Greater Miami Adventist Academy Celebrates 100 Years

Greater Miami Adventist Academy (GMAA) culminated their 100th anniversary celebration with a bang at the grand finale on alumni weekend, May 18-19, 2012. The house was packed as alumni, staff, teachers, students and families gathered together to worship God in unison for all of His wonderful blessings throughout the first 100 years of their...
history.
"We could not have asked for more edifying speakers than Elder Mike Cauley, Arleen Stubbs and Elder Gordon Retzer," states Dr. Luis Cortes, principal, who also presented a motivating and high-energy report. Historical videos, presentations and musical performances (choir and band) by staff, students, and alumni added to the festivities.

Since 1912 GMAA has been delivering academic excellence with a Christian perspective from ECEC (daycare) to college courses. Now with Phase I of their Construction Master Plan almost completed, the possibilities are limitless for curricular and extracurricular activities, tournaments, events and summer camps to name a few.

"With our enrollment approaching the 400 mark and with 100+ new students this year, there is definitely a promising future for this institution," states Cortes. "The Lord has called us to lead and be the light of our community."

Denton will be joined at Forest Lake Academy by Frank L. Jones in the vice principal role. Jones comes to us with 30 years of leadership experience, most recently as headmaster and resource consultant for Berean Christian Junior Academy and Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy. Jones shares Denton's philosophy of providing whatever it takes to help students learn. "Education is about having growth occur wherever, whenever, and however possible," he states. "Education is as vast as the ocean. Schools are responsible for ensuring every child has an opportunity to rise with the highest tide, meeting educational, social and personal success."

We look forward to the continued progress of Forest Lake Academy under these two new leaders.

Under the direction of the Integrated Youth Ministries Department, Dr. Sandra Doran, Associate Superintendent of Education, recently scripted a video featuring Seventh-day Adventist children pleading for adults "to join hands" and work in unison to keep them in the church. Following up on the positive response to the original video, Doran has now worked with Spanish-speaking students to create a new version for Spanish schools and churches. The videos can be found on our conference website, www.floridaconference.com/education.

Once again the Florida Conference Office of Education is proud to announce that "one of our own" has received national recognition as an Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF) Teacher of Excellence. Joan Waite, seventh- and eighth-grade teacher at Forest City Adventist School (FCAS), joins the honored list of Florida Conference teachers who have
Summer Trainings in Full Swing

Once again Florida Conference is busy training teachers over the summer, with a rich array of options. From math to writing, responsive classroom to crucial conversations, cooperative learning to 4MAT, we take pride in providing our principals and teachers with the latest skills and materials to do their jobs. This year we are fortunate, once again, to involve students in our classes, with teachers polishing skills by working with children who attend our summer writing clinic. Florida Conference Office of Education workshops begin in May and continue through June, with additional training provided during our new teacher orientation.

Waite, who was nominated by fellow teacher Melanie Paschal and principal Alipia Gonzalez, was noted for her meaningful work with the students and relevant lessons. “She has a skilled eye to uncover raw talent and turn it into a shining diamond for God,” said Paschal.

Waite’s immersion approach to teaching draws the students into the action with such lessons as her Civil War unit where students draw lots to side with the North or South. After some research, students make flags for their side, create canteens and cooking equipment, and set up an outdoor camp. Battles are reenacted, prisoners taken, and siblings and best friends “ripped apart” by the mock Civil War.

Waite was also commended for her development of student leaders, spiritual influence, teacher mentoring, and helping students realize their full potential. Present and former students, teachers, and families testified to her impact on their lives as they placed more than 4 dozen roses in a large vase.

AAF is a nonprofit organization working to improve Adventist K-12 education. The foundation has awarded grants totaling more than $2 million to Adventist schools and educators, including Florida teachers Joan Waite (2012), Keren Taccone (2011), Tammy Overstreet (2010), and Rusty Litten (2009).
Five Florida Conference Schools on CREATION Health Path

With the completion of their pilot year as a CREATION Health School, Indigo Christian Junior Academy (ICJA) in Daytona Beach is sharing the good news. It works! As a result, four new schools have signed on for the ride, reports Frank Runnels, Florida Conference Superintendent. Winter Haven Adventist Academy, Z.L. Sung Seventh-day Adventist School in Gainesville, East Pasco Adventist Academy, and Brevard Adventist Christian Academy in Cocoa have begun the process of analyzing their current strengths and weaknesses in all eight areas of the CREATION Health acronym: Choice, Rest, Environment, Attitude, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, and Nutrition. As the process continues, board members, school staff and students will set goals for the coming year to begin discovering unique and creative ways to help their school live out healthy principles.

The Florida Conference Office of Education is excited about this initiative and encourages interested principals to join us. Email cheryl.gold@floridaconference.com for further information.
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