Reflections in the Aftermath of the Newtown Shootings

It was with much shock and sadness that Elder Dan Jackson broke the silence during a lunch meeting to announce to us the tragic news regarding the mass killings in Newtown, CT. We stopped and together earnestly prayed for the families in pain. We stood in disbelief that such young and precious children and teachers would die in this senseless way, while the disturbed attacker who had also killed his mother finally took his own life. Evil seemed to prevail.

Many of us find relief in the promise that this world is not our home and that soon the great controversy of good and evil will end. We look forward to the day when families will be reunited with the loved ones they lost unexpectedly to death. We yearn to complete the task given to us by God so that He can return to us soon and take us all home.

However, we cannot neglect to consider what is on our hands to do in order to reduce the risk for these mass killings. Violence in all its forms (domestic, gun, youth, gender-based, etc) have been linked to health and mortality, and the Institutes of Medicine and the Center for Disease Control have documented violence as a major health problem in this country. The World Health Organization also confirms this ‘contagion of violence’ and its health impact. Public Health Officials list violence as one of 8 major priorities affecting the health of citizens in the US. It is a major health issue which health ministries leaders need to consider addressing.

Some people rather take topics such as obesity, or gun violence, and make it a political issue, however the SDA church thinks differently. In line with current research, the official church statement regarding gun violence states, “While it is true that violence and criminal inclinations lead to guns, it is also true that availability of guns leads to violence. The opportunity for civilians to acquire by purchase or otherwise automatic or semi-automatic assault weapons only increases the number of deaths resulting from human crimes. The Seventh-day Adventist church wishes to cooperate in using every legitimate means of reducing, and eliminating where possible, the root causes of crime. In addition, with public safety and the value of human life in mind, the sale of automatic or semi-automatic assault weapons should be strictly controlled. This would reduce the use of weapons by mentally disturbed people and criminals, especially those involved in drug and gang activities.” (see http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat4.html).

We must de-politicize this issue. We can follow the research pointing out to the health links related to violence while applying biblical principles that can make a difference for the entire community, the families and individuals. We must consider: are we doing enough to raise awareness about violence prevention in all its forms (including gun violence) and educate ourselves on the health consequences it brings? How to talk to kids in a therapeutic way and answer their possible fears or questions related to this tragic event? Here are some useful resources that may help answer these questions from a public health perspective:

- The Prevention Institute posted Gun Violence Must Stop. Here’s What We Can Do to Prevent More Deaths.
- From the American Academy of Pediatrics, “resources for talking to children about disasters, and advice on watching for signs of stress and trauma.”
- From Save the Children, Ten Tips to Help Children Cope
- From Sesame Street, a Resource for Parents and Caregivers.
- The Connecticut Commission on Children has identified dozens of links to resources for parents and educators.
- Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy, announced a proclamation declaring Friday (December 21) a “Day of Mourning,” requesting residents statewide to participate in a moment of silence at 9:30 a.m.
- The Governor is also requesting houses of worship that have the capability, to ring bells 26 times during that moment in honor of each life that was taken at Sandy Hook Elementary School.”

Ultimately, we have the opportunity to point people to Christ, the creator, healer and restorer of our lives. We look forward to see Him bring an end to the evil in this world. But in the meantime, He calls us to be His lips, hands, and feet to make our communities a place of health, healing and wholeness today. Let us do our part and partner with Him.

Katia Reinert, PHDc, CRNP, FNP-BC, PHCNS-BC
Director, Adventist Health Ministries – NAD
Katia.Reinert@nad.adventist.org
**Health Ministries Resources**

- **Adventists InStep for Life (AISFL)** is a Division wide health initiative. The website provides information and resources on how your church, school, or healthcare organization can become involved. Begin 2013 by motivation yourself, your family and your church to register and report miles of physical activity. Consider volunteering to be your church, school, or hospital coordinator so you can report miles for others. Register for the first AISFL Webinar on January 29 @ 8pm EST by going to www.adventistsinstepforlife.org.

- **Adventists InStep for Life Mobile Apps** are available for download for android and iphone users. You must first register at the website listed above then download the app (INSTEP or ADVENTIST INSTEP), and start recording your physical activity right on your phone.

- **NAD HEALTH SUMMIT 2013** registration is now open! This regional Summit is connected with the NY13 initiative and will take place in New York City March 13-17 for a limited number of registered attendees (300 max) so please register early to save your seat and get equipped for health evangelism. Dr. Neil Nedley will present evening outreach on the topic of mental health and optimizing the brain. We will also have hands on health expo, a track for pastors, a track for faith community nursing, a track for community services, the Adventist Recovery Ministries training and the official NAD Health Ministries training. You can register for the health summit at www.NADhealthsummit.com.

- **Health Sabbath – February 16, 2013** Plan ahead to participate in the special Health Sabbath program in 2013. The NAD Health Ministries department has prepared resources with a special focus on Recovery from addictive and harmful habits. Learn more about the health Sabbath at an upcoming free webinar on January 15 at 8pm EST. To register go to www.NADHealthMinistries.org and click on calendar.

- **December is Safety Toy and Gift Month** Millions of toys are out there, and hundreds of new ones hit the stores each year. But each year, scores of kids are treated in hospital emergency departments for toy-related injuries. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind when top-shopping:
  - Toys made of fabric should be labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
  - Stuffed toys should be washable.
  - Painted toys should be covered with lead-free paint.
  - Art materials should say nontoxic.
  - Crayons and paints should say ASTM D-4236 on the package which means that they’ve been evaluated by the American Society for Testing and Materials.


- **December 4 – 10 is National Hand Washing Awareness Week** According to the Centers for Disease Control, “the most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands.” Judicious hand washing can prevent not only common diseases like colds, but also more serious diseases like hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea. For more information go to: http://www.healthreachchc.org/news/healthTip.php?IDT=39

**Dates to Remember**

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<th>Year</th>
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| 2013 | January 15 | Health Sabbath Webinar  
www.NADHealthMinistries.org |
|      | January 22 | Funding and Grants Webinar  
www.NADHealthMinistries.org |
|      | January 29 | Adventists InStep for Life Webinar  
www.AdventistsInStepforLife.org |
|      | February 16 | Health Sabbath  
Theme: Recovery (ARMin)  
www.AdventistRecovery.org |
|      | February 24-26 | 6th International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition  
Loma Linda, CA  
www.vegetariannutrition.org |
|      | March 13-17 | NAD Health Summit NY13  
New York City  
www.NADHealthSummit.com |
|      | March 15 | ARMin Board Meeting  
New York City – Health Summit  
NADHM@nad.adventist.org |
|      | March 17 | NAD HM Board Meeting  
New York City – Health Summit  
NADHM@nad.adventist.org |
|      | April 13-15 | North Pacific Union HM Training  
Gladstone, Oregon  
Kristina.Lopez@nw.npuc.org |
|      | September 22 | Let’s Move Day  
www.adventistsinstepforlife.org |
|      | September 22-28 | Let’s Move Week  
www.adventistsinstepforlife.org |
BERMUDA CONFERENCE
Let’s Move Day Bermuda 2012
Let’s Move Day, the first ever island-wide event took place on September 23rd 2012. It was a resounding success! People of all ages and walks of life, Bermudians and non-Bermudians, were moving for health. Seniors, churches, seven of Bermuda’s schools including our school Bermuda Institute, Bermuda’s Governor George & First Lady Ferguson, cyclists, swimmers, runners and persons at the local gyms to name a few jumped on the bandwagon. We had a goal of 10,000 miles island-wide for Let’s Move Day, reported Dr Leonard Gibbons, Health Ministries Director for the Conference. We reached more than half way (6,264 miles) with more than 1000 participants. The smiles, the positive attitudes and togetherness were success enough! The conference is already planning for 2013 and looking forward to God’s opportunities to reach out to the community once again.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE
Tennessee Let’s Move Gathering
The Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists participated of an important gathering in Tennessee for key faith-based institutions involved in health promotion. EW Dempsey, Health Ministries director, along with representatives of the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Georgia , United Methodist Men, and the United Methodist Association of Preschools Tennessee joined with the Campaign for Healthy Kids Faith United to End Childhood Obesity and the First Lady’s Let’s Move Faith and Communities on October 23, 2012, in an effort to help children develop healthful habits and lifestyles. “I was honored to represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church at this meeting”, said E. W. Dempsey. “My purpose in being there was to let these organizations know that the Seventh-day Adventist churches are supportive of the fight against childhood obesity and the Let’s Move program. Each speaker was given two minutes to report what their organization is doing regarding Let’s Move and the media was present to cover the event. EW added that “the Seventh-day Adventist church has always taken a strong, positive stance regarding health. Total health includes all aspects - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual and that our body is the temple of the living God. The Seventh-day Adventist church encourages all our churches to sponsor a Let’s Move Day each year, and there has been a wide variety of kid-friendly activities included this year and in previous years.”

ADVENTIST HEATH
LivingWell Bistro
LivingWell Bistro is a plant-based eatery on campus of the Adventist Medical Center (AMC) in Portland, Oregon. They offer an array of delicious, mostly raw dishes made of local, organic and sustainable foods. The bistro has received many accolades recently, and AMC has been praised for its efforts to offer this type of dining experience for patients and visitors alike. “The casual dining atmosphere, vibrant healthy food choices and a wide selection of menu options [provide] a place where people can eat well and be well,” says Bo Rinaldi, restauranteur and collaborator on the LivingWell Bistro project. AMC doesn’t know of any other medical facility that has a dining experience like it. The bistro serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. With menu items such as the tofu breakfast scramble, black bean veggie wrap and portobello pizza, patrons are sure to go home satisfied. “We want to show people that eating in this manner can be really flavorful — it’s just good food,” says Lyndee Lawrence, AMC’s hospitality services director. “Health is so important in terms of preventing the need for treatment, and eating a largely (if not completely) plant-based diet is a major step towards health.” While the LivingWell Bistro specializes in offering a healthy, plant-based menu, it also serves as a springboard for questions from visitors and patients about the Seventh-day Adventist health message and belief system.
Fitting in Exercise

**FACT** We know the valuable health benefits of physical activity, with 75% of adults reporting exercising for health- or weight-related reasons. But recent research has found that health-focused reasons for physical activity might not be the best ones to motivate sustainable participation. A recent study asked midlife participants why they valued exercising, then followed them over one year to discover which values predicted the most participation. Those who exercised for benefits related to health or weight participated 15% to 34% less compared with those who exercised to enhance the quality of their daily life.

**HOPE** Exercise that specifically aims to enhance aspects of your life today might optimize the value of exercising and make it more compelling for you to fit into your busy schedules and stressful lives. Explore “in-the-moment” reasons to exercise, such as to feel good, reduce stress, be more relaxed, be a more patient parent, or have better focus at work. This slight change in focus may help you to exercise more!

**FACT** Current guidelines on physical activity recommend that children and adolescents participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. But less than half of 6-to-11-year-old children and only 8% of adolescents meet the recommendation. Physical education at school is not the total solution. The Copenhagen School Child Intervention Study found that although children in intervention schools increased their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity by approximately 12 minutes per day, there were only modest changes in the measured health parameters and these changes were not evident three years later.

**HOPE** As you consider your holiday gift-giving, add something fitness-related for each family member—such as sports equipment, gym memberships, or gift certificates to sporting goods stores. During breaks from school and work, plan family activities that get everyone moving and having fun together. It’s a gift that can make a difference, since active children have a better chance to grow up to be active adults.

**FACT** Do you have sitting disease? Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys suggest that 50% to 70% of us sit more than six hours a day. Sitting time and non-exercise activity have been linked in epidemiological studies to rates of metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, back problems, and mood disorders. If you have been sitting for more than an hour, you’ve been sitting too long!

**HOPE** By cutting our sitting time in half, our life expectancy would increase by roughly two years. Explore ways you can stand more during your day by pacing when talking on the phone, using a height-adjustable desk, having walk-and-talk meetings, or setting an alarm to remind you to take a walk break after an hour of sitting. If you can stand, you will be more likely to move more and your health will improve.

**FACT** Recommended guidelines for adult physical activity are 30 minutes of moderate-intensity daily physical activity five days a week. However, more than 80% of adults don’t meet these guidelines.

**HOPE** Don’t have 30 minutes? Take three. In a recent Japanese study, moderate intensity physical activity between 32 seconds and 3 minutes was associated with improvements in components of metabolic syndrome (waist circumference, blood pressure, blood sugar and blood fat levels). Integrating short bouts of activity throughout the day can be a healthy first step toward adopting a more active lifestyle.

References:


"...I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live." Deuteronomy 30:19, NIV

This free newsletter is published by Health Ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. To learn more or subscribe, visit our website www.nadhealthministries.org, email Katia.Reinert@nad.adventist.org or call (301) 680-6733

EDITOR: NAD HM

FACTS WITH HOPE: Lilly Tryon