiffany Doss, Beth Michaels

**ARTICULO PRINCIPAL DE VISITOR**

**Risas a carcajadas**

Ron Szczechowski se secaba los ojos, agitaba sus brazos, y daba golpes repetidamente en el apoya brazos de su asiento, en la quinta fila del auditorio Nitschke de University of Toledo. No estaba solo. Szczechowski, un miembro de hace tiempo de la iglesia First church of Toledo en Ohio Conference, y cientos de asistentes se deleitaron de las payasadas de los comediantes Carlos Oscar, Daren Streblow y Bob Stromberg (en la foto) and en el tercer programa anual Free to Laugh: Laugh to Free Comedy Show [El show de comedia Libre para reírte: Ríe para liberarte], que se llevó a cabo en octubre.

Frente a una escena de ciudad urbana, el show hizo cosquillas en el hueso de la risa de todas las edades. Sin embargo, este grupo variopinto no estaba allí solo para divertirse; también lo estaban para recaudar dinero y así ayudar a niñas adolescentes a rehabilitarse para siempre de la esclavitud sexual.

Aunque la trata de seres humanos no es un asunto de risa, Szczechowski y otros miembros de Toledo apoyaron con entusiasmo el show de comedia ya que este concienciaba más acerca de uno de los muchos proyectos que la iglesia cree ha sido comisionada a responder.—Tamaria L. Kulemeka
Join us in 10 days of PRAYER

January 7-17 2015

www.TenDaysofPrayer.org
White rice, cheesy pasta, breads, cakes, pies, ice cream, pizza and chips. Have these become all too common foods at your church potlucks? In your home?

Although it is well known that many Seventh-day Adventists abstain from eating meat as a way to retain good health, a growing number today might be better classified as carbotarians—a modern term to describe those with a diet too high in processed foods.

Whereas vegetarianism is widely regarded as a healthy lifestyle, carbotarianism can have the opposite effect; it is directly correlated with higher caloric intake and weight gain, which can lead to diabetes and other lifestyle-related illnesses.

Adventists aren’t the only ones at risk. According to several recent studies, people who frequent church pews might be as much as 50 percent more likely to become obese.¹

WHY THE DIET DILEMMA?

Although he doesn’t believe the majority of vegetarian Adventists can be considered carb-heavy eaters, John Kelly, MD, adjunct professor in preventative medicine at Loma Linda University (Calif.), says that for those who are, “It is … perhaps due in large part to the desire for convenience foods. It is noteworthy that fast foods generally fall into the carbotarian dietary pattern.”

Katia Reinert, PhD, RN, North American Division Health Ministries director, shares this view. “The problem we face is that many who call themselves vegetarians believe that the point is not to eat meat and may over indulge in foods that are rich in simple carbohydrates,” she explains. “They may not necessarily eat a variety of fiber-rich foods … and consume too many calories from desserts, white breads, rice or pasta.”

Jim Sharps, ND, PhD, president and CEO of the International Institute of Original Medicine in Smithfield, Va., sees Adventists falling into “the full spectrum of dietary practices, with the major exception being in regard to eating unclean meats.” While the church has the most complete and well thought-out health principles from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, he says, and our diet generally tends to be better than that of the general public, he believes there are other religious and secular groups more “convicted” and “committed” to their dietary principles.

Sharps, who attends Potomac Conference’s Windsor (Va.) church, believes the less-than-healthy diet among some Adventist members is the result of denominational growth and the integration of “the world’s views and practices on diet” rather than vigorous and rigorous promotion of the church’s health message.

Clara Iuliano, a Pennsylvania-based, registered dietitian, agrees. She notes that early Adventists seemed to treat their diet much like a contract with the church, whereas today, members focus less on being diligent to the health message. “The church doesn’t seem to want to talk about food much anymore,” she says. “People are just more lax in their eating habits.”
A PLACE FOR CARBS

Nutritionists all agree that some carbs are essential to good health. Government food guidelines report that 45-65 percent of daily caloric intake should come from carbs, which provide the body with energy.

“The main issue with carbohydrates is not that they are bad for us,” Reinert says. “The problem is the quantity that is consumed, how they are prepared and the type that is chosen. We should focus on eating lower glycemic carbs that contain more fiber. That slows the body’s absorption of sugars and does not disrupt our insulin production.”

Dr. Sharps is also quick to point out that carbs are the most important of the three macronutrient groups (the others are protein and fat). They are most commonly found in fruits, vegetables, beans and grains.

“Refined carbohydrates are nutrient deficient and lay the foundation for a variety of chronic degenerative diseases,” he says. “Whole grain carbs are better since they contain both a rich amount of essential vitamins, minerals, as well as other macro- and phytonutrients, and they are in the right ratios for optimum bioavailability,” he adds. Oats, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, whole grain breads, and any fruit and vegetables are complex carbohydrates.

“The issue is to remember that even though they are complex carbs, we still need to consume them in moderation. Serving size is always important as well as how we prepare it,” adds Reinert. She says following the My Vegetarian Plate guidelines (pictured) is a great way to get the right balance.

Karen Jaceldo-Siegl, DrPH, MS, senior nutrition researcher on the Adventist Health Study 2 and assistant professor at Loma Linda University, says no study has been done distinguishing between vegetarianism and carbotarianism. Their study, however, confirms much healthier outcomes for Adventists staying close to our denomination’s vegetarian teachings. For example, they found that mean body mass index was highest in nonvegetarians at 28.7 percent and lowest in strict vegetarians at 24 percent. Nonvegetarians also had more than twice the incidence of type 2 diabetes (and four times higher than strict vegans). Studies of cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and the metabolic syndrome also showed the same trends: the closer the participants were to a strict vegetarian diet, the lower the health risks in those areas.

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Influenced by the Bible and Ellen G. White writings, Adventists have traditionally made a healthy diet a focus of their teaching. However, Sharps says that White does not address diet from a macronutrient standpoint. “She addresses diet from a vegetarian standpoint and, more specifically, from a whole food, unprocessed, unrefined vegetarian standpoint consisting primarily of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and grains prepared in the simplest manner to ‘impert a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet,’” he says, citing Diet and Foods (p. 296). “When you look at all that she says about diet, one would conclude that it should be a very high complex carbohydrate, low fat, low protein diet.”

Dr. Sharps echoes Iuliano’s concern that church leaders are not paying enough attention to “the best system known to man for promoting both outrageous health as well as for preventing and reversing all chronic degenerative diseases,” he says.

In the meantime, Iuliano, a member of Pennsylvania Conference’s Hamburg church, stresses that individuals must take control of their health. “The closer the food is to the way it is grown, the better it is going to be. That should be the goal,” she says. “Start by identifying what needs to be changed immediately—like reducing salt and sugar—and remember that the health message stresses diet and meal planning around what is simple and doable.”

Toledo First members learned there was a heinous crime happening in their backyard and decided to take action— one joke at a time

By Tamaria L. Kulemeka

Laughing Out Loud
on Szczechow ski frequently dabbed the corners of his eyes. He also couldn’t help occasionally flailing his arms and pounding the armrest of his seat in the fifth row of the University of Toledo’s Nitschke Auditorium. And, he wasn’t alone.

Szczechow ski, a long-time member of Ohio Conference’s Toledo First church in Toledo, and hundreds of other attendees delighted in the antics of comedians Daren Streblow, Bob Stromberg and Carlos Oscar at the third annual Free to Laugh: Laugh to Free Comedy Show, which took place in October.

Against the backdrop of an urban city scene—with a makeshift brick wall and contents from a toppled trash can strewn on the stage—the show tickled funny bones of all ages. But, this motley crew wasn’t there just for the fun; they were also raising money to help rehabilitate adolescent girls who have been forever affected by sexual slavery.

While human trafficking is no laughing matter, Szczechow ski, his wife, Carla, and other Toledo First members wholeheartedly endorse the comedy show. It heightens awareness of one of the many projects the church believes they are commissioned to respond to.

Mike Fortune, Toledo First’s pastor, explains, “We became aware that Toledo is the fourth most human trafficked city in America and number-one per capita,” coming behind Las Vegas, Miami and Portland. “We believe it is immoral for Christians not to do something to combat this heinous crime.”

The church, along with its nonprofit arm Haven of Hope and other community organizations, began sponsoring the Free to Laugh show three years ago. Proceeds go to The Daughter Project, a Toledo-based organization that runs Ohio’s only licensed recovery home for adolescent human trafficking victims.

Making “Home” Safe Again

Jeff Wilbarger, founder and director of The Daughter Project, adds that the FBI and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children cite Toledo as a top U.S. recruitment city for trafficking children. He says his organization works with local law enforcement agencies and Children’s Services to connect with the victims, ages 13 to 15, after they have been rescued.

“The girls generally come from horrific situations where they are living in homes where they are suffering physical and sexual abuse,” Wilbarger reports. “In our recovery home, they are safe, loved and cared for.”

All Free to Laugh ticket proceeds, including the $25,000 raised at this year’s laugh-your-heart-out fundraiser, support the care and needs of the girls living full time at The Daughter Project’s recovery center called Hope’s House. To date the home has helped eight girls transition into a “normal” life. The victims, cared for around the clock by “house moms,” typically stay for one year before returning to their own homes or going into foster care.

Human trafficking statistics, along with other details about its close-to-home impact, stunned Toledo First members when Wilbarger spoke at the church a few years ago. The church felt compelled to respond, says Carla Szczechow ski, who helps run Haven of Hope and has scurried to and fro behind the scenes helping organize each Free to Laugh event.

“Our congregation was so touched by [Wilbarger’s] testimony that many of us wanted to get involved,” Szczechow ski says. “We saw it as an opportunity to minister to a huge need in our local community. Human trafficking … is a disgusting crime that targets young girls [who], in many cases, are runaways that are easy prey. They are gullible and vulnerable.”

Tragedy Turned Victory

At least one Toledo First member has experienced firsthand the ills of human trafficking.

Sherry* had a teenage daughter who was going through a rebellious period. The adolescent and a friend decided to skip school one day and hitch a ride to California. Unfortunately, the truck driver who picked them up drugged them, then headed toward New England, where the family believes they would have been shipped off.

Sherry says it was two weeks before she heard from the girls! When the driver stopped at a truck rest stop 18 hours away and the girls asked to use the restroom, they finally gained access to a payphone inside a stall. Ecstatic to hear from her daughter, Sherry immediately contacted local law enforcement, which then contacted authorities nearest the rest stop. Sherry says she stayed on the phone with her daughter until authorities verified she was in safe hands.

Not surprisingly, it still unnerves Sherry when she thinks about the ordeal and what could have happened. She’s also thankful the experience directed her daughter, now 37, toward a “strong walk with the Lord,” she says.

The fact that one of their own members has been personally affected by sex trafficking only strengthens
Toledo First church’s resolve to help organizations, such as The Daughter Project. Fortune says it makes their involvement more personal—and more painful.

“Sadly, the trafficking of humans affects us all. Modern slavery not only ruins lives and wrecks families, it impacts the food we eat, clothes we buy and electronics we love,” Fortune notes, referring to all forms of the slave trade (see the sidebar). He adds, “But, even if only one of us were affected, shouldn’t we still care and do something about it? 1 Corinthians 12:26 says, ‘If one part suffers, every part suffers with it’” (NIV).

**Investing in the Future**

Learning about the unfortunate plight of these young women and girls is what encouraged Wilbarger to step out in faith and start The Daughter Project. He says he used to think human trafficking was just a problem in countries like India and Thailand. It was not until his son-in-law asked him to read a book about it that he realized it was happening right in his backyard—affecting 1 million kids each year.

“What people are shocked by is that it is going on in places you wouldn’t expect,” Wilbarger shares, noting farming communities like Pemberville, Ohio, and Maumee, a Toledo suburb.

Funds raised from events like the Free to Laugh show are the lifeline for operating Hope’s House and helping victims get back on their feet. The Daughter Project uses the money to buy the young tenants food, clothing, medical services and recreational opportunities. It also pays the salaries of the house moms who run it.

Wilbarger notes, however, that the comedy show would not be possible without organizations’ support. Before any tickets are ever sold, multiple sponsors, including the Toledo First church and Haven of Hope, foot the bill to make it happen. As a result, 100 percent of ticket sales are dedicated to helping the recovery center’s young “patients.”

Fortune says the church donates about $1,000 annually to purchase 50 tickets, which they then give away to members and the community leading up to the big night of the show. But, the church’s financial support extends far beyond what’s in the church’s coffers.

“Our church volunteers its time, talent and treasure to help plan the event. We provide volunteer labor to staff the parking lots [and] run the tech and cameras,” Pastor Fortune says.

**Making Over Lives**

Helping fund Hope’s House is one of many labors of love in which Toledo First church is involved. After receiving a $27,000 gift from a local financial company, plus some funds from the Ohio Conference and church members, Toledo First began Haven of Hope. That was six years ago, and the church has done about 20 projects since then. Its mission: “making over the lives of families one at a time in northwest Ohio.”
“We believe our mission is to show people that God loves them like crazy by reaching Toledo with hope and wholeness,” Pastor Fortune says. “Ever since Genesis 3:15, God has been rescuing His kids. We are trying to do the same thing in the 21st century.”

Haven of Hope has executed makeover and rehab projects, including “putting the finishing touches” on Hope’s House after it was built in 2012. In addition, the organization provides funds to remove lead paint, poor sewer lines, and old furnaces from peoples’ homes. They have also redone rooms at the Aurora House, a rehabilitation home for women in downtown Toledo. Around Valentine’s Day, the organization hosts a sacred concert, and offerings from the event have helped Haven of Hope give back to its community.

“We provide hope and empower the community by making living space more livable,” Fortune explains.

One person who will not forget the church’s generosity is Toledo resident Cheryl Layman. Had it not been for Haven of Hope, Layman believes the repairs completed on her home—which included painting her living room and bathroom and installing “much needed” carpet and a new bathroom floor—would have never happened.

“Haven of Hope was a great help to me,” Layman says. “My aching body was keeping me from doing anything that required climbing a ladder. Haven of Hope raised my crooked steps and some of the sidewalk. This helped my body feel better.”

In addition to helping the community, the church also gives back to its own. Fortune says church members once helped a member who had struggled to maneuver around her living space because it was not wheelchair accessible. Haven of Hope and church members made repairs in the bedroom, kitchen and living room area, and widened doorways, easing her burdens.

**An Unbreakable Bond**

The desire to respond to the community’s needs is what ignited the partnership between the Toledo First church, Haven of Hope and The Daughter Project. And, Wilbarger values the bond they’ve forged. Without such partnerships, he recognizes that Free to Laugh Toledo would not have taken on a life of its own—transforming and impacting lives in northwest Ohio.

“This event, like so many of the things we do at The Daughter Project, depends upon the generosity of the volunteers,” Wilbarger says. “Without Pastor Mike and our sisters and brothers at First church, the Free to Laugh event would not take place until we found new people to do everything.”

Tamaria Kulemeka is a member of Allegheny West Conference’s Hilltop Community Worship Center in Columbus, Ohio.

*Sherry is a pseudonym

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**The Truth About 5 Human Trafficking Myths**

Amanda Rodriguez, a member at Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., recently became the advisor on human trafficking policy for the Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention. She sets the record straight on this heinous industry:

**MYTH:** Human trafficking requires crossing country or state borders. **TRUTH:** It occurs whenever someone is forced to perform a service or sexual act through force, fraud or coercion. Trafficking can occur in someone’s own home; it does not require movement at all.

**MYTH:** Human trafficking occurs to those in other countries or to foreign-born people. **TRUTH:** A large portion of it actually occurs to domestically born victims. In fact, domestic children are especially at risk.

**MYTH:** Human trafficking occurs only in urban areas. **TRUTH:** Trafficking occurs in all types of locations. It is truly the crime next door and could occur everywhere. It has been called the “invisible” crime because victims are often not hidden from the public, but it is difficult to identify.

**MYTH:** Sex trafficking is the most prevalent type of slave trade. **TRUTH:** Sex trafficking investigations get a lot of press but the majority of slavery is labor trafficking. See how your decisions affect slavery around the world at slaveryfootprint.org.

**MYTH:** Human trafficking is not a problem. **TRUTH:** Due to its underground nature, it is hard to quantify. However, trafficking has been classified as an emerging crime trend on the East Coast and is more prevalent than earlier estimated. For information about your state, visit polarisproject.org.

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Truth or Myth?
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Conference Retreat Empowers 80 Men

More than 80 men recently gathered at a retreat held at the Allegheny East Conference’s (AEC) Conference Center 1 in Pine Forge, Pa. AEC’s Relationship Ministries Department sponsored the one-day event themed “Empowerment.”

The retreat began with a devotional thought, then attendees divided into groups for icebreakers. George Thornton and Ronnie Vanderhorst, presenters, addressed topics such as “Manhood and Masculinity.”

“Too many of our men are laying back and not taking up their rightful role. Love who you are, be a priest of your home, understand the value of manhood and masculinity, and, if you are married, take care of your wife,” says John Trusty, relationship ministries director.

PFA, Elementary Students Engage Community

The principals and students of Pine Forge Academy (PFA) and Jessie R. Wagner Adventist School (JRW), both located in Pine Forge, Pa., spent part of a recent Sabbath participating in their township’s community day. Every year the Douglass Township office, located just a mile from PFA and JRW, hosts a community day where local organizations come together for fellowship.

Principals Nicole Falconer of PFA and Donna Hayden of JRW set up tables filled with pamphlets, children’s Sabbath School lessons, T-shirts, and other giveaways. They also answered questions about their schools. PFA’s creative arts ministry group sang, presented puppet shows and played the steel drums for attendees.

“We wanted the community to know that we love the Lord, we love them as our community members and we want to be actively engaged,” says Falconer.

Students echoed that desire to witness. “We’ve come to minister to the community in a different way,” says Brian Penn, PFA senior.

For the past several years, the Allegheny East Conference has donated the tent and tables used for the community day, but this was the first time AEC had any representation at the event.
Baltimore Junior Academy Gets Extreme Makeover

Baltimore Junior Academy (BJA) started the school year in a newly renovated school building. A Commonweal Foundation’s Boarding and Day School Program grant made the million-dollar facelift possible. Improvements included fresh paint throughout, new ceiling and floor tiles, central air and brand new lockers.

School staff is thankful for the gift and know God is leading their school. “In the Bible, we see how God favored certain individuals. I do believe that God favors Baltimore Junior Academy,” says Carol Cantu, principal.

The Commonweal’s grant will also provide additional staff, resources and training at BJA.

North Philadelphia Hosts an Amazing Race

Youth at the North Philadelphia church in Philadelphia recently raced throughout their community to provide acts of kindness and community service. Adult chaperones, including an elder, oversaw each group during their Amazing Race.

The youth were divided into two teams: Team Praiz and Team Victorious. They followed clues that led them to various destinations in the community, and received clues about the tasks they had to complete. The teams completed such tasks as cleaning a street block, distributing water to passersby, distributing literature and visiting a local police station or fire department.

Racers also invited members back to the church’s block party, which took place later that day. There was live music, free food, a moon bounce, face painting and information and giveaways from various church ministries.

“I believe that churches have the perception in a community of only taking up space, and this particular church has no parking lot, so on Sabbaths we’re viewed as takers. Events like this let our neighbors know that we are givers too,” says Pastor Keith Goodman.

Pathfinder John Hearst shares a goodie bag, packed with toiletries and snacks, to a passerby.

Racers take a picture with a local firefighter after thanking him for his service to the community.

Racers from Team Victorious greet a local firefighter and present him with an appreciation certificate.
Central Church Brings VeggieTales to Columbus

The Central church recently had Columbus, Ohio, buzzing, says Pastor T. Boston II. The church accomplished this by sponsoring the VeggieTales Live! tour at the Aladdin Shrine Center. More than 1,500 attended, some traveling as much as four hours, and left knowing more about the Central church.

“This initiative literally reached thousands of persons who had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists” says Lemuel Harrison, a member of the church. During the program, Pastor Boston also made an appeal for all to be prepared for the second return of Christ.

The church’s Family Ministries team, run by Ruey and Marcia Bruce, planned the event. The Bruce’s have a vision for the church to become the number-one place in the city for families and children to learn about the love and soon coming of Jesus.

The VeggieTales project is part of a long-range series to disciple and nurture new and non-believers into the love and truth of the Adventist Church. Each Sabbath morning, Central members pick up dozens of children for Kid Central for a hot breakfast and Bible study. Many of those children joined the festivities and were bused in and given free VIP passes to meet Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber, popular characters from the VeggieTales series. Pastor Boston credits the success of the event to God, the Family Ministries team and the members of Central.

Youth Leaders Come Together to Grow

The Youth Ministries Department recently held its fifth annual leadership retreat at the conference campgrounds in Thornville, Ohio. More than 70 Youth Ministries leaders from Adventurer, Pathfinder and Adventist Youth departments from across the conference came for training and leadership planning for the upcoming year.

A special part of the weekend dealt with the phasing out of the current Pathfinder Leadership Award and Pathfinder Instructor Award programs, and the installation of the new Adventist Youth Ministries Training (AYMT) program. The new AYMT focuses on a broader learning curriculum for Youth Ministries leaders. “As doctors, teachers and other professionals yearly engage in continual training and professional growth classes, we want our leaders to continue to grow and be the best leaders,” says Joel Johnson, director of the Youth Ministries Department.

The theme for the weekend was “Chosen to Serve.” Johnson says, “Its emphasis was recognizing that youth leaders are called and chosen by God to serve. Yet, our calling is contingent upon our willingness to choose to give God the very best in faithful service.”
Schools Experience Explosive Growth

Allegheny West Conference’s two schools are celebrating their students and growing enrollment numbers.

At a recent assembly, Kevin Cameron, principal of Ramah Junior Academy (RJA) in Cleveland, said with a booming voice, “We are ABLE: Achieving Beyond Limitless Expectations.” All the students, parents and staff repeated the theme together and cheered.

“We are also thankful for the answered prayer of an even larger enrollment than last year. We thank God for 90 students and counting,” says Yvette Cooper, education superintendent. As the students left the gym, Cooper welcomed each one with a smile and small school supply.

More than a hundred miles away in Columbus, Ohio, another school was also celebrating. William Cox, conference president, and Marvin Brown, executive secretary, along with the staff of Columbus Adventist Academy (CAA), welcomed their students in a unique way. Staff rolled out a red carpet from the entrance and everyone clapped and cheered as the students and parents entered the building. One parent commented, “The children and I felt so special! I have never been greeted like this before.” During their first assembly, Brenda Arthurs, CAA principal, shared the new school theme “FISH: Forever In the Savior’s Hands.”

“All the students, parents and staff repeated the theme together and cheered.

“Allegheny West is truly thankful to God for the increased enrollment of each school. RJA has 90 students and recently celebrated its 90th anniversary; and CAA has 120 students and had to transform the cafeteria into a classroom because of their explosive growth,” says Cooper. “Pray for our schools that we will be forever in the Savior’s hands as we achieve beyond limitless expectations.”

Bible Bowl Program Blossoms

The Allegheny West Conference was well represented at the annual National Black Adventist Youth Directors Association Bible Bowl Tournament held in Nashville, Tenn. This Bible study event features teams in five group levels, from ages 6 to senior citizens.

Under the leadership of Elethia Dean, conference Bible Bowl coordinator, the conference program has blossomed tremendously. For the first time in many years, champion teams represented the conference in every age category. Although it is only their first year, the conference’s newest team (aged 6-9) from the Columbus Ephesus church in Columbus, Ohio, finished in third place.

“The greatest thing about the program, however, is that our members—young and old—gain not only a knowledge of the Word of God, but a love of it,” says Dean. The conference is hosting this national event in Columbus next October.
**Jesus Was Born to Die**

No one knows for sure, but it is estimated that there are four babies born every second. That amounts to about 133 million babies born each year. Collectively it represents an incredible number of baby photos, proud grandparents and, of course, lots of diapers. The year-by-year accumulation brings us to the Earth’s population of 7.13 billion. But, for all of the fawning over cute babies, there is one birth that stands out above the rest.

Jesus was born with a special mission—to die in our place. Even in His birth story we see indicators of what will happen at His death. The parallels are striking:

- A Roman ruler’s decree sent Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and another Roman decree sent Him to Golgotha. Joseph was His protector at birth and another Joseph, from Arimethea, provided for His burial.
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the town of David, and died in Jerusalem, the capital chosen by David. Mary was, of course, present at His birth and also at His death. He was born at the proper time and died at the prophesied time.
- He was wrapped in swaddling clothes at birth and in burial clothes at death. His birth took place in a stable thought by some to be a cave. He was buried in a tomb, carved out of stone to make a cave.
- As a baby, Jesus was placed in a manger, which was likely a slab of stone. In death, He rested on a stone bench in the tomb. There was no room for Him in Bethlehem, and, at His death, there was no room for Him in Israel.

Jesus was born to die so that we could experience a rebirth and live forever. That is worth celebrating!

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**Eastern Shore Saints Gather at the River**

The annual Eastern Shore Gathering, held on the banks of the Choptank River in Cambridge, Md., offered participants a Spirit-filled Sabbath of inspiring messages, uplifting music by the Highlanders choir from Highland View Academy, based in Hagerstown, Md., and local musicians. There was also a fellowship luncheon and boat trip. Keynote speaker Bill Knott, editor and publisher of *Adventist World* and *Adventist Review* magazines, encouraged attendees to really study the “treasure” that is God’s Word as it “holds the key to a future better than this,” he said.

To view more photos of the event, visit facebook.com/chesapeakeconference.

Katlyn Roop and Caitlyn Stifs, of the Dover First church in Dover, Del., keep their boat on course.

Nancy Byrkit (left), of the Chestertown/Rock Hall (Md.) district, and Randi Pawlowski, of the Dover First church, help with the luncheon.
Dover First Dedicates New School, Commissions Teacher

The late Ralph and Hildegarde Johnson, longtime members of the Dover First church in Dover, Del., would have been proud to see the school their money helped build, says Sharon Cox, the Johnsons’ niece. The Johnsons were passionate about Seventh-day Adventist education and set up a revocable trust gifting the church $203,000. Those funds, along with a loan from the Columbia Union Revolving Fund, helped make the new Dover Christian School a reality.

The school, equipped with SMART Boards and Chromebook computers for students, opened in September in a newly constructed building adjacent to the church. They launched with 14 students and two teachers: Jennifer Miller, principal, and Joyce Barber.

A ceremony to dedicate the school and commission Barber culminated with a concert by the Highland View Academy located in Hagerstown, Md., Highlanders choir and a reception.

Women’s Retreat Draws Record Crowd

More than 300 women converged at Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) in Spencerville, Md., recently for the annual conference-wide retreat. Under the theme “Grow! Reach! Thrive!” women attended worship services and seminars in English and Spanish. Raquel Arrais, associate Women’s Ministries director for the world church, was the keynote speaker.

The weekend opened with a Friday evening concert at the nearby Spencerville church and featured music by Mark Willey, organist; a string quartet from Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.; the SAA choir, orchestra and handbell choir; and Highland View Academy’s (HVA) Highlanders choir, based in Hagerstown, Md. It was a rare opportunity to hear the HVA and SAA students perform together.

“This year, for the first time, we offered a full seminar program for young women ages 15-21,” says Samantha Young, conference Women’s Ministries director. “We really want to engage young women and provide resources to help them in their spiritual walk.”

To watch archived recordings of the general sessions, visit ccosda.org. Plans are underway for the 2015 retreat to be held in Ocean City, Md.
First STEMfest Draws 400

Highland View Academy’s (HVA) first STEMfest drew nearly 400 people to the school. The HVA Highlanders kicked off the event singing the national anthem, followed by Malcolm Hutchinson, principal, and Rick Remmers, Chesapeake Conference president and school board chairman, providing a short welcome. Ophelia Barizo, vice principal for advancement and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), introduced the keynote speaker, Sohi Rastegar, who is the director of the office of emerging frontiers in research and innovation at the National Science Foundation, Engineering Directorate (Va.). He spoke about the importance of STEM, especially engineering, as well the integration of art and STEM and the relationship between religion and science.

More than 20 federal and private STEM organizations sent staff to lead interactive activities for students or donated educational materials to give to attendees. Participating organizations included NASA; the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture; National Science Foundation (NSF); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Genome Institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Drug Enforcement Administration; U.S. Coast Guard; Chesapeake Bay Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Koshland Museum; Mycological Association of Washington, D.C.; and STEM departments of various colleges and universities, including Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.

Four Einstein Fellows volunteered with their respective agencies, NASA and the NSF. The HVA STEM department hosted 10 interactive stations where participants made slime and silly putty, performed chemical reactions, built bridges and structures with various materials, built robots and tested solar robots, and manipulated microcontrollers to do fun things. Steve Gatz, assistant boys dean, also brought out snakes, chameleons and other lizards, and a 16-foot python.

The HVA gymnasium was abuzz with excitement as students engaged in hands-on learning and discovery, say administrators.
Staff Members Dedicate Seniors’ Final Year

During a special ceremony, Highland View Academy staff highlighted the Class of 2015’s accomplishments and dedicated their future at HVA and beyond. Staff members individually recognized students by sharing memories and thoughts for their future. Then, the staff had a special prayer of dedication over the students. Seniors and staff especially anticipate this event each year. A few seniors provided comments about the evening:

“As I stood up and looked over my fellow seniors, I began feeling nostalgic about how far we have come.” —Kristen Gibb

“It was a warm welcoming to our senior year. When the teachers spoke about us, I knew that senior year would be great and that we can do it.” —Judy Hernandez

“Senior Recognition made each individual feel special and noticed. The seniors were dedicated to the community to remind people to keep us in their prayers.” —Christina Gindi

“When we came together as a group to be prayed over, I genuinely felt the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.” —Dylan Antone

School Hosts Eighth-Graders for “Let’s Move!” Day

Highland View Academy invited eighth-graders from area Seventh-day Adventist schools to join a variety of activities for the North American Division’s “Let’s Move!” Day. After a pancake breakfast in the HVA cafeteria, students from Frederick Adventist School in Frederick, Md., and Mt. Aetna Adventist School in Hagerstown, Md., chose to canoe, hike, bike, play Frisbee games or help HVA students move a local family.

Nathanael Byrkit ('16) says, “This was a good idea. I hope we do it again next year.”

Hannah Spitalsky ('17), Abby Choi ('17) and Matias Olivares ('16) enjoy the view from Black Rock after an invigorating hike.
As I observe today's events, the words of the song “Midnight Cry” come to mind. Troublesome times are upon us. Soon we will hear the midnight cry and Jesus will be here.

That scene causes me to reflect on Jesus’ words in Matthew 25. Jesus affirms the servants that have been faithful in caring for the blessings that were bestowed on them. “Well done, good and faithful servant,” he said (Matt. 25:23).

How is it in your field of labor? Are you being faithful stewards in caring for each Voice of Prophesy (VOP)/Discover Bible Study request card that the Holy Spirit impressed someone to send in? What will be your answer when the Lord asks for an accounting of each name? Are we faithful to those who have joined our church family, seeing that they are cared for so that each new member is grounded to stand in these troublesome times? As we have entered the last quarter of this year, how is it with your financial stewardship? How about our stewardship of time with Jesus? How much time are we spending reading His Word? What about our stewardship of prayer? Do we have a daily, or a moment-by-moment experience with Jesus?

In the scene in Matthew 25, the faithfulness of the servants was the basis for being invited to “enter into the joy of thy Lord.” The Mountain View Conference’s VOP/Discover initiative is not over. We’ll hold another graduation in 2015. The third group of people who requested lessons are just starting their course. Many from the first and second groups are doing Focus on Prophecy lessons. Plans have already been made to host reaping meetings in every conference church in the spring of 2015. Let's be found faithful stewards in our part of the vineyard and experience the blessings that God has given.

“Grow in Grace” Women’s Retreat Yields Harvest

Even though the weather turned cold, the women who attended this year’s Mountain View Conference “Grow in Grace” women’s retreat at Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va., say they enjoyed the warmth of fellowship, meals and spiritual food. A variety of women attended—from one who hasn’t missed any of the 23 annual retreats, to newly baptized Adventists, to friends of church members that wanted to spend a weekend away from everyday life.

Jill Morikone, a pianist and cooking show host with 3ABN, shared personal stories of God's work in her life using themes, such as “planted with love,” “pruned with mercy,” “watered by the Spirit” and “harvested with joy.” Attendees also collected disposable baby diapers to give to crisis pregnancy centers in Buckhannon, Harrisville and Huntington, W.Va. A spirit of kindness and love blessed the entire weekend, and there was an extra emphasis this year on prayer, praise and testimonies, say organizers.
Mountain View Pathfinders Lead Parade

Each year the town of Elkins, W.Va., hosts the statewide Forest Festival, which attracts visitors from as far away as Canada. The festival culminates in a weeklong fall celebration featuring three large parades along with many activities, displays, events, rides and entertainment options. The Elkins church hosts an informational booth with educational health activities and health and spiritual literature. The first Sunday of this annual event features a parade of children that travels through downtown Elkins and includes hundreds of participants.

The Elkins Black Bears Pathfinder Club has been a part of this parade for many years, and the conference has led the parade as the color guard for the last eight of those years.

Thirty-seven Pathfinders from five clubs also joined the parade this year. Some of the young people distributed literature and other gifts to children and adults who lined the parade route. Joel Stecker, conference Pathfinder director, finds that participating in this yearly event gains great recognition for the Pathfinders as well as the name Seventh-day Adventist. “You always have people asking for more information about Pathfinders. It’s great public relations,” says Stecker.

What is Your Favorite Bible Promise?

“A new heart also will I give you,” (Ez. 36:26). This, to me, is the most precious promise in the Bible. When I feel discouraged over what I find within me, this gives me hope.”—Elizabeth Jones is a member of the Glenville (W.Va.) church.

“Micah 7:8 gives me a lot of encouragement when I am feeling hopeless because of my failures. It brings to mind a picture of someone sitting in a cave and jumping up, shaking their fist at the devil and saying, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: When I fall, I shall arise; and when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me.”—Rebekah Jones is a member of the Glenville (W.Va.) church.

Schools Focus on Math and Science

Each fall Mountain View Conference schools take their students (grades K-12) to Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va., to enjoy a day focused on math and science. In this photo, Reagan Moore and Isis Barreto-Tellez, students from Parkersburg Academy in Parkersburg, W.Va., enjoy a game about telling time.
Take the Walk of Faith

Challenged by the images on the screen in my grandfather’s living room, I sought shelter behind his chair. Challenged by academic concepts in school, I sought answers from peers and professors. Challenged by the buffeting waves of life, I turned to mentors, counselors and prayer.

We all face challenges in the journey of life. They move us beyond our comfort zone and cause us to lean on something more than self—to walk by faith.

Mount Vernon Academy (MVA) is facing significant challenges right now. At this moment in our history, I am grateful for the Ohio Conference, the alumni and the staff with whom I serve and the many others who care about this educational ministry. Together, we are walking by faith, leaning upon the strength and wisdom of God, and seeking the support of our stakeholders to frame and fund MVA’s future.

If you want to participate in helping the school, please email me at dkittle@mvacademy.org.

Toldeo Bell Festival Serves Up Musical Feast

Mount Vernon Academy’s Cascabells recently attended a handbell festival at the Toledo First church in Toledo, Ohio. Choirs from around the country gathered for the annual event. The Cascabells led the individual choir performances with “The Creation,” an original score by David Nino, MVA music director.

Emily Charvat, a senior bell ringer, describes the piece as “magical,” she says. “His score focused each heart on the progress of creation from void to completion.”

The musical feast drew the hearts of the listeners to the great stories and themes of Scripture, says Nino.

Dan Kittle, principal, says the students enjoyed being with the other musicians. “Being able to hold a concert with 1,000 bells gives them a sense of accomplishment and pride that you can’t get when you just have 18 kids in a room ringing bells,” he says.

Senior Survival Draws Students Closer to God, Together

This October MVA seniors set out on the most anticipated and treacherous event of senior year: senior survival. After arriving at the Camp Mohaven Conference and Retreat Center in Danville, Ohio, the seniors split into groups and canoed three miles down the Mohican River, then hiked two miles to their campsite. They then split into living groups and built shelters out of their surroundings and two tarps.

During the week, the students prepared their own food, built fires and participated in activities that taught them to trust each other and work together. On Sabbath they explored what it takes to become “kingdom citizens.” “They not only found themselves growing closer together as a class, but also closer to God,” says Janesta Walker, vice principal.—Alyssa Thompson (’15)
Senior Named Commended Student

Darren Wilkins (pictured, right), Spring Valley Academy (SVA) principal, recently announced that senior Nicolas Chaij became a Commended Student in the 2015 National Merit Program. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2015 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top 5 percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2015 competition by taking the 2013 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Wilkins shares, “We hope this recognition will help broaden Nicolas’ educational opportunities and encourage him as he continues in his pursuit of academic success!”

Chaij is the son of Kenneth and Heidi Chaij of West Carrollton, Ohio.

Alumna Returns as Development Director

Spring Valley Academy is pleased to announce the return of an alumni and development director position to the staff, a position Angie Peach (’95) has filled. Peach is a beloved alumna who attended Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., for one year before transferring to Southern Adventist University (Tenn.), where she earned a bachelor’s degree. Peach has 13 years of experience, most recently as director of major gifts with the Kettering Medical Center Foundation in Kettering, Ohio. Prior to that, she served as director of major gift development for Union College (Neb.).

Darren Wilkins, principal, says, “Her natural leadership skills, professional experience and vibrant enthusiasm will certainly be an asset as she joins our SVA family team … especially now as we focus our vision on building our new chapel/auditorium!”

New Multi-Grade Classroom Improves Instruction

Spring Valley Academy added a multi-grade classroom for students in grades 4-6 with varying ability levels. Alison Jobson recently returned to SVA and says she is excited to teach in a multi-grade classroom.

“What a wonderful opportunity to differentiate instruction on a whole new level … It’s like differentiated integration to the 10th power! My students know and understand that they are receiving individualized instruction that meets their current needs, to take them where they need to be, and also empowers them with extended studies,” says Jobson. “It’s rewarding to see a sixth-grader assisting a fourth-grader in math, or my fifth-graders listening in on the fourth-grade science lesson and choosing to be a part of the discussion as they recall studies from last year.”

The program allows accelerated students who are able to move up a grade level in a content area with ease. “So, to essentially have a small school classroom environment within this larger community allows students to get the best of both worlds,” says Darren Wilkins, principal.
Luke Chapter 2 holds the most beautiful, tender and lovely account in literature: the nativity story: “About this time Caesar Augustus declared a nationwide census in all the countries throughout the Roman Empire … Joseph lived in the city of Nazareth in the province of Galilee. He had to travel all the way down to Judea to the little town of Bethlehem and register there, because he was of the lineage of David. He also had to register Mary, who had married him and was about to have her baby. While they were there, the time came for Jesus to be born. All the rooms in town were full so they had to spend the night in a cattle stall. That's where she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and laid Him in a box where animals feed, because there was nowhere else to stay” (Luke 2:1, 4-7, The Clear Word).

That beautiful night, the Son of God became the Son of Man in order to save humankind from sin and death. This message is comprehensive and clear. “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21, NIV).

Isn’t that memorandum great? This is the essence of Christmas! We need to think about it, talk about it and repeat the story to our children and to everybody every day. God sent a Savior to our planet! He did not send a condemnér to our biosphere. This is the greatest news of all. “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him” (John 3:17, NIV).

Adventist Leadership Summit Equips Church Leaders

This fall more than 300 leaders representing all the English-speaking churches in the New Jersey Conference gathered at the Hyatt Hotel in New Brunswick to participate in the Adventist Leadership Summit. Paulo Macena, Youth Ministries and communication director, planned the event.

“It was indeed a blessed day!” says Macena. “We had great speakers bringing messages of hope and encouragement for leaders that occupy different leadership positions in the church. Our intent is to train them to be better leaders in their churches, communities and cities. We want them to be fired up to complete Jesus’ mission.”

Some of the speakers were Macena; Derek Morris, associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association; Stanley Patterson, Andrews University (Mich.) professor; Hyvett Williams, Andrews University professor; Patrick Graham, Allegheny East Conference youth director; and José H. Cortés, conference president.
Longtime Church Worker to Retire

At the end of the year, Jim Greene, executive secretary, is retiring. “After so many years working together, it is not easy to say goodbye to somebody like him,” says José H. Cortés, conference president. “Jim has had an outstanding service record of 48.82 years!”

Cortés uses Proverbs 22:29 (GNT) to describe Greene: “Show me someone who does a good job, and I will show you someone who is better than most and worthy of the company of kings.”

Pastor Greene married Joyce Ann Keslake in October 1964. They have three children and two grandchildren. He graduated from Southern Adventist University (Tenn.) in 1967 with a bachelor’s in accounting and a minor in religion. He has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in many capacities, starting as an inventory clerk for the Southern Union Conference. He then served at the Wisconsin Conference; the Georgia-Cumberland Conference; Faith for Today and Adventist Media Center; Loma Linda University (Calif.); Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.; the Rocky Mountain Conference, where he was ordained in 2003; and, for almost nine years, at the New Jersey Conference. Greene was also a missionary in Indonesia.

Greene says his highest joy came from serving in Indonesia and then returning to conduct evangelistic meetings. On his visit, several nationals who had never heard of Christ were baptized. “To see the change in their life after being introduced to Jesus is remarkable and thrilling,” he says.

Greene is also proud of the 35 percent membership growth in the conference in the past eight years. He says the growth “has been possible due to the conference’s strong commitment to evangelism and the hard work of our pastors and lay members.”

Greene will continue to work for the conference parttime.

New Teachers Bolster School Staff

For the 2014-15 school year, the Education Department welcomed three new full-time teachers:

**Eder Dominguez** is a teacher for the Vine Haven Adventist School in Vineland. Pastor Dominguez is a native of Spain and holds masters’ degrees in both education and pastoral ministry. He enjoys teaching and preaching.

**Leah Ware** has been serving at the Lake Nelson Seventh-day Adventist School in Piscataway in different capacities for several years, including her role as the co-director for the school’s learning center. She is now a full-time teacher. Ware holds degrees in education and communication.

**Ferdinand Lagos** is a teacher at Waldwick Adventist School. He also serves as the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program coordinator for the conference. Lagos is a native of Peru and holds degrees in computer science, mathematics and education.

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Conference Oversees Staff Transitions

The Ohio Conference recently welcomed two new staffers and said goodbye to one. As many constituents are aware, the conference has been searching for a conference treasurer since the May constituency meeting. Desiring a unique skill set for this vacancy, Ron Halvorsen Jr., president, and the treasurer search committee have been cautious in their consideration of candidates.

During preparations for a recent audit at Mount Vernon Academy, Lyle L. Litzenberger, former Ohio Conference treasurer, returned to Ohio to help facilitate the process. After completing the audit, Halvorsen and Litzenberger discussed the specific needs of both the conference and academy. Soon afterward Halvorsen asked if he would be interested in coming out of retirement. Litzenberger accepted and the Ohio Conference Executive Committee voted to have him serve as interim treasurer. He has 45.5 years of denominational service, which includes experience as conference treasurer, academy business manager, church stewardship pastor and business manager for the North American Division Evangelism Institute.

"My wife and I strongly believe that God led in every job that I have accepted, and wouldn’t change any of the moves we made or jobs that I have held," says Litzenberger, pictured with Runette.

Carole Smith (right), interim education superintendent, also recently joined the conference team. Smith moved to Ohio from Maryland only days before the new school year began. "I am honored to come out of retirement and serve as the interim superintendent for Ohio and looking forward to meeting all the teachers and administrators, as well as getting acquainted with their constituencies," says Smith. "My prayer is that God will guide me in meeting the educational needs within the Ohio Conference and that, together, we can share the joys and face any challenges as a united team."

Smith replaces Alison Jobson who, in August, returned to teaching.

The conference treasury department is losing a familiar face this month: Nancy Barnett, associate treasurer. Barnett and her pastor-husband, Michael (pictured, above), accepted a call to the Walla Walla City church district in Washington, which will take them closer to family. Together they have served in Ohio for 14 years in several districts as a pastoral couple, with Barnett working in the conference office for the past seven. "She will be missed!" says Halvorsen.

Barnett’s replacement has not yet been named, but administration hopes to have this vacancy filled after the first of the year.
Our Update on Mount Vernon Academy

Last month during a joint meeting of the Ohio Conference Executive Committee and Mount Vernon Academy (MVA) Board of Trustees, we received a difficult financial report about MVA. This report provided a current, in-depth look at working capital, operational liabilities and monthly expenses, and raised questions regarding our viability that must be answered sooner rather than later. We, therefore, established a Blue Ribbon Committee consisting of members from the conference executive committee and academy board, as well as the Columbia Union. We asked them to explore what it will take for MVA to become financially stable—now and in the years to come.

Many of you will be disappointed to learn about this situation and wonder how our beloved educational ministry finds itself in such challenging circumstances. We share your concern, and quickly turned our attention to doing all we can to address the situation responsibly, with expediency and transparency.

Here are three things happening now:
Both the Ohio Conference and MVA have begun implementing recommendations from the General Conference Auditing Service, which also reviewed the financials and did not find any impropriety. Lyle Litzenberger, the interim Ohio treasurer, is working closely with Dan Kittle, principal, and his team to assure immediate financial needs are met. Kittle and leaders of the alumni association are seeking partners to create viable options for the future.

Since this is your academy, as well as ours, we need a forum to share what we learn in this process and to hear from our alumni, constituents and all those who care about MVA. Here are several ways you can stay informed and participate in the discussion:

1. **Website:** We have set up a special page at ohioadventist.org to share news and statements throughout our process. You may also email questions or comments to information@ohioadventist.org.

2. **Town Hall Meetings:** We will convene three meetings this month so you can hear what we have learned, ask questions and propose solutions (see sidebar box).

3. **Special Constituency:** The Ohio Conference Executive Committee voted to convene a special constituency meeting January 11, 2015, at the Worthington church (see official notice on page 45). Delegates to the session are those who served at the 41st regular constituency session of the conference in May 2014. We will hear reports and recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Committee and take all necessary and proper action regarding the future of MVA.

   **Friends,** we need your prayers for God’s direction and discernment regarding Mount Vernon Academy. Please pray for our administration, staff and students; members of the Blue Ribbon Committee; and members of the MVA Board and Ohio Conference Executive Committee as we navigate rough waters in search of a solution that will advance Christ’s mission in Ohio for Adventist Christian education.—*Ron Halvorsen Jr.*

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**Town Hall Meetings**

**December 4, 7 p.m., at the Worthington church**

**December 8, 7 p.m., at Primera Iglesia Hispana Adventista de Cleveland (First Cleveland Spanish church)**

**December 9, 7 p.m., at the Centerville church**
Lehigh Valley Students Lead Evangelistic Meetings

This fall four Lehigh Valley Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School eighth-graders conducted an evangelistic series at the school in Whitehall, Pa. Mark Dekle, one of the constituent pastors, trained the students to preach for the event using the ShareHim series “His Way of Hope.”

The students are excited about witnessing for Christ and invited their family, friends and church members to attend. They also posted fliers throughout the community. About 90 people attended opening night.

“This experience has helped me understand more about the Bible and has prepared me to stand in front of a multitude and preach,” says Wayne Okoth, a member of the Walnutport church.

Moses Omwega, a Bethlehem church member, acknowledges God’s role in the event, “I felt the Holy Spirit in me. I wasn’t the one speaking, it was Christ.”

The presenters are noticing other benefits from the experience. “This is helping me witness and also helping me to overcome nervousness when I am up front,” says Samantha Weekes, a member of the Allentown church. Kayleen Martinez adds, “The ShareHim program has taught me a lot of new things, and answered some of my questions about the Bible and our beliefs.”

Martinez is a member of the Lehigh Valley Hispanic church in Allentown.

“We believed it would be a great experience for the students to get up front and actually do the preaching,” says Charles Rutt, principal. “The youth are our future leaders, and we want and need to prepare them for their mission ahead.”

Lawndale Church Purchases New Building

The Lawndale Hispanic church facility was packed every Sabbath morning. Not wanting to host two church services, Pastor Saud Elias and his team began looking for a new facility.

With a loan from the Columbia Union Revolving Fund and the assistance of the Pennsylvania Conference and volunteers, members purchased a new facility in northeast Philadelphia this fall. More than 25 new members are already worshiping with the growing congregation.


Pastor Saud Elias and his wife, Yolanda, cut the ribbon to celebrate the grand opening of the Lawndale Hispanic church’s new facility.
Washington Heights Reaches 460 at Fairs

Members of the Washington Heights church in Apollo recently welcomed guests to their booths at the United Labor Celebration, a festival held at nearby Northmoreland Park, and the Fort Hand Festival, the largest community event held in Washington Township.

More than 460 visitors stopped by the booths and registered for free $50 gift card drawings, signed up for Bible studies and received free literature. "It’s hard to grasp that of the 206 requests for Bible studies, nine people requested Bible studies in their home," shares Moses Sosigian, lay pastor.

Three-year-old Cole DiCriscio (pictured) was one of the hardest working members at the festival. He handed out books, gave toys to children and told people about the free drawing.

“It is evident the Spirit of the Lord was present at each event," Pastor Sosigian says. “The people were so responsive and appreciative. We are estimating between 600 and 700 books were distributed.” Members gave away copies of Pathway to Peace, Bible Answers, Radiant Health and On the Edge of Time.

Boulevard Members Tackle Evangelism Together

While the pastor is away the members don’t play—at least not at the Philadelphia Boulevard church in Philadelphia. They stay busy praying for and connecting with people and sharing the good news of Jesus.

They demonstrated their work ethic this summer when Pastor Buddy Goodwin went away to preach and mentor young adults during the conference’s youth and young adult evangelistic mission trip to Mexico. The members of the Boulevard church kept busy studying with people who were seeking God. When Goodwin returned, there was a group of people ready for baptism.

“In this past year, many people—young and old—made their stand for God. God used the Personal Ministries Department, under the leadership of Charles Caesar, and Sabbath School teachers Leslie Funderburk and Thankgod Osuagwu, and church members to study with and pray for people seeking God,” says Pastor Goodwin. “As a result of the combined effort of the members, 11 people joined the church through baptism.” He continues, “The Boulevard church family has embraced the mission of ‘Revealing Jesus, Making Disciples.’ We are seeking to create an evangelistic culture in every department.”

There are other examples. Pathfinders and Adventurer clubs have added members from the community and the young people bring their friends. The Personal Ministries Department plans to go into the community one Sabbath a month. Once a month the Hospitality Department focuses on celebrating members and visitors alike. Members of the Boulevard family have also committed themselves to pray three times a day. They are praying for their families, friends and coworkers, as well as their pastor and themselves. “We long for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” says Pastor Goodwin. “Even if we don’t get 3,000, ‘crumbs’ will do.”—Arlene Malcom

Renewed: Pastor Buddy Goodwin (far right) with the 11 people baptized
Potomac ABC Announces New Interim Manager

Lisa Myaing, who worked at the Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Center in Silver Spring, Md., since 1991 and served as manager for 11 years, recently passed the torch to Kermit Netteburg. Netteburg, a recently retired pastor, stepped in as interim manager as the Myaing family answers a call in Tennessee.

While the store is challenged by the growing trend of online book and music purchases, sales have grown in vegetarian and natural foods and vitamin supplements. Netteburg says the store is looking for new ways to generate revenue and serve people. “We want to become a location for people to learn more about healthy lifestyles and then be able to find resources for new lifestyles,” he says. “About 70 percent of our customers are not members of the [Seventh-day] Adventist Church, so we have a great mission to serve them as well as our Adventist members.”

The store is located in the Cherry Hill Shopping Center about 2 miles from the General Conference. It’s open at normal shopping center hours, except for Friday evenings and Sabbaths. “We want to witness to our beliefs in every way,” says Netteburg. “Even our closed store—as we keep the Sabbath—is a witness to our beliefs.”

Netteburg retired as pastor of Potomac Conference’s Beltsville (Md.) church June 30. “My retirement didn’t seem to take very well,” he jokes. “I love to serve and saw the great opportunities we have to connect people with the Adventist Church.”

Stanley Church Keeps Summer Alive Thru Outreach

Does creative child evangelism pay? “You bet it does!” exclaims Barbara Manspeaker, who served as Children’s Ministries director for the Potomac Conference and Columbia Union for years. “Not only does it win children for Jesus, but it teaches them to serve others by raising the moral and spiritual standard.”

This year Stanley (Va.) church members took on and expanded Summer Splash, a program which had been part of Potomac’s camp meeting for several years. With the help of creative evangelism funds from the conference, Stanley launched its first session this summer.

Summer Splash is now an all-day program for community children filled with Bible classes, community service projects, crafts, field trips and afternoon swim time. “This year we had five teen helpers who had gone through Summer Splash themselves,” shares Manspeaker. “Four have been baptized and one shared her story and made a call for the children to make Jesus their best friend. Several kids responded. The atmosphere was indescribable.”

This fall Stanley members began adult classes for the children’s mothers. “We meet each week,” says Manspeaker. “We’ve been combining a craft with a spiritual component. In October we started a genealogy class where they made scrapbooks. To introduce them to the Bible, we made a tree that began with Ruth and went to Jesus.”

She adds, “Our hearts overflow at the results —not only from the children, but now from the parents. This summer one helper declared she wanted to be a minister. Can it get any better?”

Summer Splash participants learn to make terrariums as one of their activities.
Manassas Church Continues Building Bridges

This year building bridges with the community has been a primary focus for Manassas (Va.) church members. “We’ve been very intentional about reaching out to our local neighborhoods,” says Randy Davis, pastor of the congregation. “Our community has been very responsive to our efforts in friendship. Several of the community kids have even helped us hand out flyers to our events.”

In early August, the church worked in conjunction with SERVE, a sector of Northern Virginia Family Services, to help students in need. Students requested supplies through the sector, giving them their name, school and grade. SERVE then purchased the supplies and put them in a backpack with the student’s name on it. These backpacks were taken to the Manassas church, organized by members and distributed to students.

The church also invited the community to their annual Vacation Bible School, offered the use of their school’s playground, recently purchased soccer goals for local kids to play on the church’s ball field and, during the summer, held family movie nights, in which they would feature a family-friendly movie and provide concessions. “We provided free watermelon and our Pathfinders sold popcorn and other snacks. About 60 people from the neighborhood attended,” says Greg Charles, a member. Since then the church has been alternating between movies for kids and those an adult would enjoy.

Evidence that the community is starting to respond to the church’s efforts is seen in the tremendous turnout at their recent Neighborhood Fall Festival. More than 375 guests from the neighborhood came in response to the invitations. More than 125 church members attended to meet their neighbors and help out with the booths, crafts and concessions.

“Because of this event, several families toured the church school and one may register their child,” reports Pastor Davis. “Twenty-nine people have requested additional information, including Bible studies, GED classes, ESL classes and other felt needs.”

Phil Dawson, the church’s elder for outreach, says, “Developing relationships is the first step in our ministry. Truly, God has blessed our efforts, and we pray He will continue to use each of us as we reach out to our neighbors for Him.”
Riding the Tech Wave (Part II)

A parent who works at a Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital recently approached Ron White, information support director for Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA). The parent wanted to know if the school was interested in obtaining good computers that the VA was replacing.

To receive the computers, SVA needed to apply for them at computersforlearning.gov, a site run by the General Services Administration to assist schools, libraries and other types of nonprofits. After several months, White received a call one Friday morning from a representative at the VA hospital saying that the computers were being listed that afternoon. He anxiously checked the website throughout the day.

“Sabbath came and there was no sign of the computers being listed,” White says. “I awoke Sabbath morning pondering whether to check or not; not checking meant potentially missing them. I decided God was in charge and to wait patiently. I couldn’t, so I waited impatiently for Sabbath to be over. God laughed at me and there was nothing listed when I checked after sundown.”

Sunday came—still nothing. In fact, the computers were not listed until a week later. White checked just before leaving for work and found them posted. So he quickly requested them all.

But, anxiety would continue for White. “I noticed before I exited the website that someone else had requested them as well. Before me? After me? I didn’t know,” he says. “By lunchtime five others had requested part or all of the distribution of computers and laptops.” White decided to again trust that it was in God’s capable hands.

Several days later, the VA hospital contacted him and told him to bring a big truck. Four pallets of desktops and laptops awaited him! White excitedly made the one-hour trip.

The computers, valued at $150,000, included 240 desktops and 60 laptop systems. All of the computers still needed hard drives and many needed RAM. The school ordered the hardware. They also were able to get an enterprise level subscription to Windows 7 and Microsoft Office, which will save an additional $50,000 to $75,000 over the next 10 years. There were so many machines donated that some went to nearby Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary, making marked improvements in their technology program as well.

SVA is still exploring additional avenues to improve its technology infrastructure. For details on how to help, contact Christopher Simons at (540) 740-2202 or chris.simons@sva-va.org.
Malin Family Maintains Legacy of Commitment

One of Takoma Academy (TA) students’ favorite places to volunteer and do community service is the Hillhaven Assisted Living Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Adelphi, Md. Hillhaven has developed training opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer with their residents, and offers special programs designed for youth to learn about service to others. They also have employment opportunities in the healthcare setting.

This collaboration symbolizes the special 30-year relationship between TA and the Malin family, the owners of Hillhaven. Promoting the Christian health message and the importance of Seventh-day Adventist education is an important family tradition started by the late Lawrence Malin, MD. Joyce Malin, Hillhaven president and administrator and former member of the TA Board of Trustees, and her daughter, Kimberly Malin, director of nursing and another member of the TA Board and Foundation Committee, are at the forefront of maintaining this proud legacy.

Since TA was established in 1904, there are few families that have had as many members attend the school. Joyce and her husband, David, son of the late Dr. Malin, sent all four of their children: Charles, Kimberly, Wesley and Janine. Charles, in turn, sent his two daughters, Felicia and Kelsea. Janine also met and married a fellow alum, Daniel Humé.

The Malin family was instrumental in improving the scholastic excellence of the school. Robert Malin and Wendell Malin taught at Takoma Academy. The family also has a tradition of serving on the Board of Trustees, starting with Janice Malin, who also sent her children, Shelly and Bill, to the school.

Kimberly states that her connection to TA infiltrated nearly every aspect of her life, including babysitting. Her childhood babysitter was her neighbor, Susan Laurence Cooksey, currently the president of the Takoma Academy Alumni Association, and the granddaughter of TA’s legendary principal, J.P. Laurence. Affectionately known as “Prof,” Laurence was the longest serving principal of the school. He served from 1947-1980.

Hillhaven, the Malin family’s flagship healthcare facility, has also employed 30 TA graduates over the years. Carla Thrower, principal, lauds the Malin family for their invaluable support, “which has enabled the school to enhance its STEM program and other vital areas,” she says.

The family—Wesley Malin, Janine Malin Humé, Joyce Malin, Kimberly Malin and Charles Malin—remains committed to Adventist education.
President’s Message

The value of a Washington Adventist University education must be measured by how well we utilize our resources to impart critical abilities that students need to thrive. These critical abilities will effectively prepare graduates to fulfill their potential and provide moral leadership to their communities. It is well documented that some of the critical abilities for the 21st century graduate are expressing ideas effectively in written and oral communication; analytical thinking; competition and innovation in work; respect and honor of diversity; and continuous seeking of truth and knowledge.

We will continue to help make this vision a reality for our students. Keep up to date on our school and see how you can help by visiting wau.edu.

This is Washington Adventist University!

Cabinet Members Visit Chaplain Barry Black

Washington Adventist University’s cabinet members recently traveled to the U.S. Senate Building in Washington, D.C., to meet with Chaplain Barry Black, the first Seventh-day Adventist to hold the position. He is responsible for opening the Senate each day in prayer, and providing counseling and spiritual care to senators, their families and staffs. A retired Navy Rear Admiral and former Chief of Navy Chaplains, Black is also the first African-American to hold the position of Senate Chaplain.

The visit was the first time that WAU cabinet members had visited the Senate Chaplain’s office together. They are committed to visiting more regularly in an effort to build closer relationships with legislative leaders, provide spiritual support and to engage in local and national legislative issues.

“Being in the nation’s capital gives WAU convenient access to our legislative leaders, and an opportunity to pray with them and show our support and pride for what they do,” says Weymouth Spence, president. “Senate Chaplain Black’s story about how Adventist education impacted his life is an excellent testament to the educators in our community.”

Cabinet members who participated (as pictured) are Adrienne Matthews, vice president of student life; Bill Jackson, vice president of marketing and recruiting; Spence; Janette Neufville, associate vice president of institutional research and effectiveness; Chaplain Black; Patrick Farley, vice president of finance; Cheryl Kisunzu, provost; Rythee Jones, associate vice president of human resources; and Angie Crews, interim communication director.

Christmas Concert Kicks Off Holiday Season

WAU music students performed in a Christmas concert December 5. The free concert was held at the Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md. During the concert, the music department launched the Paul Hill Memorial Choral Scholarship Fund. Hill was the choral program director at the school from 1962 to 1970 and founder of the university’s ProMusica choral performance group.

The students performed another concert the next afternoon at Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md.

For more information about the scholarship and upcoming concerts, visit wau.edu.
SGPS Graduates Praise Program’s Flexibility

Now in its 30th year, Washington Adventist University’s School of Graduate and Professional Studies (SGPS) has changed the lives of countless graduates and earned their praise. The evening program offers 11 accelerated undergraduate programs and eight master’s programs that accommodate the needs of working adults.

Among this year’s SGPS graduates is Timothy Hatfield, a lieutenant with the Prince George’s County Police Department. He enrolled at WAU for an accelerated bachelor’s degree program that gave him the foundation he needed for law school. He commends SGPS for the small classes and professors committed to student success. Hatfield graduated in May and is now attending law school at George Washington University.

Another May graduate, Sean Fordham, appreciates the spiritual foundation, ethics and practical instruction the school provides. Once included on the “10 People to Watch” list by the Philadelphia News, Fordham credits WAU for much of his success. He is an assistant district manager for the Social Security Administration in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, and plans to attend law school next year.

SGPS graduate Rebecca Kabba earned a nursing degree in 2008 and a master’s degree in business administration in 2010. With a full-time job and a family to raise, she is a strong advocate of the flexibility that the SGPS programs offer.

For more information about the SGPS degree programs and schedules, call (301) 891-4092. Spring semester starts January 12, and it’s not too late to register. The SGPS office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday; and 8:30 a.m. to noon on Friday.

Former Washington Adventist University students who have already completed at least 75 percent of their degree program can benefit from the university’s One Step Away Program, which helps returning students reach their degree faster. It provides credit for life experience and offers classes on campus and online. Financial assistance is available and participants have access to tutoring services and other academic support. Anyone interested in matriculating under the One Step Away Program should contact Sharon Grey-Coker at (301) 891-4163 or onestep@wau.edu.

Annual Pre-Law Dinner Encourages Student Networking

Washington Adventist University’s Center for Law and Public Policy recently hosted the annual Attorney/Pre-Law Student Dinner. The event offers Seventh-day Adventist pre-law and law students the opportunity to meet practicing attorneys and members of the legal profession who can serve as mentors. Todd R. McFarland, an associate general counsel for the Office of General Counsel of the General Conference, was the keynote speaker.

For more information about the annual event and mentorship opportunities, call (301) 891-4572 or email prelaw@wau.edu.

Todd McFarland addresses the attendees at the sixth annual attorney/pre-law dinner.
Building Blocks of Excellence

If you have ever played with Legos (and who hasn’t played with Legos?), you will be familiar with the green base plates that are about a foot square and are covered with the little raised dots to which you stick the little blocks. The plates are a great foundation for just about everything you can build with the ubiquitous blocks. They are especially useful if you are creating a Lego building; they are a convenient underpinning for Lego streets and towns; and even complicated Lego vehicles or spaceships can use them as anchors for being transported from one place to another. The base plates are a foundation for all kinds of things that you can do with Legos.

I don’t get to play with blocks very much, but the other day when someone asked me an important question about Adventist HealthCare, those green base plates came to mind. The question was, “What does it mean to be ‘faith-based’?” And the short answer is, “It’s the foundation of everything that we do.”

More than 100 years ago, Adventist HealthCare was organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide distinctive and effective healthcare in the communities where we are given an opportunity to serve. We have codified that foundational support into a mission statement that reads, “We demonstrate God’s care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing.”

So one important part of being faith-based means awareness and appreciation for our founding sponsor, and a clear focus on why we were founded in the first place. Using this as our “base plate,” we were built from the ground up with a specific purpose in mind.

For Adventist HealthCare, “faith-based” also means being appreciative of the role of faith and religion in our society, and having respect for its many diverse faith communities. (Which are sort of like those little Lego bricks, when you think of it?) That is one of the reasons our team—including our chaplains and spiritual care staff—includes individuals from so many faiths, and why we seek to meet the cultural and religious needs of our patients and their families.

In some future columns, I will explore these ideas a little more fully, and will look at how being faith-based shapes our perspective on the communities and patients we serve, how it frames our commitment to excellence in our care and the outcomes we seek, and how it motivates us to seek out new opportunities for engagement with our core mission.

I don’t generally think of Legos when I think about our mission. However, there is a verse from the prophet Micah that I have often thought of as I contemplate why we do what we do each day. It is a profoundly simple reminder of the reason we exist and what we seek to achieve: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Terry Forde
President & CEO of Adventist HealthCare
Experts Help Spencerville Youth Understand Domestic Violence Problems

The issue of domestic violence has grabbed national attention the past several months, in part due to a few high-profile cases involving professional football players. But many people may not know that domestic violence is much more common than they realize, affecting one in four women and one in seven men in the United States.

Recently, representatives from two of Adventist HealthCare’s facilities in Montgomery County, Md., held an educational workshop for members of Spencerville Church in Silver Spring about the prevalence of domestic violence.

The goal of the workshop was to help children and young adults between the ages of 10 and 21 identify the warning signs of physical and verbal abuse and to learn how to seek help for themselves or a loved one. The presentation was part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s global “End It Now” program, aimed at raising awareness and advocating for the end of violence against women and girls around the world.

Heidi Bresee, CRNP, director of the forensic medical unit at Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center, and Kevin Young, president of Adventist HealthCare Behavioral Health & Wellness Services, facilitated the educational workshop. Part of Bresee’s role is to assist victims of domestic violence who come to the hospital for care.

“Victims often turn to their faith-based community for support, which is why educating our congregation about domestic violence and ways to support their friends and loved ones is so important,” Bresee said.

The presentation at the Spencerville church included statistics on domestic violence affecting both men and women and an overview of the warning signs of verbal and physical abuse. As part of the presentation, Bresee and Young showed two moving and thought-provoking videos depicting various scenes of domestic violence and a video of children appealing for an end to physical abuse and forms of verbal abuse, such as bullying.

After the presentation, social workers Simone Novel and Scott Wakefield from Adventist HealthCare Behavioral Health & Wellness Services divided the congregation into two groups—one with boys and the other with girls—to have a more intimate discussion about their views on domestic violence. Each group was asked questions such as “Have you seen a peer or family member hit, pushed or kicked?” and “Have you been called names?” Several children revealed they had witnessed domestic violence among friends and family members.

Using feedback from the questions, Novel and Wakefield were able to facilitate a productive dialogue among both groups about appropriate and safe behaviors with friends and family. The discussion also helped participants understand where to go for help if they are victims of domestic violence or have a loved one who is being victimized.

“Domestic violence is an all too common problem in our society that should not be ignored,” said Kevin Young. “We hope to offer this domestic violence education program to other groups and places of worship in our community to help end the cycle.”

For more on Adventist HealthCare’s services, please visit www.AdventistHealthCare.com
Adventist HealthCare Washington Adventist Hospital names Wangsness President

Erik Wangsness, a healthcare executive with more than 20 years of experience, has been named President of Adventist HealthCare Washington Adventist Hospital, charged with leading Montgomery County’s first hospital that serves tens of thousands of patients in the region.

Wangsness joins Adventist HealthCare after serving for more than three years as the president/chief executive officer of Jellico Community Hospital in Tennessee, part of the Florida-based Adventist Health System. Under his leadership, Jellico was one of only 20 hospitals in the U.S. to receive the 2013 Press Ganey Commitment to Excellence award for patient satisfaction. He has also served on numerous state health committees and local groups working to improve the health of the community.

Wangsness replaces Joyce Newmyer, who in June was named a regional president and CEO in charge of multiple hospitals with the Adventist Health system in Portland, Ore.

“Over the course of his career, Erik has successfully demonstrated a commitment to employee engagement, physician relationships, community partnerships and fundraising to help his organizations fulfill their missions,” said Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare. “We feel blessed that Erik has joined us to lead the great work happening now at Washington Adventist Hospital and to continue shaping and implementing a

That vision includes Washington Adventist Hospital’s proposed relocation to White Oak and also providing for the health care needs of the community through key population health services available at its Takoma Park campus. The hospital recently filed a modified Certificate of Need (CON) application with the Maryland Health Care Commission; an update to its October 2013 application, which was required due to statewide changes earlier this year in the way hospitals are paid for services.

“It is a pleasure to be with Washington Adventist Hospital at such an important time in its more than one-hundred years of service to the community,” said Wangsness. “Like our employees and physicians, I am deeply connected to the mission of our hospital. We will all work together in continuing to provide high-quality medical care, expand access to care and improve the overall health of our communities in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties.”

The CON application addresses the need for new facilities with all private patient rooms in an accessible location, continued health care services for the community at the existing campus, and reflects the changing dynamics of how health care is provided. The plan includes:

- 170 private inpatient beds, plus an additional 8-bed observation unit
- A 12-bed clinical decision unit near the Emergency Department
- Space on campus for outpatient services & physician offices
- On-campus parking for staff, physicians, patient and visitors

The current Takoma Park campus will remain home to the 40-bed Behavioral Health unit, Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland/Takoma Park and the Maternity Partnership Program clinic for low-income women. Other services on the Takoma Park campus will include outpatient services, including a walk-in primary care clinic, a federally qualified health center operated by Community Clinic, Inc., and physician offices.
Los expertos en salud del comportamiento ayudan a los jóvenes de la iglesia Spencerville a entender los problemas de la violencia doméstica

El problema de la violencia doméstica se ha ganado la atención nacional en los últimos meses, debido en parte a algunos casos muy conocidos que involucran a jugadores de fútbol profesional. Sin embargo, muchas personas tal vez no saben que la violencia doméstica es mucho más frecuente de lo que se imaginan y que afecta a una de cada cuatro mujeres y a uno de cada siete hombres en los Estados Unidos.

Hace poco los representantes de dos de los establecimientos de Adventist HealthCare en el Condado de Montgomery, Maryland, realizaron un taller educativo para miembros de la Iglesia Spencerville en Silver Spring sobre el predominio de la violencia doméstica.

El objetivo del taller consistió en ayudar a los niños y a los adultos jóvenes de entre 10 y 21 años a identificar las señales de alarma de abuso físico y verbal y a aprender la manera de buscar ayuda para ellos mismos y sus seres queridos. La presentación formó parte del programa mundial “End it Now” de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día, cuyo fin fue concientizar y abogar por el fin de la violencia contra las mujeres y niñas en todo el mundo.

Heidi Bresee, CRNP (enfermera practicante certificada y registrada), directora de la unidad médica forense en Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center, y Kevin Young, presidente de Adventist HealthCare Behavioral Health & Wellness Services, dictaron el taller educativo. Parte de la función de Bresee consiste en ayudar a las víctimas de violencia doméstica que acuden al hospital para recibir atención.

“Las víctimas suelen recurrir a su comunidad religiosa para recibir apoyo, es por eso que es tan importante educar a nuestra congregación sobre la violencia doméstica y las maneras de apoyar a sus amigos y seres queridos”, señaló Bresee.

La presentación en la iglesia Spencerville incluyó estadísticas sobre violencia doméstica que afecta tanto a hombres y mujeres y un panorama general de las señales de alarma de abuso verbal y físico. Como parte de la presentación, Bresee y Young mostraron dos videos emotivos y que hacen pensar en los cuales había varias escenas de violencia doméstica y un video de niños que reclamaban el fin del abuso físico y formas de abuso verbal como el acoso escolar.

Luego de la presentación, los trabajadores sociales Simone Novel y Scott Wakefield de Adventist HealthCare Behavioral Health & Wellness Services dividieron la congregación en dos grupos: uno con muchachos y otro con muchachas para efectuar un debate más íntimo sobre sus puntos de vista referidos a la violencia doméstica.

A cada grupo se le hizo preguntas tales como: “¿Has visto a un par o familiar golpeado, empujado o pateado?” y “¿Te han insultado?” Varios niños revelaron que habían sido testigos de violencia doméstica entre amigos y familiares.

Mediante devoluciones de las preguntas, Novel y Wakefield pudieron facilitar un diálogo productivo entre ambos grupos sobre comportamientos adecuados y seguros con familiares y amigos. El debate también ayudó a los participantes a entender a dónde recurrir para buscar ayuda si son víctimas de violencia doméstica o tienen a un ser querido víctima de ella.

“La violencia doméstica es un problema demasiado común en nuestra sociedad que no debe ser ignorado”, señaló Kevin Young. “Esperamos ofrecer este programa de educación sobre violencia doméstica a otros grupos y lugares de culto en nuestra comunidad a fin de ayudar a finalizar el ciclo”.

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HOPESIDE MISSION (hopeside.org) is an outreach-driven church plant in the Silver Spring, Md., area, which is seeking a dynamic health evangelist, a relationship expert/evangelist, and a contemporary music band for leading praise service. All positions are for a once-a-month engagement. Stipend provided. For more details, email contact@hopeside.org.

HEALTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR SOUGHT: Adventist Whole Health Network (AWHN), a ministry endeavor of the Pennsylvania Adventists, is now accepting applications for the position of executive director. The successful candidate will work toward expanding opportunities for collaboration between AWHN and the communities it serves, as well as create and foster a collaborative working relationship between AWHN’s free clinic, parish nursing program, corporate health program and other programs offered by AWHN to the community. AWHN is open to new and innovative ideas for developing the vision for medical missionary work. The incumbent will possess a clear vision for medical missionary work. AWHN is open to new and innovative ideas for developing the vision for medical missionary work. The incumbent will possess a clear vision for medical missionary work. AWHN is open to new and innovative ideas for developing the vision for medical missionary work. The incumbent will possess a clear vision for medical missionary work.

SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, Biology Dept., is seeking a qualified applicant (PhD preferred). Primary emphasis in paleontology and zoology; ability to teach introductory geology, microbiology and/or bioinformatics desirable. The successful candidate will be supportive of literal creationism. Send cover letter and CV to schwartz.arthur@swau.edu. Position open until filled.

LEAD PROGRAMMER/ANALYST: Pacific Press Publishing Association seeks Seventh-day Adventist for the full-time position of lead programmer/analyst to support all information technology software support functions, including problem analysis, design, programming, testing, implementation and training. Applicants should have a bachelor’s degree in computer science or related field knowledge and experience in industry standard programming language, including Web development tools and the ability to lead a team of programmers/analysts. Contact Ms. Alix Mansker, HR Director, PO Box 5353, Nampa ID 83653, (208) 465-2531—fax; alix.mansker@pacificpress.com.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY seeks a Seminary New Testament faculty member. Qualified person should have a doctoral degree (PhD or ThD) in the area of New Testament studies and textual criticism, preferably from a non-Adventist university. For more information and to apply, visit andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty/job_5.

LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT for diabetes reversal, permanent weight loss and overcoming depression. Butler Creek Health Education Center, Iron City, Tenn., November 9-21 and December 7-19. Prevention and recovery from lifestyle diseases amidst the beauties of God’s creation. Cost: $975. For more information, call (931) 213-1329, or visit butlercreek.us.

EARLITEEN AND YOUTH: ELLIOTDYLAN.COM for the Undercover Angels book series for Christian teens that builds on biblical principles and reinforces integrity. Great for Sabbath reading, church schools, home schools and gifts! Youth will enjoy these Christian novels filled with action, character-building lessons and Bible truths. Kindle and large print editions available.

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LEGAL NOTICE

SPECIAL CONSTITUENCY MEETING OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A special constituency meeting of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at 10 a.m., Sunday, January 11, 2015, at the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church, 385 East Dublin-Granville Road, Worthington, Ohio.

This meeting is called to present reports, findings and consider plans pertaining to the serious financial condition of Mount Vernon Academy; and based upon the consideration of such information, take all necessary and proper action regarding the future of this academy. Delegates to this session are those who served as delegates to the 41st regular constituency session of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists held May 18, 2014.

Should severe weather prohibit this meeting, an alternate date of January 25, 2015, has been chosen at the same time and location. Delegates will be notified of any postponement.

Ron Halvorsen, Jr., President
Osvaldo Magaña, Exec. Secretary

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MOUNT VERNON ACADEMY CORPORATION

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the Mount Vernon Academy Corporation will be held in connection with the special constituency meeting of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church, 385 East Dublin-Granville Road, Worthington, Ohio, Sunday, January 11, 2015. This meeting will convene immediately following the adjournment of the Ohio Conference special constituency meeting.

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Ron Halvorsen, Jr., President
Daniel Kittie, Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE JESSIE R. WAGNER “LITTLE SCHOOL BOARD” is establishing an alumni roster. Please send contact information of any student, teacher or parent/guardian who knows about the Little School, to Jessie R. Wagner SDA School, POB 345, Pine Forge, PA 15948; call or leave message at (610) 323-0343; or email pfelementary@comcast.net.

OBITUARIES

HERZEL, Edward Frederick, born May 1, 1915, in Kalamazoo, Mich., died February 6, 2014, in Hendersonville, N.C. He grew up in the Kalamazoo church, where he later served as Sabbath School teacher for the teens and missionary leader. After graduating from high school, he worked at several jobs until he felt the Lord calling him to be a pastor. In 1937 he took the train to Washington, D.C., and enrolled as a ministerial student at Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Md. He worked at various industries on campus and also drove a taxi in Washington, D.C., to pay his school bills. While handling out literature one Sabbath afternoon, he met a pretty young lady named Mary Lee Doggett. They both agreed it was an answer to prayer and were soon married. Ed graduated in 1942 and accepted a call to minister in Ohio. He pastored several districts and held numerous evangelistic meetings during his 12 years there. They then moved to pastor in New Jersey and, some years later, he asked to be transferred to Michigan to be near his aging parents. After his mother passed away, he wanted to move to a warmer climate for retirement, so he accepted a call to North Carolina, where he pastored the Morganton church before retiring there. He used his disaster training to set up distribution centers in several communities and also served as interim pastor wherever the conference needed

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him. After 24 years in Morganton, he and Mary Lee moved to Fletcher Park Inn, where he remained active as their AV tech and also volunteered at a local hospital. Ed fell at a retirees’ retreat and never fully recovered from the fall or the grief of losing his wife of almost 75 years. He is survived by three children: Fred (Edith) Herzel, Judy (George) Halleron and Dan (Meredith) Herzel; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, his siblings and his daughter, Barbara Nieminsky.

HERZEL, Mary Lee (Doggett), was born June 9, 1914, in Mecklenburg County, Va.; died March 22, 2013, at home in Hendersonville, N.C., with her family by her side. She was raised on a farm with five sisters. The Doggetts were some of the founding members of the Chase City church. In 1933, Mary Lee traveled to Takoma Park, Md., where she worked as a housemaid/companion to pay for her schooling. While passing out literature one Sabbath afternoon, she met a ministerial student, Edward Herzel, and they were soon married. When Ed graduated from Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, in 1942, they moved to Ohio and she began life as a pastor’s wife with two small children. She served with Ed in Ohio, New Jersey, Michigan and then North Carolina. Mary Lee worked with the Dorcas Society (now known as Adventist Community Services), as a children’s Sabbath School teacher, Pathfinder leader, summer camp counselor, church treasurer, and substitute church schoolteacher. She also conducted many vegetarian-cooking classes and was known for her tasty dishes served at fellowship dinners. In her retirement years, she made more than 150 lap robes and baby blankets for those in need. Her greatest wish was to see all of her family in the kingdom, and she prayed for them daily. All her sisters and her daughter, Barbara Nieminsky, preceded her in death. Her husband, Ed, died shortly after her in February 2014. Survivors: her children, Fred (Edith) Herzel, Judy (George) Halleron and Dan (Meredith) Herzel; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

HYDE, Gordon M., born June 20, 1919, in London, England; died May 27, 2014, in Collegedale, Tenn. He was a member of the Collegedale church. Survivors: his sons, Rodney and Bradley Hyde; his grandson, Geoffrey and Conrad Hyde; his granddaughters, Kimberly Roth and Elizabeth Baily Wolf; and great-grandchildren, Zachary and Cheyenne Hyde, and Ethan and Julianna Roth.
Columbia Union Revolving Fund

FOR THE PAST 44 YEARS, the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) has been the primary lending source for Seventh-day Adventist entities in the Columbia Union. To date, CURF has made available some 1,800 loans to hundreds of Adventist conferences, churches, schools and other institutions in the Columbia Union.

In the Allegheny West Conference, a CURF loan helped the Ohio Central Korean church in Worthington, Ohio, construct their first house of worship. In the Chesapeake Conference, CURF funds helped Eastern Shore Junior Academy in Sudlersville, Md., replace a 40-year-old boiler with a new geothermal system. With a CURF loan, Washington Adventist University’s radio station WGTs 91.9, based in Takoma Park, Md., was able to purchase equipment that helped them expand their potential listenership to more than 1 million.

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