The LORD will guide you always...
You will be like a spring whose waters never fail.
[Isaiah 58:11]

ANNUAL REPORT 2012
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COVER ART » A water drop. Art by Sellingpix | Dreamstime.com
KOREAN CAMP MEETING
May 17-19
Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, Ga.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE CAMP MEETING
May 22-25
Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tenn.

OLDE TIME CAMP MEETING
June 6-8
Meister Memorial Church, Deer Lodge, Tenn.

HISPANIC CAMP MEETING
June 7-9
Georgia-Cumberland Academy, Calhoun, Ga.

SOUTHERN DEAF FELLOWSHIP CAMP MEETING
July 31-August 4
Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, Ga.

NORTHEAST TENNESSEE CAMP MEETING
October 4-5
The Oaks, Greeneville, Tenn.
Other issues of Communiqué bring information and inspiration, stories of how churches and schools are engaging with their communities, involving their youth, and reaching the unreached. Indeed, we are committed to “growing disciples through shared leadership.”

This edition of Communiqué, however, includes our Annual Report, which provides a different perspective. Looking at the whole of the conference, what trends do we see in membership, baptisms, school enrollments, and finances for 2012?

Beyond the numbers and statistics, I hope you will see the work of committed members, faithful stewards, dedicated teachers, and effective pastors. Think of a child learning to read, not only opening doors of discovery in the school library, but beginning a lifelong devotional experience in God’s Word. Celebrate with a new believer, enveloped in the warmth of God’s forgiveness and a newfound sense of belonging to a local church family, now sensing an urgent mission to share this Good News with others. Affirm a group of committed lay members planting a new mission group in the desire to see God’s Kingdom grow. In each number, imagine a person.

Yes, we celebrate God’s goodness looking back at 2012. But we also look to the future claiming this promise: “The LORD will guide you always; ... You will be like a ... spring whose waters never fail” (Isa. 58:11, NIV).

God’s work in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference will go forward with His guidance and in His refreshing power.

Yours, and His,
With God’s blessing, Georgia-Cumberland continues to see membership growth. National demographic trends show people moving from the North to the South, and without doubt, we benefit from those trends. But our emphasis on evangelism and discipleship has also contributed to our growth, adding 1,039 individuals through baptism and profession of faith in the last 12 months.

Congregational growth continues to expand as well. In 2012, we organized two new churches, three new companies, and five new mission groups. Mission groups represent the first step toward church organization and are generally small groups that meet in homes, businesses, or store fronts. Companies have grown both numerically and organizationally, have more members helping to lift the load of leadership, and have demonstrated a growing tithe base and strategic plan of evangelism. This ultimately leads to organization as a church, meaning the congregation has shown a maturity in evangelistic planning, lay leadership, and stewardship, fully supporting the sisterhood of churches known as the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Tim Leffew, Publishing director, leads our team of literature evangelists going door-to-door with truth-filled literature. Once again in 2012, our publishing team led the Southern Union (and all of North America) with $1.8 million in sales. Twenty-two dedicated individuals do this as a full-time job, with another 120 students joining them for shorter periods during the summer and part-time during the school year. Our Light America program brings 35 foreign students to the United States for one year, helping them learn English and earn enough to complete their college education back home. But most importantly, their primary passion is soul-winning. All told, our literature evangelists last year were directly responsible for 36 of our baptisms!

Our Communication Department is directed by Tammy Fisher and includes graphic designer Britni Brannon and videographer Brian Young. Together they advertise, tape, and report on conference events, create training videos (see vimeo.com—search “gccsda”), produce the publication you are holding, and maintain a growing presence on the web (gccsda.com) and on social media.

by Ed Wright, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president
On March 4, Victor Maddox officially accepted the invitation to serve as the new vice president for Pastoral Ministries and Evangelism for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Maddox filled the vacancy left by Harold Cunningham, who transitioned into a new phase of life ministry locally in January.

“I am excited about getting to know all the pastors, their families, and the churches they work with,” Maddox said. “I am also excited about working with the administration and the staff of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and the opportunity to be used of God to impact His Kingdom.”

Since 2009, Maddox has served as the third district ministerial field secretary for the Florida Conference. He previously served as senior pastor of the Northwest Dade Church in Hialeah, Fla., and the Adventist Praise & Worship Center in Pembroke Pines, Fla., which he was instrumental in planting. He also has served as associate pastor of the Miami Temple and North Miami churches in Miami, Fla.

Maddox’s impressive background includes serving four years in the United States Marine Corps before completing his undergraduate work at Southern College (now Southern Adventist University). He went on to be sponsored by the Florida Conference to receive his Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University and then completed advanced theological studies at Barry University in Miami Shores, Fla., with an emphasis in social action and church planting. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University.

“The strength of Victor’s qualifications and experience immediately attracted the attention of our search committee,” said Ed Wright, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president. “Yet beyond a strong résumé, Victor brings a record of strong spiritual leadership, of relational team management, of proven administrative effectiveness, and a passion for supporting and growing pastors. The choice was clear and compelling.”

Maddox said “the sense of a call to mission” was what drew him to step into his new role. “I believe the Georgia-Cumberland Conference has a great mission to accomplish in this territory, and God has extended the privilege for me to take part in it,” he said. “I’m totally honored.”

As vice president for Pastoral Ministries and Evangelism, Maddox said he will seek to be a source of inspiration, encouragement, and growth.
“I hope to inspire every pastor, chaplain, lay pastor, etc. to realize that they are at the heart of God’s work in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference,” he said. “When they are able to experience conference support in its various forms; experience personal fulfillment in their ministry, family, and personal life; and have the opportunities for continual spiritual and professional growth, then I believe God will have worked through my ministry to accomplish these important goals here in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.”

Maddox and wife, Pauline, have four children: Victor II (17), Taylor (14), Amber (12), and Ethan (8). His hobbies and interests include spending time with his family, studying, playing racquetball, learning about astronomy, camping, doing home improvement, singing, counseling/coaching, and seeing the people of God enjoy life and grow into disciple-makers for Jesus.

story by Britni Brannon, Communication assistant director

photo by Brian Young, Communication assistant director

PASTORAL MINISTRIES
BY THE NUMBERS

125
Full-time pastors

11
Contract and stipend pastors

10
Missional and lay pastors

1086
Number of baptisms (1039) and re-baptisms (47) in 2012

Number of languages that Georgia-Cumberland Conference members worship in each Sabbath: American Sign Language, Arabic, Creole-French, English, Ghanaian, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Sudanese.
Every May, schools are given a planning day to strategize and spiritually plan for the next school year. In partnership with pastors and local leaders, a discipleship plan is developed and submitted for review. This year the initiative produced two great ideas. The first was in Lacey Sucket’s classroom in Collegedale, Tenn., where worship bags were developed for the second-grade students to take home to become the leaders in family worship. The second was at the Tri-City Tennessee school. Led by Christine Baskin, church families became the catalyst for providing special Friday worships. Both of these concepts embrace the Education Department’s mission of growing disciples through collaborative relationships and its vision that recognizes our students as His children. It also captures the home-church-school connection proven to be critical in winning the hearts of children.

The 2012-2013 school year also included the following highlights:

- About 2,500 students and 227 Christian educators in 33 elementary schools, three elementary/junior academies, and three senior academies
- An iPad for all teachers
- Participation in the NAD national teachers convention by Education employees
• $5,000,000 endowment earmarked for worthy-student scholarships at Georgia-Cumberland Academy
• Implementation of a new math curriculum with web-based resources designed to align closer with common core standards

During this school year, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference became the denominational leader in bullying prevention training, being recognized by the Center for Conflict Resolution and the Versafund Bullying Prevention Initiative for the North American Division (NAD). The GCC is the first conference in the NAD to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This initiative will be a focal point in the 2013-2014 school year.

Evidence produced by the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education in 2010-2011 shows that 97.5 percent of students enrolled in Adventist academies graduate on time, compared to 78 percent of public school students, and 88.6 percent of academy students go on to college, as compared to 63.2 percent of public school students—impressive numbers indicating that Adventist education is preparing children for higher education!

Challenges are plenty with tuition costs continuing to rise, but we are humbled by God’s continued presence in the educational endeavors of our conference and praise Him for blessing so abundantly.

Please continue to prayerfully remember our youth as we “rightly train them for His work” (Christian Education, p. 230.3).
Church Ministries strives to prepare members for ministry and assist them in attracting people to God’s kingdom. This was demonstrated in 2012 as leaders conducted more than 60 training events and rallies. Church Ministries also offers seven regional camp meetings each year. Like ripples in a lake, the far-reaching results of these events are endless. It’s about relationship—with Him and each other.

**3-POINT PLAY MINISTRIES**
Led by E.W. Dempsey, Adult Ministries director and former coach, 3-Point Play seeks to introduce children to Jesus through a four-day, summertime basketball camp. In 2012, Dempsey held camps in Eatonton, Ga., and Perry, Ga., using the ministry as an entry point to reach families. The camp has attracted the attention of other ministry professionals, and Dempsey was asked to present a training class at the Festival of the Laity on September 13-15 in Toronto, Canada.

**ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**
Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) is a ministry for students on non-Adventist public or private college and university campuses. Student leaders coordinate 10 active chapters at ETSU, Emory, GA Tech, GSU, KSU, TTU, UGA, UTC, UTK, and UWG. The CONNECT: ACF Leaderhip Conference is held annually, and about 65 students/advisers attended the 2012 training event. ACF also holds Leadership Reboot, a weekend of training just for student leaders, and 14 student leaders attended last year.

**ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES/DISASTER RESPONSE**
After the March 2, 2012, tornado in Hamilton County, Tenn., Terry Haight, Disaster Response coordinator, led this ministry in running a multi-agency warehouse that was open for six weeks with the help of 12 volunteers who put in 1,452 hours. They processed $61,233 worth of donations and served two distribution centers and 12 other agencies. Following Hurricane Sandy, Disaster Response teamed up with the Samaritan Center in Ooltewah, Tenn., and Bill Brown Trucking, and over seven days, 10 volunteers put in 84 hours and collected approximately $25,000 worth of goods, which were delivered to Toms River, N.J. Disaster Response trainings were also held in Greeneville, Tenn., and Cordele, Ga., collectively training about 50 people.

In 2012, ACS South Georgia, coordinated by Carolyn Lipscomb, distributed 142,798 pounds of food at a cost of $15,889, provided food bags to 12,624 homes, and in the health screening ministry, screened just under 2,000 individuals at a total of 13 events.
ADVENTURERS/PATHFINDERS
The 2012-2013 enrollment for Adventurers was 1,101—an increase of 288 from the previous year—and about 250 leaders attended the Adventurer Ministries Convention in September.

Pathfinders saw an increase of 396 for the 2012-2013 enrollment and are 2,606 strong. More than 1,600 attended the Southern Union Camporee (held every 5 years) at Camp Kulaqua in High Springs, Fla., in October. Then in November, 250 participated in Pathfinder Teen Challenge. Other events included Drill Instructor Training and Pathfinder Leadership Convention—the latter drawing 350 leaders.

The department also partnered with the North American Division and Southern Union to hold the annual Children’s Ministries Convention, which trains local church leaders on reaching young people through Sabbath school, Vacation Bible School, and other programs. In 2012, about 190 people attended the event.

BIBLE RESEARCH
Bible Research is an online resource that provides video Bible studies and allows individuals to sign up to receive written and/or DVD studies through the mail—all for free. In 2012 alone, 1,975 individuals received lessons, and approximately 10,400 studies were received, graded, and returned. Close to 5,700 books were mailed out. A report of the number of distributed DVDs and CDs follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DVDs</th>
<th>CDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Series</td>
<td>3,037</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy Series</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace in the Storm</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTH MINISTRIES
Health Ministries hosted 17 health rallies and eight leadership training events throughout last year. The department also organized five lectures with Don Hall at Collegedale Camp Meeting, sponsored four health testing/screening days, and held a conference-wide seminar with Vicki Griffin in Chattanooga. Additionally, E.W. Dempsey, Health Ministries leader, and Becky Campbell, Dempsey’s assistant, provided leadership and support for three cities—Lenoir City, Tenn., Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga., and Benton, Tenn.—that hosted an event for Let’s Move Day on Sept. 22 and had a presence at a health fair in Lenoir City, Tenn., the Murray in Motion Community Health & Fun Day at Cohutta Springs Conference Center, the Family Fall Festival at Advent Home in Calhoun, Tenn., and the New Member Retreat at Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

The year’s InStep for Life totals show 92,573.91 miles were reported to the Conference Office, and 130,923 miles were reported online for a total of 223,496.91 miles.
LATIN-AMERICAN MINISTRIES
Latin-American Ministries held four main programs in 2012. More than 200 attended the Laymen Festival with guest speaker Alejandro Bullón; 150 learned about meeting the needs of their churches’ young at the Children’s Ministries Convention; 40 women attended the Hispanic Women’s Ministries Leadership Training; 320 women and teen girls attended the Hispanic Women’s Retreat; and 130 were trained through department events in conjunction with the Atlanta Metropolitan Hispanic Church.

MEN’S MINISTRIES
The 2012 Men’s Retreat featured guest speaker Philip Samaan, D.Min., a religion professor at Southern Adventist University, who spoke on “Christ’s Way of Affirmation.” The event was held at Cohutta Springs, and more than 50 men experienced a blessed weekend, filled with spiritual messages, fellowship, and outdoor activities.

PERSONAL MINISTRIES
Five personal ministries rallies and eight leadership training events were held at churches throughout Georgia and Tennessee last year. The department also set up a booth at the New Member Retreat in December and held two conference-wide training events: the Layman Revival Seminar with Philip Samaan in February and the ShareHim Homeland Lay Evangelism Training with Ralph Ringer in November.

PIONEER OUTREACH
Pioneer areas are those where there is little to no Adventist presence and/or no local Adventist church. Four cities—Hefflin, Ala.; Wartburg, Tenn.; Perry, Ga.; and Vidalia, Ga.—were the main focus of this ministry last year. Evangelistic presentations, health screenings, health talks, and nutrition classes were brought to these areas to minister to and establish a relationship with those in the surrounding area.

PRAYER MINISTRIES
About 225 people registered to attend the 2012 Prayer Conference. The theme was “By His Spirit” and featured guest speaker Dennis Smith. Mark Piotrowski, Prayer Ministries coordinator, also held a Prayer Ministry Day at churches in Macon, Ga.; Loganville, Ga.; Alpharetta, Ga.; Morristown, Tenn.; and Hiram, Ga.
PRISON MINISTRIES
To encourage lay participation in this powerful ministry, a conference-wide prison ministries training event, presented by Cleveland Houser, was held in August at the Conference Office; 64 people attended. In addition, three health classes were presented to the incarcerated at Walker State Prison in Rock Spring, Ga.

WOMEN’S MINISTRIES/FAMILY MINISTRIES
A highlight in Women’s Ministries are the retreats, which provide a place for women to be spiritually, physically, and emotionally refreshed. More than 300 women attended the Spring Retreat, and 170 attended the Fall Retreat. Part of the Spring Retreat is geared specifically for teens, and many of the young girls now come every year. Sixty women also attended the annual Leadership Training and were eager to learn how to more effectively lead ministries in their home churches.

The annual Marriage Retreat continues to build momentum as couples see the positive results of being intentional about making their relationship better. Eighty couples attended the 2012 event, held Oct. 26-28 at the WinShape Retreat in Mt. Berry, Ga.

The God in Shoes Ministry continues to be an effective avenue for connecting women in the church with women in the community. Seven God in Shoes outreach events took place in 2012, involving 400 volunteers and serving more than 1,050 guests.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
High School Retreat, held each February and designed for students not attending an Adventist academy, brought together 85 teens for a weekend of fellowship. That same weekend, six young adults attended the Life Group training, which disciples them to lead small groups in their home churches. Thirty-five attended the next Life Group training in August. A highlight each year is the Youth and Young Adult Festival. About 1,800 attended the March event, spending the day in worship and praise.

A big focus of Youth Ministries is summer camp. In 2012, 85 Cohutta Springs Youth Camp staff built relationships with 1,387 campers from Bermuda, California, Florida, France, Georgia, Indonesia, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and more! This ministry ultimately resulted in 337 decisions for baptism along with 1,107 commitments and re-commitments to Christ. CSYC also added to their campus with 6.5 miles of mountain bike trails.
A good friend of mine always answered the same way any time I asked how he was doing. “Better than I deserve!” he’d say. And so it is for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Through the generosity of our members, all of our needs are being met, and God has blessed us to even meet a few of our wants!

God has called His church into prosperity, not into failure. This is affirmed in 2 Cor. 9:12 (NIV): “This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.”

I am continually amazed at the faithfulness and generosity of our members during these difficult financial times. In 2012, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference exceeded $41 million in tithes for the first time, representing a gain of 1 percent. We also received almost $700,000 through wills and estates managed by the Planned Giving Department. Praise God for people who chose to remember the church with their legacy gifts. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference ended the year with a blessing—a gain of $1 million.

All financial indicators suggest the conference is in good standing financially. During 2012, it took $115,079 per day to operate the ministries of the conference. At the end of 2012, our net cash operating reserves would support our ministries for about 140 days (90 days is the minimum policy requirement). Our churches and schools continue to meet and make their building loan payments on time, with many of them actually paying off their loans early!

The executive committee authorized the establishment of two $5 million endowments. The first endowment will support the worthy student fund at Georgia-Cumberland Academy. This endowment is projected to generate about $200,000 annually to help make an educational experience at GCA possible for more students. The second endowment is to support the capital repairs and expansion needs of the Cohutta Springs Conference Center. The center is now more than 30 years “young,” and these funds will assist in keeping it a beautiful place where visitors can relax, refresh, and experience Jesus.

Thank you for honoring your commitment to Christ and ministry by giving your tithes and offerings.

Thank you for honoring your commitment to Christ and ministry by giving your tithes and offerings. It is an awesome responsibility to be trusted with the Lord’s resources, and together we are making a difference for eternity!
If you are currently paying taxes to the state of Georgia, join others in converting those dollars to scholarships for Adventist Christian education. The Georgia Department of Education Expense Credit provides individual taxpayers with the opportunity to contribute to qualified Student Scholarship Organizations (SSOs) and receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against their Georgia income-tax liabilities. The monies contributed to the SSO provide scholarships to students who attend private K-12 schools.

A few things to keep in mind:
• The taxpayer elects which school receives their tax dollars
• The state caps assistance at $50 million (funds ran out last year in July)
• The deadline is December of each year
• Go online to sso.gccsda.com to learn more and to download the form
I decided long ago that I would be willing to assist any person in need if I was able. There have been a few times when I have changed tires, bought gas, purchased meals, or provided a lift for someone. Once, on my way to Nashville, Tenn., I picked up a hitchhiker who turned out to be a runaway student from one of our boarding academies.

However, there have been many more times when I have driven by someone along the road who could’ve used my assistance. I was either running late for an appointment, in the wrong lane, had passengers in my vehicle, or I didn’t want to fuss with it at the time.

The story of the Good Samaritan, as told by Jesus, speaks loudly to my conscience when I fail to follow through on my resolution to be an active Good Samaritan. Jesus spoke the parable in answer to a testy lawyer who had asked, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” The Lord responded by questioning the lawyer about the writing of the law. The lawyer summed up the law as loving God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. He further emphasized loving your neighbor as yourself. The story of the Good Samaritan followed as the lawyer, attempting to justify himself, asked, “And who is my neighbor?”

To answer, Jesus told about a certain man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed, beaten, and left for dead by the side of the road. Sometime later a certain priest came along and passed by on the other side of the road. A Levite also passed him by on the other side and refused to assist him. Finally, the Lord continued, a certain Samaritan came along and had compassion on him. He tended to his wounds, put him on his own animal, and transported him to the nearest inn, where he ministered to his needs. When the Samaritan left, he provided additional funding to assist with further care.

“So,” questioned Jesus, “which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” The obvious answer was the Samaritan. “Go and do likewise” commanded the Lord. Certainly, for a faithful steward, it is the right thing to do!

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### STEWARDSHIP: THE GOOD SAMARITAN

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### FINANCIAL REPORT

The figures below provide an overview of conference finances as of March 31, 2013. Every member who is cooperating with God in the faithful stewardship of tithes and offerings makes our ministry and outreach possible. Thank you for your faithfulness!

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013 (13 weeks)</th>
<th>2012 (13 weeks)</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tithe</td>
<td>$8,788,789</td>
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<td>Local Church Giving</td>
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<td>$6,441,394</td>
<td>-$183,389</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Church Giving</td>
<td>$216,084</td>
<td>$233,896</td>
<td>-$17,812</td>
<td>-7.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While Adventurers have held a Family Fun Day for many years, this year marked the first time the event spanned an entire weekend, making it a mini-camporee, of sorts.

More than 1,000 kids, parents, and staff from 31 Conference clubs gathered at Cohtta Springs on March 29-31 for the occasion. The theme was “All Creatures Great and Small (The Lord God Made Them All)” and focused on the story of Noah and the Flood. Special guests throughout the weekend included Noah’s wife; his son, Shem; and Noah himself, all sharing their story about how God took care of them while they built and then lived on the ark.

Clubs also got to participate in a decorated wagon contest, and families enjoyed a myriad of activities—from making balloon animals to visiting with live animals at the petting zoo to witnessing the construction of a “real” ark.

“The best part is to ride on the [pontoon] boat and go to the petting barn,” said Sarai Aguilar, from the Dalton Hispanic Adventurer Club. “We had fun.”

The weekend also hosted the annual poster contest. The winner’s drawing is made into a patch for next year’s event. This year’s winner was Loralei Lee from the Atlanta North Club.

A “baby crocodile” from the Lawrenceville Hispanic Club emerges from his egg.

Guest musician Bill Young and several Adventurers lead the group in praise songs.

Connie Reynolds, playing the part of Noah’s wife, speaks for the Sabbath morning program.

Ben Roy, from The Science Zone, and volunteers use household items to simulate how dolphins make and play with vortex rings under water.

Duane Foreman and his team built an ark out of metal crates, PVC pipes, and cardboard, bringing the story of Noah and his family to life.

Brandon Cortez, member of the Stone Mountain Hispanic Club, makes friends with the billy goat at the petting zoo.
In the words of a few of the students, one lesson they will take with them is:
- God has already written my story.
- Everyone has a story that needs to be told.
- Our stories begin and end with God.
- It’s important to listen to God’s story about me.

This was the message that Angelo Grasso shared during our sixth CONNECT. Grasso has been serving as the Adventist chaplain at Harvard and as an associate pastor at the Boston Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church. He connected brilliantly with the students during the main sessions and also during one of the workshops on interfaith dialogue. Two other workshops about “telling our story” and “telling the story of Jesus” were led by Krystal Barnes (assistant chaplain at Advent House) and Michaela Lawrence Jeffery, respectively.

During the last two CONNECTs, a highlight has been a student panel discussion that focuses on what’s working or not working on their campuses. This time continues to showcase the great student leadership and initiative that makes ACF happen.

CONNECT’s purpose is threefold: worship, discipleship, and fellowship. It is a linking point for Adventist students who attend public (and non-Adventist private) colleges, and it is also a leadership training time so that students can better impact their campuses for the glory of God. We hope to gather together again in 2014!
The Women’s Spring Retreat, held March 15-17, drew more than 300 women to Cohutta Springs Conference Center for a weekend that reminded each one just how much God loves her—that she is His precious daughter.

In her messages, guest speaker Elizabeth Talbot used earthly relationships—between parent and child and husband and wife—as examples of God’s intense and unfathomable love for each of us.

“It’s reminded me of who I am in Christ,” said Avonda Worrell, member of the Atlanta Southside Church. “Sometimes we get lost in the politics and religiosity, and she’s reminded me that we’re loved by Jesus no matter what.”

The theme was “God’s Greatest Random Act of Kindness: Love,” and it not only spoke of God’s kindess, but also encouraged the women to practice acts of kindness toward each other during the retreat and in their lives at home.

The weekend also brought together 57 teens for their own program with guest speaker Camille Brace, who discussed God-centered dating.

Jasmine Smith, member of Hamilton Community Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., said she attended the teen retreat with several friends and has enjoyed “talking to other people about their relationship with God” and appreciated that Brace could relate to the girls and “understands where we’re coming from.”

For adults and teens alike, attendees went home with renewed energy and deeper confidence in their Heavenly Father.

“We may think we’re not worthy or we may be trying to please other people, trying to get acceptance,” said Linda Abercrombie, member of the Douglasville, Ga., Church, “but just knowing that we don’t have to do all that, knowing that He loves us regardless of how we are. He wants us to do better, but He loves us regardless.”

Guest speaker Elizabeth Talbot holds a baby doll as she uses the parent-child relationship to illustrate God’s love for His children.
Jan. 20 was a chilly Sunday, but eagerly congregated outside of Green Thumb Vegetarian Kitchen were 25 people from the surrounding area, as well as from places only word of mouth could reach. They all shared one goal: to kick-start a new lifestyle by learning to prepare healthy, delicious foods.

Green Thumb is run and operated by Wildwood Lifestyle Center and Hospital in Wildwood, Ga., and at the door, everyone received the “Seven Secrets—Healthy Cuisine Your Family Will Love” cookbook, which has proven to be a remarkable tool in the lives of Wildwood Lifestyle Center guests. Wildwood staff then demonstrated common recipes like pizza, lemon pie, and meatballs—all made with healthy ingredients like tofu, walnuts, pineapple, and cashews. Green Thumb’s manager, Kevin Lee, is a New York City-trained chef with more than 20 years of experience. Lee gave the students a real treat when he taught them the art of making simple sushi rolls.

The event was the second of many community-focused cooking schools, a practical approach in touching the hearts of those from the northwest Georgia and Chattanooga area. The organizers see offering the cooking school as one way of following the Savior’s method of “ministering to personal needs and winning their confidence” (MH 143) and trust that as the bodies of those they minister to regain vigor, the Lord will bid them grasp His hand as He brings renewed life to their souls, as well.

Like Green Thumb on Facebook
facebook.com/GreenThumbRestaurant
On Feb. 24, 2013, I had the privilege along with 58 other Collegedale Academy (CA) students, staff, and volunteers to board an airplane to Panama and head to the province of Chiriquí for the school’s biennial mission trip. We were on our way to run a medical clinic in the town of Concepción and help finish building several classrooms at Instituto Adventista Panameño (IAP), an Adventist boarding school.

“Our first day in Panama stood out to me the most,” said Alex Pervis, a junior. “During the bus ride to Chiriquí, everyone was asleep, and I was just looking out the window at all the places we passed. I saw trash everywhere, even outside the city. All the livestock were extremely underfed, with their ribs protruding. Many houses were in such bad condition that I would have thought they were deserted if it weren’t for the people there. The bad conditions just really stood out against the beautiful natural landscape.”

The surprises did not stop with the bus ride. We reached the school long after dark and hurriedly took our luggage to our rooms, where we realized that we would not be the only creatures occupying the dorm. We could hear bats flying around in the attic, and occasionally they would find a hole in a ceiling tile and fly in and out of bedrooms. Lizards climbed on the walls and windows, chirping occasionally as if to greet us, and cockroaches—from the size of a fingernail to that of a child’s hand—skittered up walls, in closets, and under mattresses. The first two nights were filled with horrified screams and the sounds of shoes and other objects being used against the intruders.

The work projects started in earnest the morning after we arrived. The medical team headed off to the Adventist church in Concepción, while the building crew stayed at the school. Students on the medical team treated hundreds of patients every day. Each person on the team witnessed the Panamanian people’s gratitude through beaming smiles and broken English.

“I was in the lab part of the clinic checking vital signs on a woman. While she had a thermometer in her mouth, I told her that her bracelet was really pretty. She handed it to me and allowed me to see it. After I was finished, I tried to give it back to her, but

continued on page 29 [see PANAMA]
2013

put some color in your summer

DATE
June 2-9
June 9-16
June 16-21
June 23-30
June 30-July 7
June 30-July 7
July 7-14
July 7-14
July 16-21

CAMP
Junior I
Junior II
Adventure Camp
Tween/Pathfinder Honors
Teen I
Rock Solid I
Teen II
Rock Solid II
Family Camp

AGES
10-12
10-12
7-9
12-13
13-17
16-18
13-17
16-18
All

ACTIVITIES
Archery/Rocketry
Basketball
BMX Biking
Creative Arts
Digital Photography
Drama
Fishing
Fit for Life
Gymnastics
Horsemanship
Mountain Biking
Mountain Lore
Music Performance
Paintball
Pathfinder Honors
Soccer
Sports
Swimming/Blob
Videography
Wakeboarding/Skiing
Wilderness Survival

scan to download the 2013 brochure

REG CAMPS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CAMP</th>
<th>AGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2-9</td>
<td>Golf Camp I</td>
<td>13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2-9</td>
<td>Paintball Camp I</td>
<td>13-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2-9</td>
<td>Rock Climbing Camp</td>
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<td>June 2-21</td>
<td>Fit for Life I</td>
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<tr>
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<td>C.I.T. Camp</td>
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<td>June 23-30</td>
<td>Ultimate RAD Camp</td>
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<td>June 23-July 14</td>
<td>Fit for Life II</td>
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<td>June 30-July 7</td>
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<td>July 7-14</td>
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<td>July 14-21</td>
<td>Surf Camp</td>
<td>13-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every week (June 2-July 14)</td>
<td>W.I.T. Camp</td>
<td>15+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REGISTER TODAY » 706-602-7346 » campinfo@gccsda.com » WWW_CS-YC.COM
Around 300 people gathered in the gym at Wimbish Adventist School in Macon, Ga., for South Georgia Camp Meeting, held April 5-6. South Georgia Camp Meeting is the first of seven annual camp meetings sponsored by the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Guest speaker was Stan Patterson, who currently serves as chair and associate professor for the Christian Ministry Department at Andrews University Theological Seminary. Patterson’s theme was “The Upside Down Church,” and he shared that the reason Seventh-day Adventists are “upside down” is because God made us that way. By “upside down,” Patterson means that the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization is run or operated by the votes of constituent members, not by the conference or even the world church; each member has a say. He noted that it is a privilege to be a representative at constituency meetings every five years.

“If we can come to grips with what it means to be an upside down church,” he said, “it will change our lives.”

Watch Stan Patterson’s messages on “The Upside Down Church” at vimeo.com/channels/gcccampmeeting
All ages gathered on Sabbath afternoon in the field to send up a solar balloon. Ben Roy (in yellow) led the science adventure.

The Science Zone’s Ben Roy (right) held a Sabbath afternoon program for the kids, showing them how to have fun with the laws of nature and learn about the Creator of science.

Bobby Harris (back) sang “O Lord, You’re Beautiful” for special music on Friday evening. Sharon Taylor (front) accompanied him.

Children from Oglethorpe Church School sang two songs and were one of several musical features for the Sabbath afternoon program.

4Hope men’s choir—members include Ellsworth Quinton, Maury Morris, Geddes De Vignes, and David Patterson—sang several musical pieces during the Sabbath morning worship service.

Carolyn Lipscomb shared statistics on how Adventist Community Services South Georgia impacted their community in 2012, which included distributing 142,798 pounds of food and giving health screenings to just under 2,000 individuals.

The Science Zone’s Ben Roy (right) held a Sabbath afternoon program for the kids, showing them how to have fun with the laws of nature and learn about the Creator of science.

All ages gathered on Sabbath afternoon in the field to send up a solar balloon. Ben Roy (in yellow) led the science adventure.

Watch Stan Patterson’s messages on “The Upside Down Church” at vimeo.com/channels/gcccampmeeting
The goal of Cohutta Springs Youth Camp is to be the very best we can be. Much goes into making this goal become a reality—from hiring and training staff to the all-important accreditation through the American Camp Association (ACA) to the ultimate goal of bringing campers and staff into a closer relationship with Jesus.

Many institutions are accredited—hospitals, universities, etc.—and it is important for Cohutta Springs to get measured by the best-known industry standards every three years. It was time again in 2012 to go through the accreditation process for the camp program. Here are the results:

- Transportation ......................... 100%
- Health & Wellness....................... 100%
- Operational Management .......... 100%
- Human Resources....................... 100%
- Program Design & Activities....... 100%
- Aquatics.................................... 100%
- Trip & Travel............................. 100%
- Site & Food Service.................... 95%

While there is always room for improvement, we are thankful for a great team effort and praise God for such an affirming report. Jesus gave His very best for us—how could we settle for giving anything less for Him?

As the group of ACA inspectors wrapped up a long accreditation day, one of them (a camp director from a special-needs camp near Atlanta) asked if he could spend some time talking with me about our nighttime programs. We spent an hour talking, and then he asked if he could bring his staff back to observe our campfire program.

He and his staff did later visit, their cameras and note pads capturing everything they could as they watched and marveled at the Cohutta Springs Youth Camp staff. They could not believe that teen campers would sing “like that!” They appeared refreshed and blessed by every aspect of the program and looked like our campers do at the end of a great day at camp. After the program, they joined us for our staff circle and watched our team finish the day with thanksgiving and prayer, as we always do. And then they wanted to visit more!

It’s reassuring to know we are running professionally, but even more fulfilling is knowing that we are spiritually relevant in the lives of those who come to camp, whether they are teen campers or non-Christian camp professionals from Atlanta.

As we look forward to this coming summer, let’s all join in our annual campaign for young people. Everyone can play a role—encourage someone to come, assist with finances for those in need, or provide transportation if necessary. It’s worth our very best because camp is a place where faith comes into focus!
Chris Donavan, missional pastor coordinator, and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference ministerial leadership invite you to...

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For more info, contact Chris at cdonavan@gccsda.com or the Evangelism Department at 800-567-1844.

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she refused and told me that it was a gift for helping her and a way to remember the people of Panama,” said Mandy McClellan, a junior.

The construction crew enjoyed long days of hard work, and many learned a new skill on the job site. I, for instance, learned every step involved in tiling a floor—from smoothing the original concrete to polishing the tiles after the grout had dried. At times, the tools were limited and the air got a bit dusty from cutting tiles and smoothing concrete, but the team was creative and worked with what they had.

“We were privileged with the opportunity to use our imagination to make tools from what was available,” said Katherine Hesler, a junior. “Broken pieces of cinder block were wall scrapers, an old cardboard box was a portable toolbox, and a fraction of tile was a stirring stick for the mud. The water source for the project was a little creek about a hundred yards away from the work site.”

Sabbath was the day we had a chance to relax. After church and lunch, the group boarded a bus and rode to the nearby mountains for a hike in the cloud forest near Cerro Punta. We explored one of the many trails in the forest, spotting wild orchids growing on trees and fool’s gold in a creek.

During the seven workdays, we completed our projects and the medical team saw more than 1,200 patients and performed countless procedures. On the day we left, IAP had a dedication service with a ribbon cutting for the new classrooms. After the ceremony, we finished packing our luggage and said our farewells. As we boarded the bus to drive back to Panama City, it seemed unfair that we would make friends one week and then leave them the next. Still, we were satisfied with the work we had completed.

“I would recommend people to go on a mission trip because you get to meet new people and get to know your friends better, and helping others in need shows you how much you have to be thankful for,” said Andrew Suekert, a junior.

If you ever have the opportunity to go on a mission trip—whether abroad or locally—take the chance. It will change your life.
I recently fell off a kitchen stool as I reached for my plate from the other side of our counter. One of the legs on the stool had been loose for a few days, but I’d put off fixing it. After all, the other three legs were still screwed on strong. As I picked myself up off the hardwood floor, a thought came to mind: Are all four legs of the stool of my life still holding strong? Is it time to tighten the screws holding things together? What about the ministry of Cohutta Springs?

Like my kitchen stool, Cohutta Springs functions well when all who are involved work together. The youth camp is one leg, Pathfinders/Adventurers is another one, the Conference Center is the third leg, and finally, Jesus Christ is the fourth leg of the “Cohutta stool.”

The reason for four legs on a stool is to hold up the seat, right? As far as I’m concerned, the seat is the person, young or old, who has not yet met Jesus. Summer camp, Pathfinders, and the Conference Center all exist for the sole purpose of introducing people to Jesus or strengthening someone’s existing relationship with Him.

Rob Lang, Fernando Verduzco, and I continue looking for ways to improve Cohutta so it will be more practical, more comfortable, more exciting, and more beautiful. We are currently focusing on two projects (see below). As these and other projects move forward, we are so thankful for our fourth Partner, Jesus Christ, and for all of your prayers and support as we continue growing the ministry of Cohutta Springs!

A FOUR-LEGGED PARTNERSHIP
» written by Olivier LeMaitre, Cohutta Springs executive director | photos contributed

COHUTTA SPRINGS

BEFORE

AFTER

A NEW PATIO OUTSIDE MAGNOLIA AUDITORIUM AND A CAMP-SIDE BAPTISMAL AREA

BEFORE

AFTER
## CONFERENCE EVENTS

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<td>Knoxville First Church, Tenn.</td>
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<td>June 9-23</td>
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<td>Pine Ridge, S.D.</td>
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<td>June 22</td>
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<td>July 20</td>
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<td>Aug 10</td>
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## OFFERING SCHEDULE

### MAY
- 04 Local Church Budget
- 11 World Budget/
  - Disaster & Famine Relief Emphasis
- 18 Local Church Budget
- 25 Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries

### JUNE
- 01 Local Church Budget
- 08 North American Division/World Budget/
  - Multilingual/Chaplaincy Ministries
- 15 Local Church Budget
- 22 Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries
- 29 North American Division—Evangelism
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