

VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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Men's Ministries

Building Community
and Mentoring Men

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Edwin Manuel Garcia

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About the Cover: Tony Williams and Alex Partyka were photographed by Brad Barnwell at the Triadelphia church in Clarksville, Md. **Above:** Men enjoy a stroll at the Maryland Men of Faith event at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md.

ON THE WEB

JAIL AN ANSWER TO PRAYER?

God sometimes has an interesting way of answering prayers. For Alex Partyka, a member of Chesapeake Conference's Triadelphia church in Clarksville, Md., that answer came in the form of a jail sentence. Read how this unusual answer to prayer was a blessing in disguise at columbiaunionvisitor.com/jailanswertoprayer.



HOW TO START A MEN'S MINISTRY

Interested in starting a ministry for men at your church? Eli Rojas, who leads Men's Ministries, Family Ministries and is the Ministerial director for the Chesapeake Conference, shares tips at columbiaunionvisitor.com/mensministries.com

TRANSFORMATIONAL EVANGELISM

From April 28–30, pastors from around the Columbia Union Conference will gather for the Columbia Union Evangelism Conference, themed "Transformational Evangelism." Follow @visitornews and #cuevangelism on Twitter for inspira-



tion from Columbia Union Conference churches and practical "How To" tips you can use at your church.

REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES

As a free service to Columbia Union members, we post obituaries in the Bulletin Board section of the magazine. Find out more at columbiaunionvisitor.com/obituary.



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The *Visitor* is a publication of the Columbia Union Conference reaching approximately 63,000 Seventh-day Adventist homes in the mid-Atlantic area. The *Visitor* provides news and information, inspiration for effective ministry and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help engage members in experiencing the mission.

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Volume 124 ■ Issue 3

‘Friending’ People God’s Way

Mark Zuckerberg and his roommate, Eduardo Saverin, founded a social network that, in 15 years, engaged one third of the world’s population. By the end of 2018, the company reported 2.7 billion active users who, at least once a month, use one of the company’s core products: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram or Messenger. Company leaders have plans to continue growing until they can connect with everyone on the planet.



Among the reasons for Facebook’s success is that it taps into the basic human need to maintain relationships. The prosperous story of Facebook is an excellent example of God’s plan to reach every human being with His grace. Our first responsibility is with those in which we daily relate. Jesus’

first disciples followed Him because of relationships they had with one another: Andrew invited his brother Simon; Philip encouraged his friend Nathanael (John 1:35–51, NKJV).

It took only 30 years after Jesus’ resurrection to penetrate the whole Roman Empire! Paul wrote, “This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven” (Col. 1:23, NIV). This was a miracle, considering all the limitations the believers had. But they carried out the mission following Jesus’ instructions.

Ellen White says, “We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. We can do this in



the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate, and with whom we do business” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 81).

Prior to Jesus’ return to heaven, He explained to His disciples how important relationships were: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you [the Holy Spirit]” (John 20:21–22, NKJV).

People are starving for love and friendship. Like on Facebook, people usually only want to connect with their friends. Similarly, if God is your friend, we should follow His ways in reaching others. “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 143–144).

I invite you to choose five people from your circle of influence and pray for them daily. As you intercede for them, you will find opportunities to approach them with kindness and lead them to Jesus.

More than 90 percent of people who become part of our congregations do it through relationships—including my grandparents who became believers because a friend led them to Christ. But first we need to reach out and add them to our “friend list.”

Rubén Ramos serves as vice president of Multilingual Ministries for the Columbia Union Conference.

Newsline

POTOMAC VP HEADS TO ARIZONA

After nearly 12 years of service as Potomac Conference's vice president for administration, Jorge Ramirez announced that he has accepted a call as the executive secretary for the Arizona Conference.

"During his tenure, Jorge's gift for structure and detail have been realized in three major areas: the merger of the conference and the corporation into one entity known as the Potomac Conference Corporation; the creation of a system for accurate record keeping of all official documents; and the implementation of our child



protection program. All three are vital to the operational efficiency of the organization," says Bill Miller, conference president.

Ramirez says he looks "forward to continuing [his] ministry and seeing the hand of God at work."

Read more about him in Potomac Conference's newsletter on page 29.—Potomac Conference Staff

COLUMBIA UNION TO PUBLISH BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Beginning April 1, the Columbia Union *Visitor* staff will accept listings for a soon-to-

be-created directory of business owners who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the eight-state territory of the Columbia Union Conference.

"This could be a win-win for business owners and members

alike," says Sandra Jones, project coordinator and *Visitor* advertising manager. "In addition to raising awareness, many of our members would like to patronize Adventist-owned businesses and services because they know a portion of those funds will go back into supporting the church's mission through tithes and offerings."

Jones will accept paid listings for a three-month period, ending June 30, 2019, from Columbia Union members and *Visitor* advertisers who provide a completed form and reference from their pastor. When published later this year, the business directory will be posted online and mailed to more than 63,000 households.

Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/businessdirectory to access the submission form and information about advertising and sponsorship opportunities.—Visitor Staff



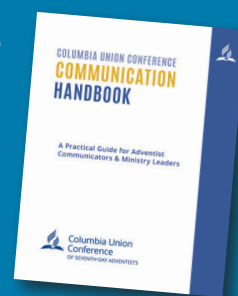
PATHFINDERS TEST BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

This winter Pathfinders from participating clubs around the Columbia Union Conference studied and memorized the Book of Luke for the Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE). Teams participated in local, then conference events to test their knowledge. Groups that advanced through each level recently gathered at Potomac Conference's Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Md.,



Members of Mountain View Conference's Parkersburg Panthers participate in the conference-level Pathfinder Bible Experience.

Communication Tip ■ Throughout 2019 the *Visitor* editors will share tips local leaders can use to strengthen their communication with community members and within the church. See more tips in English, Spanish and French at columbiaunion.org/communication.



IS YOUR CHURCH BREAKING THE LAW?



Did you know that a church can not publish a song performance online or modify song lyrics without permission from the originator and the artist? Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/copyright to watch "How to Avoid Violating a Copyright," a presentation by Jennifer Gray Woods, associate general counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, on how to avoid copyright issues you may be violating.—V. Michelle Bernard

for the union-level event. Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/2019pbe to see which teams will continue on to the North American Division event, April 26–27, in Rockford, Ill. —V. Michelle Bernard

HELP WITH ADRA'S NEW CAMPAIGN

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) recently announced a new global advocacy campaign, “Every Child. Everywhere. In School.” The campaign is an urgent call to leaders around the world that all children, regardless of race, age, nationality, gender, religion or origin, have a right to earn and complete an education, and that being in school is a recognition of the value and potential of each individual child.

The campaign aims to collect one million signatures by 2020 through grassroots efforts in



collaboration with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and petition world leaders to take action for children to receive a quality education and live free from exploitation and the shackles of intergenerational poverty. Already, 131 ADRA offices around the world have pledged support for this global campaign.

“Every child is a child of God—precious, unique and filled with incredible potential. However, poverty, marriages at young ages, inequality, disability and many other factors are keeping an unacceptably high number of children out of school. This is why we are calling for greater investments in education globally and increased access to quality education for all children.



OHIO CONFERENCE HOSTS GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGE

Students from schools in the Ohio Conference recently gathered at the conference’s Eastwood Junior Academy in Westerville to participate in the 2019 Ohio Conference Education Department Geography Challenge. Visit facebook.com/ohioadventists to watch a video of the entire event.

It’s time that we make education a top priority so that every child can fulfill their God-given potential,” says Jonathan Duffy (pictured, left), president of ADRA.

Visit adra.org/inschool/petition for more information and to sign the petition.—Kimi-Roux James

WAU HOSTS 2019 CHORAL FESTIVAL

Students from the Blue Mountain, Highland View, Shenandoah Valley, Richmond, Spencerville Adventist, Spring Valley and Takoma academies recently participated in Washington Adventist University’s (WAU) 2019 Choral Festival.

“One of the most interesting things about this event is that we get to collaborate with other schools and learn different music,” said one participant.

On Friday night, the WAU Festival Choir—composed of the Columbia Collegiate Chorale—the strings section of the New England Youth Ensemble and the festival participants held a vespers concert. In addition to preparing for their music, students had an opportunity to audition for scholarships. Twenty-two students also received merit scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$9,000, renewable throughout their time at WAU.—Emeraude Victorin

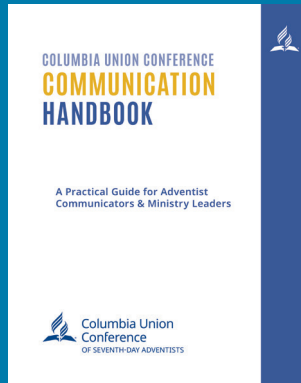


PHOTOS BY DANIEL MORIKONE, HEIDI SHOEMAKER

Consejos sobre comunicación ■ A lo largo de 2019, los editores de *Visitor* compartirán consejos que los líderes locales pueden usar para fortalecer la comunicación con los miembros de la comunidad y dentro de la iglesia. Encuentra más consejos en inglés, español y francés en columbiaunion.org/communication.

¿ESTÁ TU IGLESIA VIOLANDO LA LEY?

¿Sabías que una iglesia no puede publicar una canción en línea o modificar la letra de una canción sin el permiso del creador y del artista? Visita columbiaunionvisitor.com/copyright para ver “Cómo evitar violar un derecho de autor”, una presentación de Jennifer Gray Woods, consejera general asociada de la Conferencia General de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día, sobre cómo evitar los problemas de derechos de autor que se pueden estar violando.—V. Michelle Bernard



VP DE POTOMAC A ARIZONA

Después de casi 12 años de servicio como vicepresidente de administración de la Conferencia de Potomac, Jorge Ramírez anunció que aceptó un llamado como secretario ejecutivo de la Conferencia de Arizona.

“Durante su mandato, el don de Jorge para la estructura y los detalles se dejó ver en tres áreas principales: la fusión de la conferencia y la corporación en una sola entidad conocida como Potomac Conference Corporation, la creación de un sistema para el registro preciso de todos los documentos oficiales y la implementación de nuestro programa de protección infantil. Los tres son vitales para la eficiencia operativa de la organización”, dice Bill Miller, presidente de la conferencia.

Ramírez dice que espera “continuar con [su] ministerio y ver la mano de Dios en acción”.

Lea más sobre él en el boletín de la Conferencia de Potomac en la página 29.—*Personal de la Conferencia de Potomac*

UNIÓN DE COLUMBIA PUBLICARÁ DIRECTORIO DE NEGOCIOS

A partir del 1 de abril, el personal de *Visitor* aceptará listas de propietarios de negocios miembros de la Iglesia Adventista en el territorio de la Unión de Columbia para publicarlos en un directorio.

“Esto podría ser beneficioso tanto para los dueños de negocios como para los miembros”, dice Sandra Jones, coordinadora del proyecto y gerente de publicidad de *Visitor*. “Además de crear conciencia, a muchos de nuestros miembros les gustaría patrocinar negocios y servicios propiedad de los adventistas porque saben que una parte de esos fondos volverá a apoyar la misión de la iglesia a través de los diezmos y las ofrendas”.

Se deberá pagar una tarifa para ser incluido en el directorio, y Jones aceptará listados por un período de tres meses, que

finalizará el 30 de junio de 2019, de miembros de la Unión y anunciantes de *Visitor* que proporcionen el formulario completo y una referencia de su pastor. Cuando se publique a fines de este año, el directorio comercial se compartirá en línea y se enviará por correo a más de 63,000 hogares.



Visita columbiaunionvisitor.com/businessdirectory para acceder al formulario de envío e información sobre oportunidades de publicidad y patrocinio.—*Personal de Visitor*

CONQUISTADORES PRUEBAN SU CONOCIMIENTO DE LA BIBLIA

Este invierno, los Conquistadores de clubes participantes de la Unión de Columbia estudiaron y memorizaron el libro de Lucas para la Experiencia Bíblica de los Conquistadores. Los equipos participaron en eventos locales y luego a nivel de conferencia para probar su conocimiento. Los grupos que avanzaron en cada nivel se reunieron recientemente en la Academia de Takoma de la Conferencia de Potomac en Takoma Park, Md., para el evento a nivel Unión. Visita columbiaunionvisitor.com/2019pbe para ver qué equipos continuarán en el evento de la División Norteamericana, del 26 al 27 de abril en Rockford, Ill. —V. Michelle Bernard

FOTO POR ANDRE HASTICK





LE VP DE POTOMAC MET LE CAP SUR L'ARIZONA

Après environ 12 ans de service en tant que vice-président de la Fédération Potomac pour l'administration, Jorge Ramirez annonce qu'il accepte un appel pour occuper la fonction de Secrétaire Exécutif de la Fédération de l'Arizona.

« Au cours de son mandat, les dons de Jorge pour la structure et les détails ont été réalisés dans trois domaines principaux : la fusion de la Fédération et de la société dans une entité connue sous le nom de Potomac Conference Corporation, la création d'un système permettant de conserver avec précision tous les documents officiels et la mise en œuvre de notre programme de protection de l'enfance. Tous les trois sont essentiels à l'efficacité opérationnelle de l'organisation », a déclaré Bill Miller, président de la Fédération.

Plus d'informations sur lui dans la lettre d'information de la Fédération Potomac, à la page 29.—*Personnel de la Fédération Potomac*

PUBLICATION DU RÉPERTOIRE DES ENTREPRISES DE L'UNION DE COLUMBIA

À compter du 1er avril 2019, le personnel du magazine *Visitor* de l'Union des Fédérations de Columbia recevra les inscriptions pour un annuaire qui sera créé prochainement et qui regroupera les propriétaires d'entreprises membres de l'Église Adventiste du Septième Jour dans les huit états du territoire de l'Union de Columbia.

« Cela pourrait être une transaction gagnant-gagnant pour les propriétaires d'entreprise et les membres », déclare Sandra Jones, coordinatrice de projet et responsable de publicité pour le magazine *Visitor*. « Beaucoup de nos membres aimeraient parrainer des entreprises et des services appartenant à des adventistes sachant qu'une partie de ces fonds servira à soutenir la mission de l'église. »

Pour figurer dans l'annuaire, des frais sont réclamés, et Sandra Jones recevra, pendant 3 mois, une période qui prendra fin le 30 juin 2019, les inscriptions des membres de l'Union de Columbia et des annonceurs de *Visitor* de l'Union de



Columbia, qui auront à soumettre un formulaire dûment rempli et une référence de leur pasteur. Une fois réalisé plus tard cette année, le répertoire des entreprises sera mis en ligne et envoyé par voie postale à plus de 63 000 ménages.

Visitez columbiaunionvisitor.com/businessdirectory pour accéder au formulaire de soumission et aux informations sur les possibilités de publicité et de parrainage.—*Personnel de Visitor*

CONCOURS BIBLIQUE POUR ECLAIREURS

Cet hiver, les clubs des Eclaireurs à travers l'Union de Fédérations de Columbia ont étudié et mémorisé le livre de Luc pour le programme Pathfinder Bible Experience (L'expérience Biblique des Eclaireurs). Les équipes ont participé à des événements locaux puis à des événements au niveau Fédération pour tester leurs connaissances. Les groupes qui ont progressé d'un niveau à l'autre se sont récemment réunis à la Takoma Academy de la Fédération Potomac, à Takoma Park, dans le Maryland, pour l'événement organisé au niveau de l'Union. Visitez columbiaunionvisitor.com/2019pb

pour savoir quelles équipes participeront à la grande rencontre de la Division Nord-Américaine les 26 et 27 avril prochain à Rockford, dans l'Illinois—*V. Michelle Bernard*



Membres de Pisgah Scorpions, église de la Fédération d'Allegheny East à Pisgah Road in Bryans Road, Md., participant à Pathfinder Bible Experience à l'église Métropolitain de Chillum, dans le Maryland.

Conseils sur la communication ■ Tout au long de l'année 2019, les rédacteurs du magazine *Visitor* partageront des astuces que les dirigeants locaux pourront utiliser pour renforcer leur communication avec les membres de la communauté et avec les membres d'église. Consultez d'autres conseils en anglais, en espagnol et en français à l'adresse suivante : columbiaunion.org/communication.

VOTRE ÉGLISE ENFREINT-ELLE LA LOI ?

Saviez-vous qu'une église ne peut pas publier une performance de chanson en ligne ou modifier les paroles d'une chanson sans la permission de l'auteur et de l'artiste ? Visitez columbiaunionvisitor.com/copyright pour visionner « Comment éviter de violer un droit d'auteur », exposé de Jennifer Gray Woods, avocate générale adjointe de la Conférence Générale des Adventistes du Septième Jour, sur la manière d'éviter les problèmes de droit d'auteur que vous violez peut-être sans le savoir.—*V. Michelle Bernard*





More Than Just Breakfast

Alex Partyka grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but stopped attending for 12–13 years, when partying got the best of him, including almost daily drug highs. He realized he wanted to change his life, but didn't know how, so he prayed about it. He says his prayers resulted in a miracle involving a 30-day jail sentence. (Get the full story at columbiaunionvisitor.com/miraclejailsentence.)

Returning to the faith in his mid-30s, he felt something was missing to fortify his spiritual walk. “I just knew I needed fellowship and needed to meet some people,” he says.

However, he wasn't sure how to make that happen.

He found the answer one Sabbath morning in 2014 while sitting on a pew at Chesapeake Conference's Triadelphia church in Clarksville, Md. Scanning the church bulletin, Partyka came across an announcement: “Triadelphia Men's Ministries Breakfast.” *It was free*, he thought, *so why not?* He attended the Sunday morning buffet, and, in subsequent meetings, shared his testimony, identified a spiritual mentor and received valuable advice.

Partyka is one of hundreds of active members in the Columbia Union Conference whose spiritual lives have been enhanced by Men's Ministries groups—adults of all ages who meet weekly, biweekly, monthly or at annual retreats who bond over shared experiences, study the Scriptures and help each other overcome struggles, many times over meals.

Members of the Triadelphia ministry, who gather at a restaurant in a hotel in Columbia, Md., started meeting in 2014 and gather most every second Sunday for breakfast. The fellowship, typically ranging from 15 to 25 people, starts at 8 a.m. for prayer, food and socialization,

Men's Ministries Provide Nourishment to Fill the Soul

by
Edwin
Manuel
Garcia

followed by a 20-minute devotional and closing with a discussion period.

It is during those discussion times that Tony Williams, one of the leaders, became Partyka's mentor.

“I think that by sharing with other men, it makes it easier for me to relate to [others with similar issues],” says Partyka. “The experiences that I've been through and the life that I had been living is not something that I wanted to share with a lot of people in church, but Tony was very non-judgmental from the beginning. I felt like I could trust him. ... Knowing he accepted me after everything I had been through made me more confident [about] being involved in church. He encouraged me to take positions and get involved in things.”

Partyka adds, “As men, we each have different problems we're dealing with in life, but because we're sharing with each other, we can encourage each other.”

Williams, Partyka's mentor, grew up with an abusive father, but had uncles, a grandfather and an academy principal who took an interest in him and spent time with him. He now “looks back and sees that the Lord intervened,” Williams says. “In 2006 when I thought about all of this, [I realized] I wanted to give back. ... I feel a little bit like it's an opportunity to share like the way my uncles shared with me, kind of life returning the favor or returning God's faithfulness to me to share with [Partyka].”

Alex Partyka and Tony Williams have forged a friendship during Men's Ministries events at Chesapeake Conference's Triadelphia church in Clarksville, Md.

The group finds opportunities to serve through volunteer projects such as clearing trees off a widow's property, helping a family move or shoveling snow.

In addition, Williams says the group has spawned several men's book studies that have discussed topics ranging from the life of David to pornography. "It's tough being men in this sin-filled world where everyone wants you to be like the world."

Williams also appreciates the ministry's potential for witnessing. "There are three to five non-Adventists who come to this breakfast quite regularly," he says, adding that Partyka has brought several unchurched friends. "I'd love to see some of these men make decisions for the Lord, but that doesn't have to happen in my lifetime. ... All things work together for the Lord, and this might be a stepping stone."

Williams is also one of three laymen, who, in 2006, helped start Maryland Men of Faith (MMOF), a daylong Sabbath conference that inspires, encourages and challenges nearly 200 men from the Columbia Union and beyond to incorporate Jesus into their lives and grow into His likeness.

Modeled after the Michigan Men of Faith, the assembly, which is sponsored in part by the Chesapeake Conference and takes place at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md., features seminars that encourage men to improve their lives at home, church and the workplace.

Williams hopes the group will continue challenging and encouraging participants to be better men. He shares an anecdote from Arnold Moore, one of the co-founders: "Normally you walk into the house and you kick the dog. Now, you walk by the dog, and the dog says 'You've been to Maryland Men of Faith.'"

Other groups around the union gather to pursue similar goals.

The Dedicated Man

"We're seeing that men in general, for lack of a better term, are losing their way or getting swept by a wave," Clifton Fitzgerald says. "If God has made you the head of the household, you have to be right with God, you have to carry out your mission, and, to do that, you have to be well equipped."

Richard John of Potomac Conference's Community Praise Church in Alexandria, Va., and Fitzgerald of Potomac's Restoration Praise Center in Bowie, Md., are firm believers that a large, annual weekend retreat can provide a deeper, more meaningful experience than can be accomplished by multiple, local groups.

Prayerful conversations, along with 16 years of participation and leadership in Men's Ministries meetings

and retreats between John, Fitzgerald and others, led them to start The Dedicated Man, who launched its first weekend retreat in 2017 with about 100 attendees, followed by the 2018 program with 140 men. Held in Raleigh, N.C., both events drew participants from Virginia, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Texas and other states.

The October 2018 retreat, under the theme, "Why Me, Why Now?" featured communion and powerful messages with meaningful, practical and urgent applications.

"There's a misconception that Adventist men and other men of faith, don't go through these things,



Attendees to Maryland Men of Faith events gather for a day of spiritual renewal and to be challenged to become better men. • Undaunted by the snow, 15 men attend one of Triadelphia's monthly Men's Ministries breakfasts.

whether it's verbal abuse [or] physical abuse. We're 'not supposed' to talk about this without being judged by our peers. But when you offer a safe place and have pastors or therapists as your presenters," John says, "you'd be surprised at the amount of men that speak up."

The retreats offer confidentiality, so men can publicly express what's burdening them without the fear of embarrassment or of being judged by others. Video recordings are not allowed.

Fitzgerald says he's seen numerous manifestations of God's grace in the short time the ministry has been operating, even as it applies to his own life. "Men are made up differently, and when men start dealing with men, you have to see past the bravado and see the little boy crying inside. This ministry has helped me see that," he says.

John says that Men's Ministries has made a big impact on his life. He's been married for 21 years, but 10 years into his marriage, he returned from a retreat, woke

up his wife and apologized. He says the retreat opened his eyes to the way he was living.

"It saved my marriage. It saved my relationship with my daughter, with my brothers," he says. "Now when I see my own brothers, the men at church, I say 'Happy Sabbath' and will stand and listen to them. Before, that wasn't me. I realize how bad we need each other. ... I am truly not the only one going through this."

Future plans for The Dedicated Man include continuing to grow the conference and promoting the ministry to members at Hispanic churches.

Way to a Man's Heart

Back at the local level, men's groups have found success due to shared interests among its members.

A common thread at the Men's Ministries program at Potomac Conference's Richmond Brazilian Community church in Virginia is its immigrant culture and food. The group was started last year by Thyago Ferro, who led a men's ministry in Brazil and now finds himself adapting to an adopted homeland, which can be challenging to navigate.

"As an immigrant church, a lot of these people live within the community and several don't speak English. That's the reality, so they rely on people who have been here longer to guide them," says Andy Vasconcellos, who emigrated from Brazil long ago and is an active participant of the ministry.



Men from as far away as Florida, New York, Wisconsin and Texas attend a retreat organized by The Dedicated Man leadership team. • Some of the council members from The Dedicated Man gather: Mike Jones, community relations director; Richard John, president; Daniel Dawson, executive administrator; Clifton Fitzgerald, vice president; and Devon Irvin, public relations.



New Freedom to Love

Pornography usage, rampant across nearly all demographics and a topic of discussion at some Men's Ministries groups, doesn't skip church members. Studies say that 77 percent of Christian men ages 18–30 view porn at least once a month. The North American Division has created a new resource on the topic. "New Freedom to Love" is a live, five-part seminar that provides an educational, holistic look at how pornography impacts users biochemically, emotionally and spiritually. Visit newfreedomtolove.org to view the seminars and download additional resources.

Word of the ministry spread quickly at the small church—more than half of the 60 or so men in the congregation showed up for the inaugural breakfast in September and attendance has remained steady. "Anytime you *mention* food, the answer [to attend] changes very quickly, anytime you *have* food the answer is 'Yes,'" Vasconcellos says.

Perhaps it's not surprising that during the monthly Sunday morning breakfast at the fellowship hall, the socialization part of the Bible study covers topics such as: How to Obtain Health Care; The Best Time of Day to Make a Trip to the Social Security Office; and How to Access the Department of Motor Vehicles.

As time goes by, more men have started to open up about insecurities related to family life and work situations, Vasconcellos says. As a result, they are getting to know each other on a deeper level.

The group is making a difference, encouraging more men to get involved in church. Even though he has a full schedule, attending helps him slow down and notice the needs of others. "I realized there are guys over there asking for prayers for certain situations. If I had not gone, I would not have known that," Vasconcellos says.

Sometimes greater communication and openness between participants can lead to an immediate solution to problems. Vasconcellos shares a prayer request made by a man who was afraid of being laid off because business was slow at his company. "Right then and there I knew of someone who was looking for an employee, and I was able to get them connected."

"When people spend time together," Vasconcellos adds, "they generally tend to love each other."

Deeper Than Football

At Chesapeake Conference's Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., men gather every other week in the youth room to watch "Monday Night Football" and other televised sports projected on two large video screens. The agenda this past season included dinner



Andy Vasconcellos and Thyago Ferro participate in the Men's Ministries group at Potomac Conference's Richmond Brazilian Community church in Virginia. • Richmond Brazilian Community church members Thyago Ferro, Heber Gouvea, Jeronimo Santos, Robert Vasconcellos and Everaldo Bianchi pray during a Men's Ministries meeting.

at 7:15 p.m., followed by an hourlong study based on a video called, *Stepping Up: A Guide to Courageous Manhood*, then the game. The men also hold a special breakfast seminar series once a quarter.

"There's something really important about men having camaraderie, backing each other up, having information, supporting each other," ministry leader Paul Rivera says.

“There are studies that show that when men are actively involved in the church ... their families are better, and it just benefits the entire congregation.”—Eli Rojas



“The role of men is terribly, terribly important in our society. Fatherless homes abound, especially in minority communities, and there’s a domino and ripple effect that is undermining and harming our community,” says Rivera, whose eldest of three children is 15. “I wanted to be a really involved father, and I also wanted to encourage other men to be involved in their family. That’s part of the reason I got involved in Men’s Ministries: to equip, inform and advise other guys. ... I just want to encourage men to be involved and make a difference.”

The group is currently in the process of building a mentorship program with Spencerville Adventist Academy (Md.).

Avoiding Loneliness Is a Team Effort

Ten years ago, Art Calhoun was a youth class teacher at Mountain View Conference’s Toll Gate church in Pennsboro, W.Va. He missed having interaction with adults, so he started a Men’s Ministries program.

The group delves into books of the Bible for the study portion of the biweekly get-togethers. Its participants, about half of whom are not members of the church, chat for about a half hour on current events, things that are happening in their lives, and offer each other solutions to problems such as home

Members of the Mountain View Conference’s Toll Gate church’s Men’s Ministries group in Pennsboro, W.Va., gather twice a month: (top row) Leonard Broadwater, Art Calhoun; (middle) John Bair; and (bottom) Jim LeVos, Jack Mackay. • Men watch the Super Bowl at Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md.



PHOTOS BY BRAD BARNWELL, BERNIE CALHOUN, RICHARD JOSEPH GORDON AND MARLON MING/MARYLAND MEN OF FAITH; COURTESY OF SPENCERVILLE CHURCH

repairs. They also enjoy volunteering and have worked on projects together like building a wheelchair ramp for a church member.

Half of the attendees are active church members, says Calhoun, something that helps them avoid loneliness. For others, the group fills that goal of fellowship.

Benefitting the Entire Congregation

Eli Rojas, who leads Men's Ministries, Family Ministries and is the Ministerial director for the Chesapeake Conference, wishes men's groups were more prevalent, but he knows this takes a huge commitment from leaders and are difficult to sustain.

The groups most likely to thrive in congregations are those that are united or tight knit, noted Rojas, based on his nearly 30 years as a local minister. When men are emotionally close, Rojas says they are better able to connect with each other on intensely personal issues, such as addictions or problems with their marriage.

The advantages of having a men's ministry program are enormous.

"There are studies that show that when men are actively involved in the church—and that's what Men's



Ministries does—their families are better, and it just benefits the entire congregation," Rojas says.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us.

Connect with a local Men's Ministries event in your conference. Here are a few of the upcoming 2019 options. (Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/2019mensevents for a complete list that will be updated throughout the year.)

- **Joshua and His Band of Brothers:
The Greatest Action Movie Never Made**

May 17–19

Camp Mohaven, Danville
ohioadventist.org

- **Enough to Make a Grown Man Cry:
A Men's Roundtable**

June 29

*Allegheny East Conference Camp Meeting
Camp Davis, Pine Forge, Pa.*
visitaec.org

- **Men's Empowerment Conference**

August 3

Rockville, Md.
visitaec.org

- **Maryland Men of Faith
"Not Bought or Sold"**

October 5

Mt. Aetna Retreat Center, Hagerstown, Md.
mmof.org

- **The Dedicated Man**

October 11–13

Crabtree Marriott in North Carolina
thededicatedman.org



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Ebenezer Member, Composer, Musician Passes

Composer and musician Allen E. Foster, a longtime member of the Ebenezer church in Philadelphia, recently passed after battling an illness. Foster started playing the piano at Ebenezer at the age of 14 and became the choir’s accompanist at 16.

Foster began composing music in 1958 and became



an accomplished hymnodist. Four of his compositions can be found in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. Foster served Ebenezer as an elder and trustee member for 49 years. It was also at Ebenezer that he met the love of his life, Gwendolyn Foster, and they married in 1963. Gwendolyn served the Allegheny East Conference as health director for several years, as well as music director for Pine Forge Academy (Pa.).

“The life and ministry of Elder Allen Foster will have a resounding effect on Ebenezer today, tomorrow and throughout eternity. Only in eternity will we know the full effects of his ministry,” shares Carlos McConico, pastor.

Foster leaves behind his wife, Gwendolyn, and daughters Joya (Lysle) Follette and Angela (Maurice) Griffin. His son, Allen Jr., preceded him in death.

Composer Allen Foster, who is a member of the Ebenezer church, and has four hymns in the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, recently passed.

Church Opens Doors During Freezing Temperatures

The Mt. Olivet church in Camden, N.J., became a Code Blue station for the homeless in their community during freezing temperatures this past winter. Mt. Olivet member Nyzia Easterling received a call from a community partner looking for a place to accommodate homeless people, and she offered her church.

After Pastor Colby Matlock and other church leaders approved this request, members went into immediate action, taking to social media to request donations and assistance. They collected coats, blankets, gloves, warm food and drinks. “The response was overwhelming,” says Easterling. “We emptied our cabinets and garages, and came together to meet needs.”

Members also drove through the city with police to pick up individuals who were without shelter. “Regardless of someone’s beliefs or the color of their skin, the goal was to help; that’s true ministry,” says member Lorene Brown-Watkins.

The church was able to accommodate close to 20 individuals as well as service another 30 at an additional Code Blue location. “We were just grateful to be able to serve and meet people’s needs with no

strings attached. After all, that’s what the gospel is about—allowing others to see God through you,” says Mt. Olivet member Mike Williams.



Mt. Olivet members Nyzia Easterling and Lorene Brown-Watkins sort through donations received while running a Code Blue station at their church.

PHOTO BY APRIL SAUL

Center Packs Backpacks for Homeless

The W. C. Atkinson Memorial Community Service Center, an outreach ministry of the Coatesville First (Pa.) church, recently packed 232 backpacks full of personal care products for the homeless. This project was part of the Greater Philadelphia’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

The project was made possible by donations from businesses, organizations and individuals. The Atkinson Center welcomed 105 volunteers, one of whom was U.S. Congresswoman Chrissy Houlihan, to assist with packing backpacks.

At the end of the day of service, City Gate Mission and CYWA Gateway shelters, residents of the Atkinson Shelter and the Chester County Department of Community Development received backpacks.

Minnie McNeil, project organizer and director of the Atkinson Center, shares one of the miracles that occurred during the project. “We wanted two pairs of socks in each backpack. After all, what happens when one pair gets wet? We didn’t have the resources to purchase more and were 100 socks short. At the end of the Sabbath service, a woman approached me and asked if I knew anyone that could use about 100 pairs of new men’s socks and about 50 bagged personal care items for women! What are the chances? We are



Jeanne Kennedy and Elvia Mendez, members of the West Chester church, and Christine, Andrew, Grace and 20-month-old Blessing Doirin of the Coatesville First church, participate in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service activities.

confident that God blessed in every way!”

The national Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service started in Philadelphia, as a small project in 1996 with 1,000 volunteers. It has become a fast-growing nationwide movement that breaks down barriers, forms ongoing partnerships and fosters understanding about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Remembering a Pastor and Former Youth Director

Pastor Claude Harris II, affectionately known to the Allegheny East Conference (AEC) constituency as “Papa Bear,” passed to his rest this past January.

Harris joined the Allegheny East Conference (AEC)

ranks in 1987, pastoring several churches throughout the territory. He was soon elected as the Children’s and Youth Ministries director, where he served for 16 years. He was known for intuitive and powerful preaching, but it was his love and advocacy for children and young people that set him apart. While AEC Youth Director, he served as president of the Black Adventist Youth Directors Association for two terms, reaching the youth in the nine Regional Conferences.

With his military experience and avid outdoorsmanship, he quickly advanced the Pathfinder Club organization in trainings and discipline. “His legacy in the Allegheny East Conference will be remembered and cherished until all the saints meet again in the earth made new,” says Patrick Graham, AEC Youth Ministries director.

At the time of his passing, he was pastoring the Beacon Light church in Annapolis, Md. He leaves behind two children, Rick (Debbie) and Precyous (Patrick), and three grandchildren.

Claude Harris (left), alongside Allegheny East Conference members Fred Craig, Genome Moore, Patrick Graham, Dennis Moore and Marcus Harris, was a strong proponent of the Pathfinder program.



New Multimedia Ministries Coordinator Joins Team

Benia Jennings recently accepted the Allegheny West Conference's (AWC) invitation to serve as the Multimedia Ministries coordinator. Beginning her new role in February, Jennings brings with her experience in public relations, mass communication and religious broadcasting.

A native of the Bahamas, she most recently served as a religious broadcaster and TV host for the North Bahamas Conference in Freeport.

"We are delighted to welcome Mrs. Jennings to the Allegheny West Conference. She brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and creativity to the Communication Department. We have no doubt that her professional skills will efficiently and effectively aid us in advancing the gospel message of Christ's soon return," says Jermaine Jackson, AWC's chief financial officer.

Among Jennings' accomplishments are the launch of the Bahamas first online Adventist radio station, DUB 101 Radio (Disciples United Broadcasting), along with the development of a citywide food distribution program and food pantry.

Jennings has a sincere commitment to community services. She is the founder of The Grand Bahama Soup Kitchen, which organizes church-led feeding initiatives in conjunction with local government agencies as well as private sector partners. She spearheaded the launch of The Sidewalk Soup annual kitchen event, an initiative to provide hot meals to persons in the community during the holiday season.

"We are living the greatest communication shift in



Benia Jennings, Allegheny West Conference's new Multimedia Ministries coordinator, addresses the Shiloh Cincinnati church.

many years," says Jennings. "Never has it been so easy to share information so rapidly on a global scale. I'm a firm believer in utilizing all available means in the communication sector to share the gospel of Christ. I count it a privilege to be a part of this ministry."

A significant part of Jennings' role for AWC will be the production of interview-style features, podcasts and social media management across a variety of platforms. She joins Bryant Smith, AWC's communication director, as they collaborate to share stories within the conference. Jennings' husband, Conrad, and daughter, Teagan, join her in this new experience and mission field.

Iglesia de Toledo Takes on Prayer Challenge

When we have a need, gratitude or petition, the doors of heaven are always open for God's children. The power of prayer is our blessed tool as Christians to connect with our heavenly Father," says Daniel Haro, the multicultural pastor of the Iglesia de Toledo in Ohio.

Earlier this year, members of the Iglesia de Toledo decided to host an online 10 days of prayer challenge. Themed "A Deeper Experience," Haro spoke, prayed and studied each night at 7:30 p.m. with many members and friends via Facebook Live.

"It was a really great experience for that church because all members were actively involved by inviting

their friends," Haro says. "God drove people to participate in this evangelistic effort. As a result, over 3,300 people were reached. Even when the objective was focused on the local church and community, we received feedback from people in Colombia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Perú and a few cities in the U.S.

"Thanks be to God, for He opened hearts and homes so that the everlasting gospel seed could be planted for His kingdom," adds Haro.

To watch videos from the 10 days of prayer challenge, visit facebook.com/IglesiaAdventistaToledo/.



Grace Community Realizes Dream, Breaks Ground

The Grace Community church recently celebrated a milestone in its congregation's history. Members gathered together to break ground for a multi-million-dollar state-of-the-art worship center. Three years ago, Grace Community moved to the Cleveland suburb of Euclid, Ohio, home to 48,000 people. The congregation purchased an old K-mart building that will be renovated and transformed into a ministry hub. The groundbreaking served as a great step toward the realization of this dream.

Freddie Russell, former Allegheny West Conference president, kicked off the event with a powerful sermon, encouraging the members to press on and take hold of what God has prepared for them. Current President William T. Cox Sr., Executive Secretary Marvin Brown and Treasurer and CFO Jermaine Jackson joined the celebration. Cox stated he believed the location they chose and the congregation "would be the model we would follow in AWC for growing the conference and sharing the vision in preparation for Jesus to come."

Kirsten Holzheimer Gail, Euclid city mayor, believes Grace Community will be a perfect fit for the city's "Faith in the City" campaign, which highlights the power of community and faith. The mayor, joined by Councilwoman Taneika Hill, enthusiastically welcomed the congregation to the city. Hill has worshipped at the church several times and is excited about its worship, fellowship and outreach commitment.



Grace Community church Pastor MyRon Edmonds, Allegheny West Conference President William T. Cox Sr., Euclid city Mayor Kirsten Holzheimer Gail and Euclid city Councilwoman Taneika Hill break ground for a new worship center in Euclid, Ohio.

This is not the first move for Grace Community. The first official church home was purchased in 1918 in Cleveland. Soon, the congregation moved to 71st and Cedar Avenue. The next move would occur in 1949, as the members moved to the historic Glenville area, located on the corner of Elgin and 105th. The journey from Cedar to Glenville to Grace (Euclid) is the result of God's guiding hand leading the congregation to fulfill its destiny in proclaiming the three angels' messages. Pastor MyRon Edmonds states, "The groundbreaking was meaningful for me because it reminded us all that with God all things are possible."

Grace Community is excited about what God has in store. "The vision is to be the head and not the tail in terms of our quality of ministry," Edmonds explains. "We want to have a facility that helps as many people as possible experience God's grace in as many ways as possible before Jesus returns. Essentially, we want a facility that can emulate the ministry of Jesus."

—Dewain Hall



CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE CURRENTS

What Every Volunteer Wants

For more than 25 years, I have personally recruited about 1,000 volunteers. In the process, I have observed five recurring things volunteers are looking for when accepting the call.

First of all, volunteers want to get a sense that the leader of the team comprehends the ministry mission and vision. Though volunteers may not grasp the finite details of all of the team goals, they want to feel that their leader has a strong grasp on the direction and purpose of the team.

Volunteers also want to experience a well-thought-out selection process. This includes taking time to match the gifts and talents of individuals to the roles they are being asked to fulfill. This process helps to convey appreciation and ensures that their time and gifts are valued as they help transform lives.

Trust is a critical third component. When no trust is given to a volunteer as they perform their tasks, it hinders progress. If there is a perceived absence of trust from leaders, many volunteers will simply abandon their post in frustration. First you have to train them, then you have to trust them to do their best.

Next, it's important to know how to have fun. Volunteers love when an organization shares in the "joy of the Lord." Bringing food to a meeting or having a sense of humor during a planning session expresses that they are part of a loving community.

Last but not least, how organized is the team? When volunteers see a disorganized ministry, many will not endure it.

We all have the opportunity to experience volunteerism in our churches. Let us be good stewards of the ministries with which God has entrusted us.



Carl Rodriguez
Youth & Young Adult
Ministries Director

Three Retreats Bring Youth Together

More than 200 youth and young adults recently gathered at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md., for three power-packed winter retreats.

The Teen Leadership Training (TLT) group welcomed enthusiastic youth to engage in "iTell: The Love Reality." They focused on what it means to be a Christian in the 21st century and how to become more like Jesus. Izzy Uribe, youth pastor of the Frederick (Md.) church, led the sessions, utilizing interactive discussions and activities to keep the youth engaged.

The Spanish Federation Youth group focused on the theme, "Mi Identidad en Cristo" (My Identity in Christ), and saw 48 more attendees than the previous year. Josue Feliciano, associate pastor of the West Wilmington (Del.) church, served as the main speaker. In addition to worship, Sabbath morning featured a skit by members of the Frederick (Md.) Spanish church (pictured), portraying the Church as a sleeping bride who awakens to help the world see Christ and answers their call, "Help me!"

The Prismatic Young Adult Ministry team challenged young professionals during the weekend retreat titled "Magnify," a call to surrender all to the Lord. David

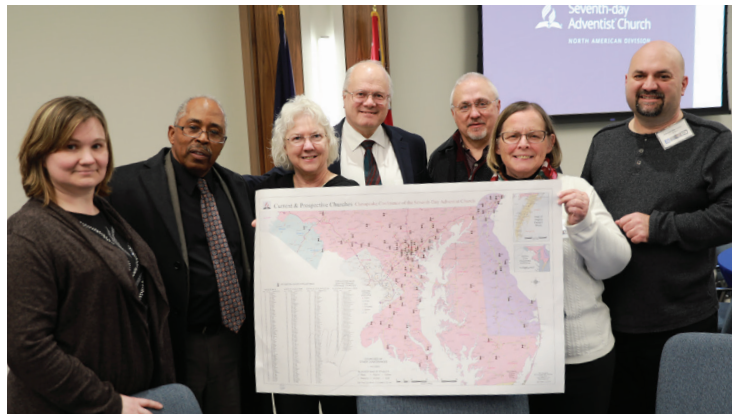
Kim, associate pastor of the Washington Spencerville Korean church in Silver Spring, Md., delivered the weekend messages.

"Our diversity reminded us that God truly cares for *all* people and that He works in *all* circumstances," says Ankur Singh, leader of the Chesapeake Young Adult Ministries team. "We closed the weekend with a prayer of dedication for each attendee, and hope that they will be encouraged to keep trusting in God to lead and enrich their lives."



MissionWorks Evangelism Seminar Empowers

Earlier this year, more than 260 lay-leaders and pastors from 25 churches in the Chesapeake Conference attended the MissionWorks workshop, led by the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI) and the Chesapeake Evangelism Department. The keynote speaker for the weekend, Russell Burrill (pictured), former director of NADEI, shared inspiring messages that reminded members and pastors of the essentiality of following a biblical model for church and outreach.



Chestertown (Md.) church members organize plans and pray over their community territory.

“I saw churches coming together, working deliberately, through plans on how they could institute a redemptive Adventist presence in the community around their church, making a difference, sharing the Adventist message of wholeness with their community,” says Errol McClean, assistant director of NADEI.

The weekend gave opportunity for plans to be made and prompted members to reach people in their respective territories. The thematic “Priesthood of all Believers” workshop refrain emphasized that not only pastors and leaders voted by the local church need to serve, but every member is called to serve in ministry and share in the evangelistic efforts of the church.

“It’s been a beautiful time here. ... We’ve really been able to identify a lot of our strengths and weaknesses, and we now have a plan of action that we can take home with us and implement,” says Diana May, a member of the Providence church in Elkton, Md. “This plan will also help uplift and nurture our other members that are a part of our team but aren’t here today to partake in this.”

Breakout sessions provided opportunities for church groups to pray and formulate a refined strategy for outreach and evangelism. The weekend concluded with members, pastors and conference personnel coming together in partnership and commitment to the Lord for further evangelistic activity.

“It was very good training for the leaders,” says Linette Zuniga, member of the Baltimore-White Marsh church in Rosedale, Md. “We can go and train our people so that they can also impact our community.”



Members of the Connection Community Church in Laurel, Md., gather in a circle of solidarity and prayer.

MOUNTAIN VIEW POINT

Working to Take the Mission Forward

On May 19, the Mountain View Conference will hold its first Quinquennial Constituency Session at the Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville. It has been an incredible privilege to serve the Mountain View Conference (MVC), first as executive secretary, and currently as president since December 2017. Though my family and I have served in this role a short time, we have fallen in love with the members, pastors, volunteer lay pastors and their wives; our Bible workers; our education team; and our office staff. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the mission of Jesus in West Virginia and Western Maryland.

Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age*” (Matt. 28:19–20, NKJV). We can testify that Jesus has been with the MVC throughout the last five years. As we have made mission our primary focus, He has blessed in ways that have left us speechless at times. I would like to share with you a few of the ways we are working to take the mission forward in our conference:

Renewed Commitment to Training Our Pastors

We have made a strong commitment to provide our pastors with the best training we can give them. We will again be taking our entire pastoral team to train with Mark Finley at the Living Hope Evangelism Training Center in Haymarket, Va. We have also brought in highly-skilled trainers from various places to help our pastors know best how to lead and grow their churches.

Church Planting and Replanting

I am also excited to report on our church planting and replanting work that is underway. During the quinquennium now ending, we started two new church companies with the Moorefield Spanish and Lewisburg Spanish groups. We are also working

hard to plant four new churches: Petersburg, W.Va. (English speaking); Hurricane, W.Va. (English speaking); Clarksburg, W.Va. (Spanish speaking); and Parkersburg, W.Va. (Spanish speaking). We sincerely believe that church planting is vital to growing our conference. We are also making plans to replant the Williamson, W.Va., congregation, since its active members have either moved or passed away.

Growing Hispanic Work

We have also seen God working through our focus on outreach to Hispanic people in Mountain View. In 2015 we brought student missionaries from Peru to begin working in various locations around our territory to evangelize our ever-increasing Hispanic population. As I previously mentioned, churches are being planted and we are seeing growth with our Hispanic congregations, and we expect even stronger growth in the upcoming quinquennium.

Volunteer Lay Pastor Initiative

We also launched a Volunteer Lay Pastor initiative. Many of our smaller congregations were in three and sometimes four church districts, which means they usually only saw their pastor once a month at best. Through our Volunteer Lay Pastor initiative, we are now empowering teachable laypeople who we can train to lead these smaller congregations on a weekly basis.

Mission-Focused in Mountain View

I am truly excited about the future and all that Christ has done and is about to do in the Mountain View Conference. The fields are already ripe for the harvest, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus wants to do even greater things through us in the upcoming quinquennium. It can and will happen if we work together and allow Him to use us.



Mike Hewitt
President

Conference Votes Mission, Values, Priorities

After Mountain View Conference's (MVC) mission statement was created in 2018, a survey was sent to MVC committee members, pastors, teachers and leaders. After the data was compiled, the results were presented to the MVC Executive Committee in December for further clarity. The conference administration team then took the information and created a single document reflecting the prayerful thoughts and ideas of those surveyed. In January 2019, the Executive Committee unanimously approved the document shown below.

CALL TO ACTION MOTTO: "Reflecting Christ Through Loving Service"

MISSION: "We exist to grow healthy churches that reflect Christ's love and compassion in our communities."

VALUES: Service ■ Compassion ■ Unity ■ Community ■ Integrity ■ Excellence

PRIORITIES:

Prayer—We will keep prayer and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit our main priority because we realize that we can do nothing without Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Growth—We will place a high priority on helping our congregations become healthy and vibrant as they grow spiritually and in membership.

Church Planting—We will place a high priority on planting new congregations throughout our territory to reach more people in our communities with Christ's message of hope and wholeness.



Senior and volunteer Maddie Wymer from the Highland Adventist School grooms a dog at Fancy Paws.



In harmony with Mountain View Conference's mission statement, seven Grafton (W.Va.) church volunteers display 43 Christmas boxes for "Operation Christmas Child" last December.

Youth, Young Adults and Children—We will place a high priority on the young people in our conference by ensuring that they are engaged, trained and involved in every area of ministry.

Community Outreach—We will place a high priority on reaching our communities around our churches through compassionate service, community involvement and needs-based evangelism.

Education—We will place a high priority on helping our schools grow and prosper so that our students can grow and prosper, now and in the future.

NEWS

NEW JERSEY

Inaugural Filipino East Convocation Convenes

The Filipino churches of the Eastern part of the U.S. recently convened for a convocation at the Tranquil Valley Retreat Center in Andover, N.J., for spiritual and physical revival and renewal. Spearheaded by the New Jersey Conference Filipino district steering committee, chaired by Emmanuel Jardiniano, pastor of the Filipino English and Filipino International churches, the event had a timely theme of “Go Forward in Unity.” With the theme song, “One Church in Unity,” composed by church members Johanne Veraque Jardinico and music by her mother, Felucille Veraque, voices reverberated through the gym walls with power and glory for the God who unites. President Jorge Aguero and Executive Secretary Mario Thorp opened the convocation at vespers Friday evening, and Treasurer Karen Senecal joined them for Sabbath services.

On Sabbath morning through the afternoon, approximately 500 people worshipped and fellowshiped together, led by speakers Vic Louis Arreola III, the North American Division (NAD) Asian Pacific Ministries director; Jose Cortes, Jr., NAD Ministerial associate director for evangelism; Ronald Obidos, Hope Channel’s *Philippines & Back to the Scripture* host; and Jason Hovey, Muslim Ministries specialist. Ramon Baldovino, pastor from Potomac Conference’s Filipino-American Capital church in Beltsville, Md., spoke to the youth and young adults.

“So much warmth and fellowship continued through the Sabbath evening for the Social and Cultural night and Sunday for the much-awaited Sportsfest!” says Irma Florendo-Cordero, the communication director for the First Filipino convocation. “Indeed, it was a wonderful and blessed convocation, a weekend to remember and a glimpse of what heaven will be like when the Lord’s children are united in love and in the spirit of servitude. All who came left with a smile on their faces, much joy in their hearts and renewed faith in the Lord who unites.”



Approximately 500 Filipino church members gather for a convocation at the Tranquil Valley Retreat Center.



Filipino choir members sing during the Sabbath morning service.



Mario Thorp (fifth from the right), executive secretary for the New Jersey Conference, stands with his wife, Olgath, and Filipino church members.

Long Branch Brazilian Celebrates Four Baptisms

The Long Branch Brazilian church plant in West Long Branch, N.J., recently held a baptismal celebration for four new members. Some note that the congregation of just two years is a vibrant, friendly and committed group that welcomes all to experience the love of Jesus, inviting visitors to study together to learn more about the Bible.

Inspired by a co-worker turned good friend, Hueberty da Silva Rabelo decided to surrender his life to Jesus and was baptized by Eduardo Monteiro, pastor of Long Branch Brazilian. Following Rabelo, a young adult, Luís de Souza, also made the decision to



Eduardo Monteiro, pastor of the Long Branch Brazilian church plant, baptizes Luís de Souza.



Hueberty da Silva Rabelo, Jaciele de Oliveira, Robson de Aguiar and Luís de Souza take baptismal vows, conducted by Jeferson Daniel, a Long Branch elder.



Church members Luís de Souza, Robson de Aguiar, Pastor Eduardo Monteiro, Bruna Costa, Jaciele de Oliveira, Hueberty da Silva Rabelo, André Silva and Glaciele Lima celebrate together.



get baptized. “Luís, God has a plan for your life, and here you are accepting it and taking a step toward its fulfillment,” said Monteiro.

Married couple Jaciele de Oliveira and Robson de Aguiar also both gave their lives to the Lord. After completing her Bible study lessons with church member Bruna Costa, Jaciele said she was eager for her and Robson to seal their lives to Christ as soon as possible. Without delay, plans were set for baptism.

The celebration closed with a communion and agape supper (pictured). “The addition of new members left the congregation motivated to continue living by Christ’s example, allowing Him to shine through them in every interaction with friends, family and the Long Branch community,” shares Monteiro.

Camp Mohaven Is Not Just a Summer Camp

Most memories of Mohaven include swimming, archery, high ropes, horses, mountain biking, and that's only summer camp! What many may not realize is that Camp Mohaven in Danville, Ohio, operates year-round and is host to a variety of programs. Men's and women's retreats, camp meetings (Hispanic and English), local church retreats, Pathfinder and Adventurer events, youth and young adult events and lay pastor assistant and elder trainings, just to name a few.

Camp Mohaven attracts thousands of people each year, both constituents and non-constituents. Over the last decade, Mohaven leadership has created and nurtured connections within the community. Their equine therapy program continues to grow, helping at-risk students in nearby Danville local schools. "It's a ministry ... when Christ was on this earth, He healed and fed people before He ever preached the gospel. At Camp Mohaven during the winter, it is healing and feeding; and in the summer, when we have summer camp here, they are teaching," says Carrie Brown, equine program manager and new manager/ranger for Camp Mohaven.

The Camp Mohaven of 2019 showcases the many upgrades completed in 2018. High-speed internet and improved cell service are available, thanks to a new Verizon tower and fiberoptic cabling installation. A new pool liner both conserves water and saves countless man-hours readying the pool for the summer season.



Newly completed bathhouses (which double as tornado shelters) feature exterior stonework and concrete sidewalks.



The Camp Mohaven office has been relocated to a more practical and productive location, making it more convenient for visitors.

Newly completed bathhouses (which double as tornado shelters) feature exterior stonework, concrete sidewalks and freshly seeded grounds ready for spring.

God has been "showing off," as former camp ranger Dave Robinson used to say. Donations of materials and labor continue. Brown shares that 25 volunteers donated their time over Thanksgiving for a work bee. During recent months, a grain bin was donated to help decrease grain costs for Mohaven livestock; a feed room was constructed from existing lumber and a donated door, built with the assistance of equine-therapy students; and fencing was removed and relocated to improve field management and create a field for Pathfinders.

Not all improvements are readily visible. Brown, who has served as interim ranger since last fall, reported a barn expansion, including improvements to the drainage tiles; an electric pole and connections replaced and upgraded following a windstorm; and a four-year project to place and bury electrical piping carrying electricity to other areas of the camp.

"In the camp world, I am what is known as a 'Lifer,'" explains Brown. "From the time I was a child attending camp, I told my mom that when I grew up, I would work at a camp. Little did she know it would be a lifelong career for me." Brown looks forward to showing Ohio constituents all Mohaven has to offer. Contact her at (740) 599-6111 or mohaven@ohioadventist.org for more information.

Radio Station Celebrates One Year of Blessings

Congratulations to our radio station on this first anniversary! It has brought so many blessings through every broadcasted program. We hope and pray that this station will continue for many more years, sharing the message of salvation,” says Miguel Rodriguez, member of the First Hispanic church of Columbus, located in Westerville, in a comment on Facebook Live earlier this year.

Stereo Adventist Radio (STAR) began broadcasting in January 2018. Its beginning was not easy and required extensive preparation. This considerable challenge was nothing compared to the one they had after their first broadcast, however: keeping their broadcasts on air 24/7. “The need for resources, including a volunteer staff to operate the station, was an enormous challenge, but by God’s grace it was accomplished,” shares Peter Simpson, Hispanic Ministries coordinator for the Ohio Conference.

“Since the station began, we have doubled our initial audience (1,500 people per week) and doubled the number of countries who report listening to STAR,” says Simpson. To meet production demands, the station has doubled the number of volunteers—now more than 30 people—who offer their time, talents and many other resources to the station.

According to Simpson, STAR is looking ahead as they spread the gospel to an increasing number of listeners. Their central studios are presently in Cleveland, and they have acquired the necessary equipment to install two additional studios in Dayton and Columbus.



Peter Simpson (second from left) and a few of the radio team members celebrate their first anniversary.

This addition will allow the station to “have more participation [from members around the state] and put us closer to more people to reach them with the gospel of salvation,” says Simpson.

STAR leaders worked diligently to keep up with technological demands. One of their volunteers created a free app for both Apple and Android devices, enabling the station to reach even more listeners. “This is undoubtedly one of our greatest blessings and a much more effective way for people to be connected to our radio station. This has been a truly blessed year and a great first anniversary!” exclaims Simpson.

Ohio Conference to Host Men’s Retreat

Men ages 16 and older are invited to attend the annual Ohio Conference Men’s Retreat at Camp Mohaven in Danville, Ohio, May 17–19. Guest speakers include former Amish Andy Weaver (pictured with his wife, Naomi) on Friday night and a surprise presenter on Sabbath, who will speak on the theme, “Joshua and His Band of Brothers: The Greatest Action Movie Never Made.”

Visit ohioadventist.org for details about this weekend, filled with food, campfires and “manly awesomeness.” For more information, contact Men’s Ministries coordinator Ken Franklin at ohioswildlifesolution@gmail.com or (440) 669-4499.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL F. MCELROY/AP IMAGES

Pennsylvania Pen

The Steve Jobs Paradox

With the invention of the iPhone, Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, revolutionized the way the world communicates. Yet, days before he died, Jobs wept as he confessed to his adult daughter, Lisa, “I didn’t spend enough time with you when you were little.”

In fact, Jobs avoided Lisa for much of her life, and for a long period even denied she was his child. Mysteriously, he wouldn’t even respond to Lisa’s phone calls or emails during his last 10 years. It wasn’t until the last week of his life that he revealed the reason: she didn’t invite him to her introductory day at Harvard University. When Lisa asked him why he didn’t tell her this earlier, Jobs shrugged and paradoxically said, “I am not good at communication.”

You and I are called to be excellent communicators of God’s love and truth (Rev. 14:6). “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love” (Ellen White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 416). The world needs to discover in us and our churches that we love people, spend time with them and practice accepting their behaviors. Anything less is a paradox.



Gary Gibbs
President

Pennsylvania Welcomes New Vice President for Education

Jeremy Garlock has accepted the invitation by the Pennsylvania Conference Executive Committee to serve as vice president for Education. Garlock joined the conference February 1. He most recently served as Superintendent of Education and associate Youth Ministries director for the New York Conference.

“This move to the Pennsylvania Conference is a big decision for my family and me,” says Garlock. “As with all such big decisions, there is a certain level of uncertainty, especially for our young girls. But at the same time, there is excitement to see God’s clear calling and working in our life. I am excited to see how He continues to lead and what His plans are for the future.”

Garlock is passionate about connecting young people with the gospel. He has served as a teacher and principal, while also being involved in Youth Ministries and Young Adult Ministries. He has planted a church and speaks frequently for churches, camp meeting and other events. He facilitated the creation of Revolve Young Adult Ministries for the New York Conference and piloted a youth mentoring program.

“We praise God for leading us to Jeremy and for the gifts and talents that he will bring to our team here in Pennsylvania,” shares Gary Gibbs, president. “Our

personnel committee was impressed with his spiritual walk with God, commitment to mission and thorough knowledge of the job. It is obvious that God has placed His hand on Jeremy, and we look forward to seeing how God will use him in Pennsylvania.”



Jeremy Garlock, pictured baptizing a student, believes Adventist education is an important tool for impacting the lives of children and sharing the gospel with families who are not yet attending church.

Pennsylvania Pen

Retiring to Fulfill the Mission

The Navarros retired earlier this year—Al from the Hope Channel and Bonnie from the Pacific Union Conference—and joined the Pennsylvania Conference Planned Giving team. However, they are beginning their retirement a little bit differently than the norm of vacationing and spending time with grandchildren.

“We’ve spent the last 20 years helping connect people with opportunities to make a lasting impact on God’s work,” Al says. Bonnie began her work as a critical care nurse before going to law school. Licensed in five states, including Pennsylvania, she has more than 20 years of experience as an attorney, focused on planned giving for the church. Al worked as an optometrist before joining Bonnie to help church members understand how to use wills, revocable living trusts, charitable gift annuities and remainder trusts, revocable cash asset trusts and direct IRA rollovers to support God’s work, while providing tax savings and income.

They are excited to provide no-cost estate planning documents to church members who benefit God’s work. “I would love to see funds come in to support evangelism, education and especially Blue Mountain



Academy (BMA),” shares Al, a BMA alumnus. “I want to see the day when Pastor Gibbs has to tell constituents, ‘Give no more! We have more than we need.’”

The Navarros will provide a seminar on planned giving opportunities, June 10–14, at the Pennsylvania Conference Camp Meeting. For more information, email ywnavarro@paconference.org or oamnavarro@paconference.org.



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For more information or to register today, go to laurellakecamp.org
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 Phone: (610) 374-8331, ext. 210 ■ paconference.org ■ President, Gary Gibbs ■ Communication Director, Tamyra Horst

Potomac People

VP Accepts Call to Arizona Conference

After nearly 12 years of service as Potomac's vice president for administration, Jorge Ramirez recently announced he has accepted a call to be the executive secretary of the Arizona Conference.

"Jorge and I have worked closely together on some very difficult issues over the years," says Bill Miller, president. "In every instance, he demonstrated the highest level of personal integrity and unwavering commitment and loyalty to Potomac Conference. During his tenure, Jorge's gift for structure and detail have been realized in three major areas: the merger of the conference and the corporation into one entity known as the Potomac Conference Corporation, the creation of a system for accurate record keeping of all official documents and the implementation of our child protection program. All three are vital to the operational efficiency of the organization."

In his new role, Ramirez will assist the Arizona Conference in creating systems that will enable the corporation to accomplish its mission. He will take on the added responsibilities of leading the ministerial team and directing all evangelism campaigns.



Furloughed Workers, Families Receive Free Meals

With thousands of families in need during the recent government shutdown, Mytonia Newman, a member of Restoration Praise Center, located in Bowie, Md., and owner of My New Cuisine catering business, decided to help others in a practical way: She committed to feeding families for one week.

During that time, Newman provided 45 family-style meals to furloughed workers. "I used to work professionally in Washington, D.C., and now my commercial kitchen is there," explains Newman. "So I'm surrounded by federal workers. I know several families affected by the shutdown and posted what I was doing on Facebook. People started asking if I could include their son or daughter on the list for meals, and others asked how they could donate. I continued getting funding and ended up doing a second week of meals."



Mytonia Newman, founder of My New Cuisine, provided free meals for furloughed workers and families during the government shutdown.

When asked what prompted her to donate her time and resources, she says, "I was diagnosed with cancer several years ago. Every day I have is an extra day that I won't squander. I genuinely look for opportunities to help others—I couldn't pass this one up."

Newman says her cancer diagnosis inspired the development of her vegan catering business. "My husband is an oncologist and went vegan years before me, based on what he knew about cancer," she explains. "When I was diagnosed, I started doing my own research and soon became vegan. I truly believe faith and dietary discipline is how I'm beating cancer."

A large portion of Newman's clients are people undergoing cancer treatment. "I speak with them about what type of cancer they have, and then build a diet plan for them," she states. "Since I have been through treatments myself, I have a good sense of what foods the body needs to heal and what foods can be tolerated after treatment."

Newman says she will never stop looking for ways to use her gifts and business as a ministry. For more information about her kitchen, visit mynewcuisine.com.

Potomac People

6 Pastors 'Grow Young' to Reach Young

Six pastors recently completed their cohort in Growing Young—a research-based project focusing on successful ministry to young people—and have committed to being influential trainers for other pastors, youth and young adult leaders and churches in their areas.

The project, developed by Fuller Theological Seminary (Calif.), started by looking at what components ensured a successful young adult ministry. After 10,000 research hours and 1,300 individual interviews over 40 states, they discovered six essential core commitments. The Growing Young cohort unpacks these commitments, which are defined on their website as: “keychain or load-bearing (rather than token) leadership, empathizing with young people, taking Jesus’ message seriously, creating a warm environment, engaging young adults and their families and being good neighbors to our local and global communities.” Completion of the program certifies participants as speakers and trainers.

Josant Barrientos, director for Youth and Youth Adult Ministries, says, “We believe that implementing the values of Growing Young is a powerful step in growing healthy, disciple-making churches—Potomac’s mission. We are excited to be investing in the younger generations of our church in a very intentional way.” Barrientos says he and the five other pastors who completed the cohort—Geraldo Alonso (Valley/Southwest



Six pastors, Renee Stepp, Garrison Hayes, Federico Revollo, Joseph Khabbaz, Geraldo Alonso and Josant Barrientos, recently completed their cohort in Growing Young, which identifies cultural values necessary for successful ministry to young people.

Va.); Garrison Hayes (Northern Va.); Joseph Khabbaz (Maryland); Federico Revollo (Hispanic churches); and Renee Stepp (Capital/Tidewater)—are looking toward the future of how these values can become part of every church’s culture.

“As certified speakers and trainers, we are available to pastors at monthly and yearly educational meetings,” Barrientos explains. “We also offer private mentoring to pastors who are interested in one-on-one training. Additionally, we will have presentations available for lay leaders through EQUIP trainings, which are regularly scheduled throughout the conference each year. The Youth and Young Adult Ministries Department is committed to training leaders at their events. We are also available to any group that would like to invite a speaker to present at their event, training or church(es).”

Barrientos believes implementation of Growing Young will help churches grow and keep young people engaged. “It allows us to play a key role in winning this and future generations to the kingdom of God,” he says. “Growing Young seeks to engage people of every generation, focusing on giving ownership and meaningful leadership to younger generations in order to ensure health and growth. We invite you to pray for this ministry! How you would like to be a part of the great story of God in these exciting times?”



Josant Barrientos, Youth and Young Adult Ministries director, stands with Matthew Deprez, a staff member from Fuller Institute, after a training session.

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Phone: (540) 886-0771 ■ pcsda.org ■ President, Bill Miller ■ Communication Assistant, Tiffany Doss



COMMUNIQUE

Former Student to be Alumni Weekend Speaker

Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) is excited to welcome Minervino Labrador as the 2019 Alumni Weekend speaker, April 26–28.

Labrador, who attended BMA from 1981–83, is president of the Upper Columbia Conference (Wash.). He previously served as vice president of Ministries and Ministerial and Men’s Ministries director for the Southwestern Union Conference (Texas). He also worked in the Carolina and Florida conferences as a pastor and Men’s Ministries director. He recognizes his years at BMA as instrumental in giving him the faith experience that strengthened his relationship with God.

Born in Cuba, Labrador’s family moved to Philadelphia when he was four. He lived next door to a girl named Evelyn, who moved away a few years later. Providence reintroduced them when they were 19, and they married in 1986. Thirty-two years later, they now have two married sons, who are firefighters.

In 2019 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the North American Division Family Ministries Department in recognition for his 20 years of work in Men’s Ministries.



Students Blessed Through Assist Program

Blue Mountain Academy has been blessed to be part of the Assist program, overseen by Southern Adventist University (Tenn.). Since 2006 the Assist and Partnering for Eternity (PFE) programs have facilitated relationships between students at Seventh-day Adventist academies and mentoring adults in their communities.

Craig Johnson, BMA’s Assist coordinator, shares

the following testimonies:

We now have an assist night shift made up of nine students who meet twice a week. In just two visits to the Orwigsburg Center, God has truly opened doors, not only for our program but also for our students.

Freshman Paul Masaka had his first visit with a gentleman. After the visit, Paul shared, “At the close of our conversation, the man asked me for a second time what my name was, and I replied ‘Paul.’ He immediately responded, ‘Oh, Paul, just like in the Bible?’” The gentleman asked Paul to bring his Bible the next time so they could study together.

Ellen DeJesus and her senior mentor had an equally strong connection. As we ended our visit one evening, we noticed that Ellen was not with the group. I went to find her, and as the elevator arrived at the second floor, Ellen and her mentor were waiting to step on. As we rode down, I can’t tell you how many times Ellen’s mentor hugged her and kept telling me that Ellen is such a sweet, young lady.

Even adult children compliment us. Sue Kramer told us that “[Her] mom is very happy when the girls come to visit her!” A special thanks goes out to Jenna Turner, the Life Enrichment director, for organizing this program with the senior mentors.



Freshman Paul Masaka (back row, left), freshman Giulia Alves and junior Ellen DeJesus (front row), pose with their mentors and staff at the community facility.

Students Share Talents at Professional Stadium

Students from Highland View Academy (HVA) recently shared their talents at the Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C., home to the Washington Wizards and the Washington Capitals.

The Highlanders, HVA's elite choral group, sang the national anthem to open a Boston Celtics vs. Wizards game. The school earned this opportunity by submitting an audition video. David Niño, HVA's music director, says the excitement of the performance "engaged and motivated students" for months.

When the day of the performance arrived, both Niño and the students felt nervous. Senior Mariah Lee-Wong says, "It finally hit me that we'd be singing in front of thousands of people." Niño was concerned about performance logistics. "There was all kind of noise: loud music throughout the speakers, players warming up, news reporters and TV cameras going back and forth. I thought to myself, 'How in the world will all these people pay attention to our music?'"



The Highlanders rehearse on the court before a Washington Wizards game.



HVA basketball player Toby Nweke scores a basket during a fast break.

Complete silence filled the arena before the group sang, however, and the performance went smoothly. Niño says, "I could tell how proud my students were to represent our school."

Senior Justin Tanguay says, "As we were walking off the court, a guy sitting in one of the courtside seats slapped all of our hands. ... As we were walking through the stadium, different people kept saying we did an awesome job. It was great that people actually took time to tell us that they enjoyed our performance."

A few weeks later, HVA students returned to the arena—this time to play basketball. Erik Borges, HVA's principal and athletic director, worked with Ryan Heilman, the athletic director from Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va., to rent the arena for a boys varsity basketball game between the two schools.

Senior Curtis Morris was elated to dunk on an NBA rim during warm-ups. "I now can say that I played on an NBA court," he says.

PHOTOS BY ERIK BORGES AND JOY BANKS

PFA POST



Visit us online at PINEFORGEACADEMY.ORG. Excellence is no accident.

Academy Develops Student Work Ethic

The school day is over, but not for students who attend Pine Forge Academy (PFA). Junior Joseph Cheatham, a student supervisor for the gym custodians, has “learned to work hard and how to get a job done,” in the PFA Career Readiness Program.

This program that bustles in the afternoon and evening hours on the academy campus provides 115 of the 146 academy students the opportunity to work toward the payment of their own tuition. “It gives me a sense of pride to know that I am helping to pay for my Christian education,” says Emmalouise Jackson, a freshman who works in the school cafeteria. “Some things I’ve learned are how to clean an industrial-sized kitchen properly and how to work with a team to get our job finished in time,” she shares.

Student labor is essential to the logistics of the PFA system. Training young people to value work by using their minds, spirit and hands has always allowed PFA to prepare their students for lives of self-sufficiency, excellence and service to their community. As stated by Ellen White, “There should have been in connection with the schools, establishments for various branches of labor, that the students might have employment, and necessary exercise out of school hours” (*Christian Education*, p. 11).

Following this advice, students are employed in



Sophomore David Joshua Longsworth works as a receptionist to help pay for his tuition.

PFA’s food service, maintenance/janitorial, administrative offices, dormitories, Public Relations/Media departments and the Assist program.

In 2016 Southern Adventist University (Tenn.) awarded PFA a \$35,000 Assist grant. Since that time, subsequent Assist grants have helped more than 50 students earn cash dollars toward their tuition. Assist promotes the development of long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between senior adult mentors and young people where all participants receive Christ’s blessings of service, growth and friendship.

Junior Irvin (Pax) Fordham states, “Working as the school’s videographer has provided me with opportunities to further my creative and video production skills. ... I feel this program is preparing me for future work environments.”

Senior Benjamin White, says, “I think receiving the Student Employee of the Year award my freshman year encouraged me to continue to do my best work so that now, in my senior year, I am one of the two student supervisors in the largest program department—the café.”

Cheatham adds, “I enjoy my job, and I believe that it is preparing me to work hard and is helping me build great leadership skills [that will enable me] to join the workforce in the future.”—Tracey Jackson



As part of the PFA Career Readiness Program, Vice Principal Jaymie Pottinger receives help from junior Pax Fordham.

Post is published in the *Visitor* by the Pine Forge Academy ■ P.O. Box 338, Pine Forge, PA 19548
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Spotlight

on Spencerville

Highlights from Spencerville Adventist Academy

Alumni Return to SAA in Different Role

For academies across the Columbia Union, it's that time of year when seniors can clearly see the finish line. No longer a fabled pot of gold at the end of the educational rainbow, but a real, tangible and fast-approaching deadline. While there are some who cannot possibly imagine life beyond the classroom, it's safe to say that, for the most part, students cannot wait to move on to bigger and better things. While many go out into the world to make a positive impact, a number of former students and graduates have chosen to come back home and change the world in a much more familiar setting. Even if the building is different.

For the 2018–19 academic year, Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) has more alumni working at the school than ever before. In fact, it has become something of a running joke among staff members who

have been here for quite some time that the school is now being run by students. In the high school alone, one-fourth of the teachers are former graduates.

If you look beyond the high school and extend alumni status to those who attended when it was a junior academy, SAA staff is comprised of eight former students in total. So then, with such a large number of the staff being former students, what makes SAA not only an important part of someone's past, but their *bigger and better* as well?

Jarrod Lutz ('07), a high school English teacher since 2012, says, "I've been going to SAA since second grade. This place means the world to me. It was a dream of mine to work here, and I feel truly blessed to be making an impact at the school that made such a big impact on me." Gregory Macalinao ('05), a P. E. teacher since 2015, echoes this sentiment. "It's an honor and privilege to work here at my alma mater. It's been a huge blessing to have been [teaching] here for the past four years, and I look forward to what's to come." Brittany Thorp ('07), business manager since 2015, captures the general consensus of all the alumni who work at SAA. Speaking of her position here and her love for the school, she says, "Being able to give back to the school and community that I have been a part of for my entire education is a dream come true. It's truly something that I'll cherish forever."



Alumni who currently serve at SAA are (back row, left to right) Terri Sheahin (1973–1984), elementary administrative assistant; Kaitlyn Masotta ('11), Spanish; Lisa Froelich ('10), band; Greg Macalinao ('05), P. E./health; (front row) Pamela Hernandez ('15), Pre-K aide; Brittany Thorp ('07), business manager; Jarrod Lutz ('07), English; and Linda McEowen (1957–1966), guidance counselor/P. E.

PHOTO BY GIGI MATTOX

SAA proudly presents their 20th musical, *The Sound of Music*, April 10, 11, 13 and 14.
 Tickets are available at spencerville.org/tickets, (410) 540-4989 or saadramatickets@gmail.com.

Spotlight is published in the *Visitor* by Spencerville Adventist Academy ■ 2502 Spencerville Road, Spencerville, MD 20868
 Phone: (301) 421-9101 ■ spencervilleacademy.org ■ Interim Principal, Jim Martz ■ Editor, Heidi Wetmore

SPRING VALLEY ACADEMY^{.ORG} CONNECTIONS

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO KNOW FOLLOW SHARE JESUS

News

High School Students ‘Stomp’ School Spirit

Spring Valley Academy (SVA) is proud to announce “S.T.O.M.P.” (Stand Together On Mutual Pride), a new high school club that promotes school spirit. Twelve students came together with a desire to encourage and foster more school spirit among the student body. Under the direction of registrar Kathy Burns, they organized and designed their own T-shirts and even traveled to an away varsity basketball game where they displayed their support in cheering alongside the SVA varsity cheerleaders. Junior Max Shull shares, “One of the most important things in every high school is positive school spirit. Our entire mission in the S.T.O.M.P. club is centered on just that!” One thing is certain: Though they may be few, they are fierce in enthusiasm and spirit!



S.T.O.M.P. team members (front row) Nicole Mikov, Rachel Breakie, Grace Betances, Shaine Price; (middle row) Grace Lawrence, Annika Cambigue, Devaney Ross; and (back row) Kobe Wilkins, Ally McCoy, Ayden McCoy, Deejon Jackson-Cook and Max Shull promote school spirit in the SVA hallways.

Student Leaders Attend Annual MLK Celebration

Each year the Centerville-Washington Diversity Council hosts a community breakfast at the Yankee Trace Golf Club in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year’s event featured keynote speaker David Anthony Johnson. A professional motivational speaker, Johnson is a solo artist, historical storyteller and orator,



SVA high school student leaders Max Shull, junior class president; Kobe Wilkins, freshmen class president; speaker David Anthony Johnson; Devaney Ross, senior class president; and Rachel Breakie, sophomore vice president, attend the annual MLK community breakfast.

who specializes in Martin Luther King speeches. An alumnus of Oakwood University (Ala.), Johnson has shared the stage with a slew of noteworthy figures, including Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Johnnie Cochran, Brian McKnight and Julian Bond.

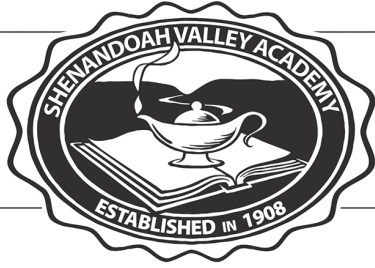
Based in Los Angeles, Johnson has been a songwriter and youth motivator for more than 25 years, working with young people as a church youth director and leader, a counselor in group homes and a juvenile probation officer. He credits his great-grandmother, the daughter of a Tennessee slave, with inspiring him to learn the speeches of King, because, according to his grandmother, King gave up his life for the cause of love.

Prior to the breakfast event, the entire student body assembled on the Friday before an all-school chapel to see Johnson give a presentation in acknowledgement of Black History Month.

Spring Valley Academy 50th Anniversary Alumni Weekend, April 26–27

Honor classes 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

For more details, visit springvalleyacademy.org.



IMPACT Shenandoah

Serve God – Value Knowledge – Accept a Life of Service

Message From the Alumni President

In anticipation of Alumni Weekend, we become nostalgic, remembering the “good old days.” We get out our yearbooks and other keepsakes. I have several clothing items from my days at Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA)—a couple of T-shirts, a varsity jacket and a flag football jersey. I am sure many of you have saved some memorabilia too. To my delight, my daughter McKenzie, now a senior at SVA, proudly wears these items to school from time to time.

As you walk around campus this coming Alumni Weekend, you will encounter current students in SVA sweat-shirts and other clothing. They, like us, now belong to the SVA club. We all wear things that tell others who we are and where we belong. Not only is it fun to dress up in these items, but it is also comforting to know we are part of something bigger.

Isaiah 61:10 says, “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness” (KJV).

For more than 110 years now, students have come to Shenandoah Valley Academy and become part of a family. SVA teaches students that they are God’s children and that He is giving them the most special clothing of all—His perfection.

Please prayerfully consider volunteering, making a financial gift or befriending a current student so that you can help SVA continue to clothe students like you for the future—in God’s robes—so that all will know who they are and where they are going.—*Kelli Fluharty Hanon ('88)*

Shenandoah Valley Academy Alumni Weekend

April 19-21, 2019

Friday, April 19 8:00am Golf Tournament 6:00pm Reception, Registration & Business Meeting 8:00pm Memories & Music Vespers	Sabbath, April 20 9:00am Registration 10:00am Worship Service (No Sabbath School) 12:00pm Honor Class Photos 12:00pm Lunch for All & Honor Reunions 4:00pm Alumni & Student Gospel Jam 5:00pm Alumni Vespers	Saturday Night, April 20 9:00pm Alumni Basketball (Ladies First) Sunday, April 21 9:30am Principal's View Breakfast
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Honor Classes: 1919 1929 1939 1949 1959 1969 1979 1989 1994 1999 2009 2019

Please RSVP for the Principal's View Breakfast only to janel.ware@sva-va.org or (540) 740-2202.

Impact is published in the *Visitor* by Shenandoah Valley Academy ■ 234 West Lee Highway, New Market, VA 22844
Phone: (540) 740-3161 ■ shenandoahvalleyacademy.org ■ Principal, Donald Short ■ Editor, Janel Haas Ware

www.ta.edu TATODAY

News you can use from Takoma Academy

Special Guest Encourages Chorale to ‘Hone Craft’

The Takoma Academy (TA) chorale and camerata is a vocal group consisting of 85 students ranging from grades 9–12. They seek to achieve excellence in all aspects of music—from performance, literacy and technical skill to music history and music in worship and ministry.

In addition to medaling at the 2018 World Choir games in South Africa, the choir has performed at the White House for former First Lady Michelle Obama; the Miss World competition at the U.S. Capitol; and have shared the stage with notable Christian artists such as CeCe Winans, Take 6 and Wintley Phipps. The choir has performed internationally in Canada, Bermuda, Jamaica, the Czech Republic and the Bahamas.

Earlier this year, TA’s chorale worked with one of their inspirations, Stacey Gibbs. He took time from his busy job in Detroit, where he serves as a clinician for university, high school, professional and church organizations, to visit the academy. Gibbs is a highly sought-after composer and arranger of spirituals. He wrote several choral pieces in the choir’s repertoire, including “Great God A’mighty,” “Ezekiel” and “Rock’a My Soul.”

Gibbs discovered his passion for music when he was in eighth grade. It wasn’t until his second year of college at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, however, that he began to understand the beauty of arranging harmony and melody.

Gibbs observed TA’s chorale at last year’s music festival, hosted in Indianapolis. He reveals, “I always admire conductors doing great work with their students, especially young singers, and I said to myself, ‘I think I need to get to know her and her chorale a little better.’”

The chorale enjoyed his teaching, especially when he added funk to his arrangements. When Gibbs interacts with youth in this industry, he keeps three



Stacey Gibbs, a composer and arranger of spirituals, shows the TA chorale a different arrangement to one of his songs.

important goals in mind: to enlighten, to educate and to give another perspective. He advises anyone who has a passion in composing to “hone in your craft and really begin to develop your personality, not the personality of another composer. We already have them. Individuality, uniqueness and creativeness, with good voicing, is important.”

Lulu Mupfumbu, TA’s choir director, emphasizes, “It was a great honor to have such a highly-accomplished musician working with us. He reminded the kids to always give their best and to never be mediocre.”

Gibbs concludes, “There is nothing without God.” Gibbs constantly reminds himself of his favorite scripture: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20, NKJV).

KETTERING COLLEGE

BOONSHOFT
CENTER FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



Students are visiting the Academic Support Center more than ever—in 2018, the center had 14,412 contacts compared to 11,231 contacts in 2017.

Students Find a Home Away from Home

By Lauren Brooks

The transition to college can be a challenge. For Stephanie Djuzeu Wandji, the initial adjustment was particularly difficult. The Cameroon native had recently immigrated to the United States and for her, attending Kettering College meant being separated from her husband and young son who stayed behind in Virginia.

"I was so lost at the beginning—everything around me was new," says Djuzeu Wandji, a recent alumna of Kettering College. "I had so many questions, but I didn't feel comfortable saying them out loud until I met Bev Ervin in the Academic Support Center."

Hundreds of students each year come to the Academic Support Center for services that include peer tutoring, learning style assessments, and help with stress management and test-taking skills. The center opened in 2002 and is led by Bev Ervin.

Visitors are greeted warmly and often given baked goods. Those who seem particularly stressed might even chill out with the center's "emotional support animal," a giant, stuffed teddy bear.

"Bev and I really connected, and soon I felt like I could ask her anything," said Djuzeu Wandji. Other caring faculty members took an interest in Djuzeu Wandji, and before long, Kettering College began to feel more like home.

That sense of home and being part of a family is a common theme among Kettering College students, who come from different cultures, academic backgrounds, and phases of life to prepare for careers in medicine. Longtime faculty and staff members say it's always been that way.

"Faculty and staff got to know the students by name and created real friendships with them," says Stella Freeman, who has worked at the College since 1982. "Many students, now, have families and are working while still getting their education. The school works to meet the needs of today's students, and the emphasis on creating a caring atmosphere is still there."





A New Generation of Learners

Periodically, I receive messages from another university president. The most recent message was from Dr. Robert E. Johnson, Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Here is an excerpt from his letter titled, Meeting the Needs of the Next Generation of Learners: The Agile University.

“Rooted in the origins of the academy to impart knowledge, the Agile University goes further by fostering learning, empowering people, and embracing change to add and create new value to society. Universities must be agile both to prepare students for the future of work, and because financial pressure to educate more students with fewer resources is the new normal. If the academy does not disrupt its status quo, it will be disrupted. For leaders to build the Agile University, they must be willing to take risks to do things differently. Taking risks means building systems that allow for selective experimentation to enhance the student

experience and allowing teaching and learning to take place in ways that are meaningful to the student and not merely convenient for the institution.”

Please continue to pray and support WAU as we make needed institutional adjustments to meet the needs of a new generation of learners.

This is Washington Adventist University
Weymouth Spence
President



Music Festival Makes a Lasting Impression



Pastor Anwar Ottley makes an impression on academy students visiting for Music Fest.

The Washington Adventist University (WAU) Department of Music recently hosted the 2019 Choral Festival featuring over 100 attendees from eight private academies.

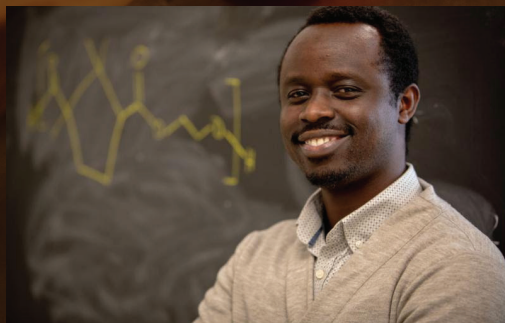
Festival participants were Blue Mountain Academy, Highland View Academy, Shenandoah Valley Academy, Richmond Academy, Spencerville Academy, Spring Valley Academy, Takoma Academy, and participating for the first time, Tri-City Christian Academy.

For four days, students took part in a focused and rigorous program, studying music and enhancing their skills. They were also exposed to a wide range of literature while learning alongside WAU music majors.

"One of the most interesting things about this event is that we get to collaborate with other schools and learn different music," said one participant.

On Friday night the WAU Festival Choir, composed of the Columbia Collegiate Chorale, the strings section of the New England Youth Ensemble and the Festival participants, held a Vespers Concert. Together, they performed such pieces as Mass in G major by Franz Schubert, Way Over in Beulah Lan' arranged by Stacey Gibbs, and We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder arranged by Horace Boyer.

In addition to preparing for their music, students had an opportunity to audition for scholarships. At the end of the Vespers program, 22 students received merit scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$9,000 renewable throughout their time at WAU.



Published on Polymers

Washington Adventist University (WAU) congratulates Olivier Nsengiyumva, Ph.D. on the recent co-publication of his research on environmentally friendly plastic. This publication was part of the work conducted through his doctoral studies with his advisor Stephen A. Miller.

The paper titled Synthesis, Characterization, and Water-Degradation of Biorenewable Polyesters Derived from Natural Camphoric Acid was published in the Green Chemistry Journal. Together with his advisor, Nsengiyumva synthesized a new polymer (plastic) that is capable of potentially degrading in water in a matter of two weeks. In general, plastic materials, such as those we use for take-out, are expected to take 500 years to break down.

On average, polymers used in our take-out containers or water bottles cannot handle temperatures above 75 degrees Celsius. However, some of the polymers studied by Nsengiyumva and Miller were able to handle temperatures from 100–125 degrees Celsius. This would allow products made of this material to withstand the heat from a hot beverage, or exposure to the sun without experiencing deformation.

The work which has been patented will take a few years to develop into a marketable product. Nsengiyumva looks forward to collaborating with his former advisor to improve the properties of these polymers, testing the toxicity of the by-products. However, The George and Josephine Butler Laboratory for Polymer Research is located in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Florida, he expects to play more of a consultant role.

Last Fall, Dr. Nsengiyumva joined the WAU campus community as an assistant professor of chemistry in the Department of Biology and Chemistry. He is excited to share his work with the Chemistry Department's Journal Club to increase their knowledge and encourage their love for polymers.

YOUR HEALING MINISTRY

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

NASA-like Operations Command Center Helps Patients Get Care Faster

By Christina Keresoma

Kettering Adventist HealthCare celebrated the opening on its new operations command center, powered by TeleTracking software, which helps coordinate patient flow throughout the system.

“The network operations command center’s mission is to care for the over 20,000 patient admissions and transfers every month by maximizing the efficiency of patient movement to get them quick access to the care that they need,” explains Nancy Pook, MD, medical director of the command center. “This will allow our physicians, nurses, and care teams to focus on patients while the center works to facilitate the movement of patients to the right place, the right bed, the right time—the first time.”

The facility coordinates the flow of all incoming, admitted, transferring, or discharging patients. The team appropriately places patients according to the level of care needed, available resources, and other factors—working closely and communicating with each unit. It currently centralizes the network’s patient transportation, patient bed placement, and path of discharge, with plans to centralize other operations in the coming years.

By using TeleTracking software, command center staff can view the status of every patient bed in real time in every network hospital and medical facility. This insight helps guide the command center in determining the best bed in the most appropriate care setting for the patient, based on a number of factors such as diagnosis and information from the admitting physician or EMS.



THE NEWS

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

Fort Hamilton Hospital Expanding Cancer Services

Fort Hamilton Hospital is expanding cancer services. The 12,600-square-foot third floor will be completely remodeled and includes 16 private and semi-private infusion bays to accommodate chemotherapy patients, the latest in radiation therapy technology, and 10 clinical exam rooms designed to enhance care for cancer patients. Construction is expected to be completed in spring 2019.

“The expansion of our cancer services will allow for better continuity of care for all cancer patients,” says Ron Connovich, president of Fort Hamilton Hospital.

The design for the new cancer care area follows the model designed for patients by patients.



Kettering Adventist Church Breaks Ground to Support Growing Families

As its congregation continues to grow, Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church broke ground on an expansion in February for a new children’s wing. The new space will be 24,000 square feet, have 13 classrooms, a front entrance and lobby, indoor and outdoor play areas, and a family resource library.



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EMPLOYMENT

THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more information and to apply for the position, contact Robert Young, Senior Vice President for Academic Administration, Southern Adventist University, P.O. Box 370 Collegedale, TN 37315.

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TRAVEL/VACATION

ISRAEL TOUR with Pastor Jim

Gilley and friends, November 17-25. \$3,295. Includes air, breakfast and dinner buffets daily, all tips and taxes. From New York, Chicago or Los Angeles; other departure cities available. Call Maranatha Tours at (602) 788-8864.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPENCERVILLE JUNIOR ACADEMY (SJA) AND SPENCERVILLE ADVENTIST ACADEMY (SAA) attendees and alumni are invited to homecoming/alumni weekend, May 10-11, celebrating 75 years of education. Friday vespers in the former SJA/SAA gymnasium! Sabbath morning at Spencerville church! Saturday night at the current school! A not-to-be-missed event. Check in at spencervilleacademy.org/alumni-weekend for details.

MANASSAS ADVENTIST PREPARATORY SCHOOL in Manassas, Va., will be celebrating 50 years of service to their community and church October 12. Festivities will begin at 9:30 a.m. Please invite all former staff and alumni by sharing the event page on Facebook: facebook.com/events/319882628794471.

SAVE THE DATE: UCHEE PINES INSTITUTE 50TH ANNIVERSARY, June 23-29. Speakers include Mark Finley and John Bradshaw. For more information, visit ucheepines.org or call (877) UCHEEPINES.

ANDREWS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Adventist elementary school, is having its Centennial Celebration, June 14 and 15. Come celebrate 100 years of Adventist education in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, especially if you are alumni. For more information, visit andrewsca.org, or email centennial@andrewsca.org.

LEGAL NOTICE

MOUNTAIN VIEW CONFERENCE QUINQUENNIAL SESSION

The first quinquennial session of the Mountain View Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at 10 a.m., Sunday,

Sunset Calendar

	April 5	April 12	April 19	April 26
Baltimore	7:34	7:41	7:48	7:55
Cincinnati	8:04	8:11	8:18	8:25
Cleveland	7:55	8:03	8:10	8:18
Columbus	7:59	8:06	8:13	8:20
Jersey City	7:24	7:31	7:39	7:46
Norfolk	7:30	7:36	7:42	7:48
Parkersburg	7:53	8:00	8:06	8:13
Philadelphia	7:28	7:35	7:42	7:49
Pittsburgh	7:47	7:55	8:02	8:09
Reading	7:31	7:38	7:46	7:53
Richmond	7:35	7:42	7:48	7:54
Roanoke	7:45	7:51	7:57	8:04
Toledo	8:03	8:10	8:18	8:26
Trenton	7:26	7:34	7:41	7:48
Wash., D.C.	7:34	7:41	7:48	7:55

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Bulletin Board

May 19, 2019, at Valley Vista Adventist Camp, 532 Valley Vista Lane, Becky's Creek Road, Huttonsville, WV 26273.

The purposes of the meeting are to elect the conference officers, conference committee, Board of Education, and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the ensuing term, as well as to transact other business as may properly come before the conference at that session.

A meeting of the Organizing Committee, described in Article IV, Section I, of the Bylaws, will convene at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, April 7, 2019, at the Parkersburg Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1901 Park Avenue, Parkersburg, WV 26101. The purposes of this meeting are to select members of the Nominating Committee for the session and to nominate members of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the ensuing term.

Michael Hewitt, *President*
Victor Zill, *Secretary*

OBITUARIES

BELCZYK, Mona, born August 23, 1940, in Hamilton, Ohio; died July 5, 2018, in her home in Belle Vernon, Pa. Mona, her

husband Stanley, and daughter Sherry were baptized into the old Charleroi Adventist church in Charleroi, Pa., in 1972. Later they adopted twins, and they became members of the church when they grew older. A few short years after their baptism, Mona began teaching an adult Sabbath School class, became the head deaconess and also served as Prayer Ministries coordinator. She held these leadership roles until the end of 2017, when she was no longer able because of her health. She loved writing poetry and true, short stories from her life experience. Mona had two major poems published in 2000 and are recorded in the books of poetry entitled *Poetry Elite*, *The Best Poets of the Year 2000*; the poetry forum book, *America at the Millennium*, *The Best Poets and Poems of the 20th Century*, and the poetry book, *The Blush of Morning*, *The International Library of Poetry*. One of her true-life short stories was also published in the *Review and Herald*, December 1974, entitled "A Christmas Witness." Survivors: her husband, Stanley; two daughters, Sherry Zelinsky and Lana Burgess; a son, Christopher Belczyk; 13 grandchildren, Candace Dolfi, Shannon Zelinsky, Carli and Garrett Poland, Tiffany Flick, Rebecca

Rechiel, Casey Shunk, Quincy Burgess, Rachael Ladisic, Kisiah Walters, Salina Belczyk, Michael Belczyk and Natasha Lunsford; nine great-grandchildren: Tyler Brookes, Brett and Brant Dolfi, Victora and Eric Rechel, Brantley and Leo Mcauliffe, Connor Walters and Cassidy Paige; and two brothers, Carl and Robert Wolford.

CUSACK, Betty Ann, born September 7, 1937, in Ireland, W.Va.; died November 25, 2018, in Wheeling, W.Va. She was a member of the Wheeling church. Betty is survived by her son, John Cusack of Wheeling, W.Va.; and two daughters, Sandra Hastings of North Carolina, and Carol Cusack of Phoenix, Ariz.

DAWSON, Derald E., born February 6, 1937, in Takoma Park, Md.; died October 9, 2018, in Hagerstown, Md. He was a member of the Hagerstown church. Donnie retired in 1999 from the Review and Herald Publishing Assn., after 44 years of service as a shipping and receiving specialist. He was an avid train enthusiast and collected train memorabilia. Donnie also loved gardening. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; sons, Eddie of W.Va., and Bill of Hagerstown; his daughter, Susan

Harsh of Hagerstown; a sister, Shirley Reading of Hagerstown; four grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

MOORE, William E., born July 23, 1945, in Johnstown, Pa.; died July 5, 2018, in Johnstown. He was a faithful member of the Johnstown church. Survivors: his wife, Ruth J. Moore of Johnstown; his sons, Edward Moore of Johnstown, Thomas R. Grove of Grand Prairie, Texas, and James K. Grove of Wilmore, Pa; grandsons, Kevin Grove of Wilmore, Pa., James Moore of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Mark Grove of Grand Prairie; granddaughter, Summer Grove of Salix, Pa., and Madeline Grove of Wilmore; and two great-grandchildren.

SMITH, Delores, born May 31, 1923, in Warren, Pa.; died November 2, 2017, in Reading, Pa. She was a member of the Kenhorst Boulevard church in Kenhorst, Pa. She cooked at Blue Mountain Academy for five years. She is survived by her daughters, Linda (Denis) Rettger of Mt. Jewett, Pa., and Evelyn Lum of Los Angeles, Calif.; her sons, David Smith of Shoemakersville, Pa., Randy Smith of Columbus, Ohio, and Jerry (Annette) Smith of Hamburg, Pa.; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

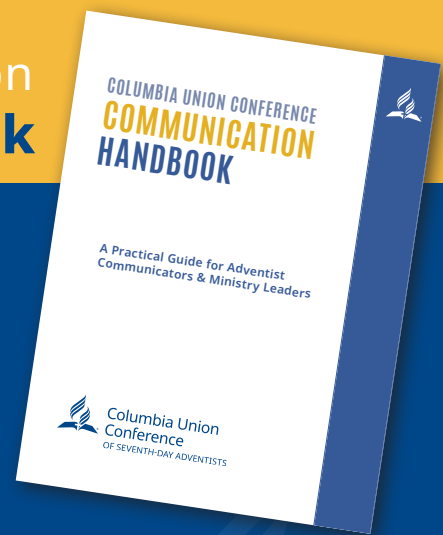
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