From the pen of Donna Jackson...

Hi friends,

On Nov. 6, 2012, at the NAD Year-End Meetings in Silver Spring, Md., Dr. Ivan Williams and I, and four other NAD directors (following the lead of the G.C. Ministerial Department), introduced a new PKs Ministry initiative. At the conclusion of our short presentation, Dr. Williams asked the leaders of our Division to use their voting clickers to indicate if they had a child who had distanced themselves from God and our Church. The immediate reply shot back on the front screen: 60 percent said “yes.” We paused for earnest prayer.

Fast forward to Jan. 7, 2013, at the Southern Union Ministerium in Daytona Beach, Fla. I stood on a stage holding one side of a huge, red, cloth cross, which draped down the middle aisle of a meeting room, shared by approximately 500 ministerial spouses, and watched as my sisters wrote their dearest heart's desire on sticky notes. As they surged forward and laid them on the cross, their reverent, purposeful expressions and falling tears spoke profoundly of their yearnings for their most precious loved ones.

Would you agree, friends, that raising children in the parsonage is one of the greatest blessings and challenges, both at the same time, that we can experience? And likewise, for our children! Thus, in this issue, we’ve chosen to focus on nurturing our children. We hope you’ll enjoy this theme picked up by our contributors.

Friends, today may you know and joyfully embrace God’s deepest, heart-desire for you and your children, and may you breathe into their lives His positive prophecies for them.

“I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children.”

--Isaiah 49:25 ESV

On the MSA Facebook page, share with the other ministerial spouses how the Lord encourages you when you are worried about your children.

Submit a personal prayer request. Each prayer request will be prayed for individually.
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' --Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

In each issue, Fresh Strength will highlight a different topic relevant to ministerial spouses. The theme for the next issue is "Family Finances."

In Christian love,

Donna

FAITH ALIVE!

'The Elijah Message for Today' series offers hope for ministerial families

Relax awhile at the fireside of Dr. John Youngberg, and soak in the winsome wisdom of one of Adventism’s most outstanding family life leaders. In "The Elijah Message for Today," a series of three- to ten-minute videos, Youngberg, a professor emeritus at Andrews University, leads us on a journey through the messages of the prophet, Elijah, with a special focus and application for ministerial families. Click here to watch. (The series was filmed in 2012 by Pastor Gary Burns, communication director of the Lake Union Conference.)

We'd like to hear from you, too. Take your smartphone or iPad, and ask someone to film you sharing a short testimony or story about what God is doing in your life. Upload your video clip to a video-sharing site like www.YouTube.com or www.vimeo.com, and then email your video link to us.

FAMILY MATTERS

Keeping Your Kids Connected

Dr. Martin Weber, director of communication for the Mid-America Union Conference, shares from his research why some preacher’s kids stay active in the Adventist Church and why others go other directions. Click here to watch.

Your ministry exploits will inspire other ministerial spouses. Please share them.

COUNSELORS CORNER

Artistic Musings

"Will You Disciple Me?"

Sanders Family Ministries

The Story of Jonah

Click here to listen to "The Story of Jonah," told with incredible expression and passion by young Mary Margaret.

In this section, we want to feature what you have created: a poem you’ve written, a painting you’ve completed or original music you’ve performed, etc. Submit here.

Fit for Life
My spouse and I don't agree on curfew. What do I do?

Question: I am a pastor's wife. Our 16-year-old daughter has started to push her curfew later and later. Last Saturday night, she came home at midnight. My husband, who has a very close relationship with her, thinks we should trust her because she is in the company of Christian friends. I don't agree with my husband, and my daughter knows we don't agree, so she plays us against each other; she never listens to me. My husband and I have not had the best relationship because he has always kept too busy to develop a close relationship with me. We also have two sons, but my daughter is his favorite. She usually gets anything she wants from him. What do you recommend I do? --A Frustrated Parent

Response: It sounds like your marriage might be one where a third person has become "triangulated" into the relationship, meaning your husband's attention and energy have been diverted toward your daughter, and she may even enjoy some "parental privileges" that allow her to make some decisions on her own. This dynamic will leave you aside and stripped of your rightful parental authority, which is required to make sound parental decisions along with your husband. Read more.

Click here to submit questions to the counselors, Carolann and César De León.

MINISTRY STORIES

PKs Ministry

Check out Trina Young-Bowden, a dynamic pastor's daughter, educator, wife and mother from Florida, who has begun a new ministry for PKs in the Southeastern Conference with a team of other PK young professionals! They're on the move! Click here.

Trina Young-Bowden

We welcome your proven parenting tips, family worship ideas, financial tips (low budget anything!), family management ideas and de-cluttering strategies. Submit your ideas here.

FRIENDS AND FELLOWSHIP

Retreats provide encouragement

Health Tips for PKs

We all have heard the statistics: During the past three decades, obesity has increased among children of all ages, and more than one-third of American children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Among adolescents, ages 12 to 19 years, it is estimated that 34 percent are overweight and another 18.1 percent are obese. This translates to more than half of the entire adolescent population being above the normal weight, and it means more chronic disease risk. This unhealthy weight issue affects children of all ethnicities, income levels and religious affiliations, including Seventh-day Adventists and, yes, our beloved pastors' kids (PKs).

Katia Reinert shares practical ideas to help our children increase physical activity and consumption of nutritious food. Read more.

Resources

Share health tips that work for you, like how you lost weight; healthy, quick, delicious recipes; depression busters, etc.

Websites

www.indiscipleship.org
Don McLafferty's downloadable guides, videos, etc.

www.myplacewithjesus.com
Kids' interactive online
Lake Union Conference Administrators’ Spouses

In each issue, we will feature highlights of events for ministerial spouses that take place in the Division. Please share your photos and stories.

NURTURING MINISTRY FOR SEMINARY FAMILIES

First the Blade

The Christian Ministry and the Discipleship and Religious Education Departments of the Seminary along with all the Seminary faculty and students want to support Seminary families in nurturing the faith development of your families. You are studying to better nurture the faith of congregations and classrooms, and we encourage you to remember … “First the Blade” (see Mark 4:28).

The First the Blade initiative team includes Kathy Beagles, Lisa Clouzet, Judith Peterson-Williams and Hyveth Williams. Read more.

WRITERS NEEDED

Women's Devotional Book project needs writers

The Women's Ministries devotional book project is looking for writers. (Sorry, this applies only to female spouses; but if you are a male spouse, encourage your wife to write!)

Women's Ministries publishes a 365- or 366-day devotional book each year. The writers receive no pay; nevertheless, each receives a complimentary book. The big pay-off, however, is that all royalties from these books go to scholarships for women around the world who are seeking college or university level education. (If that applies to you, complete an application! Click here to learn more about the scholarship program.)

The devotional book editor, Ardis Stenbakken, shares how to participate. Read more.

Books

10 Christian Values Every Kid Should Know
Dr. Donna J. Habenicht (1999-R&H)

The Adventist Home
Ellen G. White
(A study guide is available: www.whiteestate.org/guides/ah.pdf)

Child Guidance
Ellen G. White

Grace Based Parenting
Dr. Tim Kimmel (Gold Medallion award, 2004-Thomas Nelson)

How to Help Your Children Really Love Jesus
Dr. Donna J. Habenicht (1999-R&H)

Making Jesus My Best Friend: Baptism Preparation for Younger Children
Claudio and Pamela Consuegra (2005-R&H)

Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right, Dr. Tim Kimmel (2006-Thomas Nelson)

Romancing Your Child’s Heart
Monte Swan (2002-Loyal)

Series on Teaching Sexuality to Children
(Gold Medallion award series, 2007-Nav Press):

God's Design for Sex
Stan and Brenna Jones

Before I Was Born
Carolyn Nystrom

What's the Big Deal
Stan and Brenna Jones

Facing the Facts
Stan and Brenna Jones

The Blessing
Dr. John Trent and Gary Smalley

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/...?qDJHuujA7dI-wSv77rdT0qOpBFEm0S5nKbhZZmz0iCc_HmTJx6YwUmYQcV4tCoeGl%3D[2/1/2013 10:19:17 AM]
We welcome your review of a great book or resource. Submit here.
Question: I am a pastor’s wife. Our 16-year-old daughter has started to push her curfew later and later. Last Saturday night, she came home at midnight. My husband, who has a very close relationship with her, thinks we should trust her because she is in the company of Christian friends. I don’t agree with my husband, and my daughter knows we don’t agree, so she plays us against each other; she never listens to me. My husband and I have not had the best relationship because he has always kept too busy to develop a close relationship with me. We also have two sons, but my daughter is his favorite. She usually gets anything she wants from him. What do you recommend I do?

Response: It sounds like your marriage might be one where a third person has become “triangulated” into the relationship, meaning your husband’s attention and energy have been diverted toward your daughter, and she may even enjoy some “parental privileges” that allow her to make some decisions on her own. This dynamic will leave you aside and stripped of your rightful parental authority, which is required to make sound parental decisions along with your husband.

When a parent relinquishes his or her role to their children and, instead, becomes a pseudo-spouse and develops a symbiotic relationship with their children, sound parenting principles are completely disregarded. The parent relegated as the “outsider” does not have power or authority to exercise parental authority, and the one “emotionally married” to the child will not set parental boundaries for the child in order to maintain the emotional connection. We recommend you seek professional counseling in order to restore the correct order of the marital and family elements where you return to your God-given position as a wife, and your daughter returns to the children’s sub-system. — Carolann and César De León
Columbia Union Conference Administrators Wives Weekend Retreat

The weekend of Oct. 5-7, 2012, brought 20 Columbia Union Conference administrators wives together for a weekend retreat in Leesburg, Va. Cheryl Retzer (far right), recently retired from the Southern Union Conference, was the guest speaker. She fed us well with her topic of “Bloom Where You Are Planted.”

We enjoyed beautiful music by Denise Barclay, an English tea and, basically, developed friendships with our new sisters!

Saturday night, we enjoyed many laughs with our “blue team” and “yellow team” activities, which included “Minute-to-Win-It,” “Mad Gab,” and a “Rowdy Relay!” It was a wonderful, full weekend with fond memories that we packed in our suitcases to take home and cherish!
Becky Weigley leads the Ministerial Spouses Association for the Columbia Union Conference. She is the wife of the Union president, Dave Weigley, a mother of two and the grandmother of four. Friends that know Becky say she has the spiritual gift of hospitality.
In January 2013, the Lake Union Conference Presidents Cabinet and Spouses Retreat was held in Captiva, Fla. It was four days of fun, fellowship and spiritual renewal. Our special guests were Alex Bryant, executive secretary of the North American Division, and his wife, Desiree Bryant, associate superintendent of education for the Potomac Conference. We worshiped together as couples, and then we separated providing time for the wives to spend time to together.

Desiree shared the “yarn web” activity with us (photo, right). You can use the activity to share prayer requests, stresses in your life, appreciations, etc. Our group expressed something that “bugged” us, and then we tossed the yarn ball from one to another across the circle, sharing our thoughts. Then we tossed it in reverse, and we prayed for one another and gave encouragement or advice on how we can deal with those feelings as we untangled the web.

Saturday night we played group games, led by Linda Gallimore of the Michigan Conference. We played such games as "What’s Your Line,” “Name Boggle” and "Geography." You can tell by the picture (left) that there was a lot of fun and laughter. The men were on one team, and the ladies on the other. Overall, the greater number of points went to the ladies.

On Sunday, Rose Anne Grove led us in a craft activity (lower right). She is registrar for the Lake Union Conference and the spouse of Rodney Grove, executive secretary of the Lake Union Conference. We created shadowboxes as a memory of our time together. Gifts were given; but instead of just regular gift bags, they were in darling, handmade paper “purses,” also created by Rose Anne.

We have begun prayer journals for each other. Donna Jackson modeled this at a previous meeting, and we have taken that idea and are doing it for our team. We are devoting a page for each of us and our families, including our children and grandchildren. Just knowing we have each other in prayer is so encouraging.

Alex shared with us about the character and attributes of Christ as a leader, from Philippians 2:1–11 and The Desire of Ages. "Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." —Philippians 2:4, 5 NIV
Southern Union Ministerial Spouses Connect

More than 600 ministerial spouses came to be "Connected – to God, to Family and to One Another" at the Southern Union Ministerium Conference at the Hilton Beachfront Hotel in Daytona Beach, Fla., Jan 6–9, 2013.

Joyful, enthusiastic fellowship characterized the meetings plus close attention to the inspirational talks of speakers Yolanda Smith, Southern Union Ministerial Spouses director, and Audrey Folkenberg, Upper Columbia Conference Shepherdess leader (soon to embark for China!). Audrey’s interesting presentations included a narrative on the wayward Gomer — delivered so convincingly that some wondered if it was Audrey’s story!

Ministerial spouses appeared visibly moved during an activity, led by Yolanda, when they were asked to write a prayer request, on a sticky note, and lay it on a large, red, cloth cross that stretched from the platform down the middle aisle. Many tears mingled with earnest prayer.

Another highly-touching moment came when Beverly Sterling, widow of recently-deceased Pastor Milton Sterling who was the former ministerial director of the Southeastern Conference, gave her powerful testimony of how God sprinkled the anguish of her sudden loss with many evidences of His grace and support. The resolute strength and mature faith of this sister left many almost speechless.

Jacquelyn Ross, ministerial/evangelism coordinator of the Southern Union, who served at the side of her husband, Dennis, with outstanding, untiring devotion and passion for more than 40 years, symbolically handed over the reigns to the energetic, able and new Southern Union ministerial/evangelism coordinator, Kathy Hernandez. These leaders, along with Yolanda and Bonnie Davidson, the Southern Union Ministerial Spouses associate director, rejoiced together as women of faith experienced God in an extraordinary way.

Yolanda challenged the spouses by saying, “Together, we can help each other be ready for the return of Jesus. Together, we can make sure that not one of us is missing on that glorious day!”

Ruthie Jacobsen (left) prays beside Yolanda Smith at the Ministerial Spouses meeting at the Southern Union Ministerium.

Jacquelyn Ross is the former assistant ministerial and evangelism director of the Southern Union.
Donna Jackson is the Ministerial Spouses Association leader for the North American Division.
First the Blade

WHO?

The Christian Ministry and the Discipleship and Religious Education Departments of the Seminary along with all the Seminary faculty and students want to support you in nurturing the faith development of your families. You are studying here to better nurture the faith of congregations and classrooms, and we are here to encourage you in remembering … First the Blade (Mark 4:28).

WHAT?

First the Blade will provide:
1. Monthly children’s programs based on the Bible and Adventist Heritage,
2. Potential financial encouragement for unsponsored students wanting to have their children in church school in the area,
3. A physical resource library where new and gently-loved books, games, tapes (etc.), that can enrich your parenting skills, family spiritual times, or children’s understanding of their role as disciples of Jesus and members of the Seventh-day Adventist church can be shared and/or borrowed,
4. A web resource where you can find continually updated links to resources, actual resources, a calendar of family-friendly programming in the area, encouraging blogs for parents and families, and a place to share prayer requests.
5. Membership pins for all registered children 5 through 12. This is to be worn to each program. Replacement pins will be available for $2.00.

WHEN?

Physical and monetary donations for this project are sought on an on-going basis. An offering of at least $1.00 is requested of all attending Seminary chapel on the third Tuesday of each month.

WHY?

We are passionate about the current religious education of your children! We are here to support and enrich what already happens at home, church and school.

HOW?

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the teacher God has sent to empower the spiritual growth of us all.

We would love for you to share your ideas, suggestions, and needs.

The First the Blade initiative team: Kathy Beagles, Lisa Clouzet, Judith Peterson-Williams, Hyveth Williams

CONTACT US AT: www.firsttheblade.com
Message from the Editor

The Women’s Ministries devotional book project is looking for writers. (Sorry, this applies only to female spouses. But if you are a male spouse, encourage your wife to write!)

Women’s Ministries publishes a 365- or 366-day devotional book each year. The writers receive no pay; nevertheless, each receives a complimentary book. The big payoff, however, is that all royalties from these books go to scholarships for women around the world who are seeking college- or university-level education. (If that applies to you, complete an application! See at [http://www.adventistwomensministries.org/index.php?id=60](http://www.adventistwomensministries.org/index.php?id=60).)

I am starting to work on the 2015 devotional book. As you probably know, the 2013 book, Blessed, is now available in the Adventist Book Centers or at Amazon.com; it is also available as an e-book. And the 2014 book is in the copyediting/formatting process at the Review and Herald. Thank you so much if you have contributed before. If you have not participated before, now is the time!

How can you help? By writing at least one devotional for me. And please invite other women to write as well — relatives, friends, fellow church members. The more writers we get the better.

So, thank you so much for your support of this ministry. I am really excited by the reports I receive from readers as well as the young women who are granted scholarships. Together, we are making a difference!


Thank you so much — I look forward to hearing from you!

In His love,

Ardis

Ardis Dick Stenbakken
Devotional book editor
We have all heard the statistics: During the past three decades, obesity has increased among children of all ages, and more than one-third of American children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Among adolescents, ages 12–19 years, it is estimated that 34 percent are overweight and another 18.1 percent are obese. This translates to more than half of the entire adolescent population being above the normal weight, and it means more chronic disease risk. This unhealthy weight issue affects children of all ethnicities, income levels and religious affiliations, including Seventh-day Adventists and, yes, our beloved pastors' kids (PKs).

Why is this a big concern and what can you do to help your child?

Today, doctors are seeing diseases such as diabetes, breathing problems, psychological disorders such as depression, kidney disease, heart disease, inflammation and poor circulation — which once affected only older adults — striking children as young as six. Being overweight as an adolescent is also associated with stroke and premature mortality in adulthood. Why is this happening? Most researchers agree this issue is very complex, but the most common culprits are activity and food. We know that:

- Less than 30 percent of all children ages 6–17 engage in vigorous activity (at least 20 minutes of physical activity that makes the child sweat and breathe hard).
- Ninety percent of the population in the U.S. does not eat enough vegetables, and 80 percent does not eat enough fruits.

If we could engage our children in at least one hour of physical activity daily, five days a week, and encourage an intake of five fruits and five vegetables daily, we would contribute immensely to their health now and in the future.

Practical Ideas

Set the example:

- Increase the amount of fiber-rich plant foods in your menus at home.
- For every hour of Internet or video, do 30 minutes of physical activity.
- Get a pedometer, set a walking goal for yourself and track your progress.
- Learn practical ways to cook more healthfully and try new, fun recipes.
- Replace sodas and pre-packaged juices with water or fresh juices.

Make it fun for the whole family:

- Join Adventists InStep for Life as a family, and set family goals for physical activity, get awards and track miles (register at www.adventistsinstepforlife.org).
- Plan for fun family time outside in nature and fresh air.
- Replace family time in front of the TV with fun physical activities.
- Start a family vegetable garden and eat produce from the garden.

Learn other ideas at the website above. As a parent, you have more influence on your children than you can imagine.
Teaching by example will speak louder than words. Start today!

Katia Reinert, PhD(c), CRNP, FNP-BC, is director of Health Ministries for the North American Division and director of Adventist Recovery Ministries.