NAD News Video: The in:site Film Contest was sponsored by Union College and Christian Record Services for the Blind which challenged students to create short videos that would highlight the challenges of being blind. The NAD Office of Communication attended the premiere of the films and filed this report.

This year marks the 150th Anniversary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The theme for this important milestone, which will focus on the Church as a missional movement, will be, "United for Mission." MORE

SONscreen Festival "Pitch Fest" offers $10,000 seed money to work with the Division's Office of Communication to produce the film as an outreach project of the Church. Preselected Festival attendees will have the opportunity to pitch a film idea to a panel of judges that will ultimately select a winner. Interested filmmakers should submit their film treatment no later than March 25 to the Festival executive director to be considered for the PitchFest. Film treatments should follow the themes of the Festival (redemption, tolerance, equality, truth and hope). The Pitch Festival will be held on Thursday, April 4, from 8:30-10:00 p.m., in connection with the SONscreen Film Festival, April 4-6, at the Adventist Media Center in Simi Valley, Calif.

Watch this video invitation to SONscreen to learn more, and then forward it to anyone who would benefit from becoming involved with other filmmakers and expand their connections.

Washington Adventist Hospital Cancer Program has earned the prestigious re-accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. "This accreditation indicates that the quality of cancer care services offered at Washington Adventist Hospital is in line with some of our nation’s top cancer treatment centers," said Shailendra Kumar, M.D., Cancer Committee Chairman. MORE

Adventists in the News

113th Congress Most Religiously Diverse Ever -- and Why It Matters

IRLA joins call for pastor’s release from Iranian prison

Study: Plant-Based Diets With Nuts And Virgin Olive Oil Can Reduce Risk Of Heart Disease By 30%

Amid Boy Scout turmoil, other groups hope to grow

Special Days:
March Focus: Women in the Church
March 2, Women's Day of Prayer
March 3-9, Adventist Youth Week of Prayer
March 16, Disabilities Awareness Sabbath

Helpful Special Day
Websites and Resources:
Find a full list on the NAD website

Upcoming Events:
Mar. 7, Prayer Call
Mar. 7-9, Music and Worship Conference
Mar. 9-17, AYM Week of Youth Evangelism #1 (GNYC)
Mar. 12-13, NAD Youth Ministry Symposium
Mar. 13-17, NAD Health Summit
Mar. 15-16, ReCharge Youth Leadership Training
Mar. 22 -24, Compassion (Global Youth Day)
Mar. 23, AYM Compassion Candlelight March
Apr. 4, Prayer Call
Apr. 4-6, SONscreen Film Festival
Apr. 6-13, AYM Week of Youth
Watch or attend: Maximizing Your Brain Potential, March 14-16 at 7:30 p.m. ET, with Neil Nedley, M.D. Learn how to improve your capacity to learn, retain and apply knowledge, improve and lengthen your life and health, your emotional intelligence and motivation. (Watch the video.) It is a FREE NY13 Health Summit outreach event for the public with priority seating for non-Adventists and members bringing non-Adventist friends. Registration deadline: March 7. Watch live online at http://choosefulllife.org/ or on the Hope Channel. MORE

Women’s Day of Prayer sermons in English, Spanish and French are available for use on the 2013 Women’s Day of Prayer, March 2. The theme, “Building Faith through Prayer,” can easily be addressed by someone who might never have delivered a sermon before. They come with PowerPoint presentation, a children's story, and additional resources that include a suggested program (with group and individual prayer time, praise and thanksgiving), and handouts on prayer. MORE

"Prayerlessness is the greatest sin in America... Prayer is our most formidable weapon, but it is the one we are the least skilled in... Praying Christians are the most demanding need of this world."

-- NAD Vice President Alvin Kibble at NAD Worship, February 13.

REACH: A Strategy of Mission and Excellence

Education for Discipleship
A student from Washington Adventist University (WAU) set a new standard for ministry while on WAU’s Cruise With a Purpose. Brittany Bower (pictured, left) proved the perfect example of Christian humility and compassion when she gave her shoes to a young girl with no shoes. MORE (From Columbia Union Visitor Bulletin, 2/13/13)
Mar. 3-9: Ohio Conference, with 94 churches, and 11,448 members
UNITED FOR MISSION: ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS

From Great Disappointment to General Conference

The Millerites firmly believed that Jesus Christ's "second advent" (His second coming to earth) would occur on October 22, 1844. When His second coming did not take place, many Millerites were disillusioned and gave up belief in a literal second advent; but others went back to studying the scriptures.

Over the next 15 years, former Millerites, meeting in a sequence of "Bible conferences", identified a series of Bible truths forgotten since the days of the early Church. The key beliefs they adopted were:

1. That Christ's second coming is imminent and will be literal, not metaphorical, seen by all the world
2. That the seventh day, Saturday, not Sunday, is God's Sabbath and the obligation to keep it is perpetual
3. That God does not eternally torment sinners, but rather that the dead "sleep" until the second coming and last judgment
4. That Christ ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, thereby mediating to us the benefits of His death on the cross, saving us by His righteousness, not our own deeds
5. That in the last days Christians will be tempted by apostasy, but will be called back to divine truth — the "third angel's message" of Revelation 14 — by a small "remnant" of faithful believers
6. That the remnant would be marked by a recurrence of the prophetic ministry
In all this, they were guided by a young woman, Ellen G. White, who, further to their sixth belief, they recognized as a prophet, inspired by God.

These beliefs emerged gradually. In the 1850s there was no Seventh-day Adventist Church — only small groups scattered across the northern United States, who had these beliefs in common but who did not even have a name for themselves, though some, like James White, identified themselves as belonging to "the Great Second Advent Movement", while others used the term "sabbatarian adventist."

Eventually, however, inspired by Christ's great commission to "Go and make disciples", the seventh-day sabbatarian adventists recognized that they needed to organize, so they could more effectively and more widely proclaim the third angel's message. A vital step was taken by a gathering of delegates from across the northern United States on October 1, 1860, who agreed to "take the name Seventh-day Adventist." Then, on May 20 and 21, 1863, at a further meeting, delegates from all those American states with Seventh-day Adventist congregations formed the "General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists" — an organized church, focused on mission and on proclaiming the good news of a God who created us, lived among us, died for us, and redeems us.

Drawing inspiration from our pioneers

Because our image of the founders of our church is largely shaped by photographs of middle-aged men, we often do not realize how diverse they were — in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

During the formative years of the movement, its leaders were mostly young, in their late teens, 20s and 30s. At the time of the Great Disappointment of 1844, James White was 23; Ellen White and Annie Smith were 16; John N. Andrews was 15, and Minerva Loughborough not quite 15. Uriah Smith and John N. Loughborough (brothers of Annie and Minerva) were only 13, and George I. Butler was just 10.

Yet it was these young men and women, aided by elder statesmen like Joseph Bates (who in 1844 was aged 52), who took the lead in the Bible conferences of the late 1840s and the 1850s, during which the beliefs of what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church were discussed, debated and agreed. It was they who published a series of pamphlets, persuasively setting out the new beliefs, as well as a magazine, The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (today's Adventist Review), which connected all the widely scattered believers together, and without which the church would never have been founded. It was they who led the efforts to transform a network of small groups of believers into an organization that would unite all Seventh-day Adventists and provide a basis for mission. Most of the youngsters of the 1850s provided leadership to the church into the 1880s and some into the twentieth century.
Although only men attended the original General Conference Session in 1863, among the first members of the newly created church, women were prominent. In addition to Ellen White, there were Minerva Chapman (née Loughborough), a key figure in the early publishing work who later became Treasurer of the General Conference; Maud Sisley Boyd, who became a pioneer missionary to Europe, South Africa and Australia; and Nellie Druillard (née Rankin), who became a pioneer missionary to Africa and an influential educator and health reformer. Also among those first members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863 were the Hardys, a prominent African-American family.

Today we see pictures of our pioneers in later life, their faces creased by the strain of lives struggling against overwhelming odds. It is easy to forget that they created our church when they were still in their 20s and 30s — easy, too, to forget that, although Adventists did not ordain women to gospel ministry, they accorded women important roles in leadership. And it is too little known that not only were most of the believers in the 1850s fervent abolitionists, but also that, in the late nineteenth century, when blacks and Chinese were being relegated to second-class citizens across the United States, Seventh-day Adventists ordained them to the ministry and entrusted important mission work to them.
American society of the time did not place much value on youth and marginalized women and ethnic minorities. Further, Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were unpopular among religious scholars. Whence came the boldness to defy both social conventions and the general consensus of leading theologians? Seventh-day Adventists were inspired by love for Jesus and conviction that He was coming soon, by confidence in divine prophecies, and by belief that the Spirit of Prophecy was manifested in Ellen White. They were, in consequence, willing to dare anything. While it took them until 1874 to realize that fulfilling the Great Commission meant they had to send missionaries overseas, they swiftly thereafter became committed to worldwide mission. They sought to reform not only theology, but also lifestyle, promoting radical health reforms and prioritizing education. They preached prophetic truths, but also wanted to make men and women whole in the here and now. To this end, during the denomination's first half century Adventists worked in big cities and among people of all languages and social classes, inspired by the example of Jesus, Who, as Ellen White stressed, "mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

As we mark 150 years of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, there is more need than ever for Adventist men and women of all ages, and all ethnic and social backgrounds, to follow the example of our founders. Founded in love for our Savior and His love for sinners, we need to proclaim Christ and Him crucified, His longing that men and women be whole, and His desire that we "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

**After 150 years**
Our 150th anniversary is not a time for parties or celebration — those who founded the General Conference in May 1863 would have undoubtedly been deeply disappointed to know that their descendants would still be on earth in 2013. This important anniversary is rather a time for reflection; for repentance; for thanksgiving; and for renewed commitment to the purpose for which God called this movement into being.

The worldwide church has designated Sabbath May 18, 2013, as a day of prayer, remembrance, and recommitment to mission. Each local congregation is encouraged to find appropriate ways to mark the "sesquicentennial" of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, including a focus on their local church history. Throughout our 150th year, individual Seventh-day Adventists can also be inspired by our history.

This important anniversary should prompt us to reflect on how God has led His remnant church "and His teaching in our past history" (Life Sketches, 196). We should both thank Him for miraculous leading — and reflect on what we have done, and not done, that grieves our God, and repent. It is a good time to commit ourselves, both individually and corporately, not just to "a revival but [to] a reformation", as Ellen White urged (R&H, July 15, 1902, p. 7). It is time to pledge ourselves anew to preaching "the everlasting gospel ... to every nation, tribe, tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6).

As we reflect on 150 years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is time to recommit ourselves to the prophetic destiny of the Great Second Advent Movement.
Washington Adventist Hospital Cancer Program Earns Prestigious Re-Accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer

Takoma Park, MD – Washington Adventist Hospital’s cancer program has again been granted a full three-year accreditation with commendation by the American College of Surgeons (ACoS) Commission on Cancer (CoC). Only about 30 percent of U.S. hospitals are currently accredited, of which only a minority exceed standards to receive commendation. This prestigious designation highlights the excellence and high quality of Washington Adventist Hospital’s cancer program.

"Providing high quality, compassionate care is a top priority for us at Washington Adventist Hospital. We are pleased to again receive this important recognition for our cancer program," said Joyce Newmyer, President of Washington Adventist Hospital.

"This accreditation means that cancer patients in our community receive the high-quality, comprehensive and coordinated care that they need and deserve close to home," said Jane Peck, Executive Director of Cancer Care Services for Adventist HealthCare. "Our commitment to a high-caliber service is demonstrated through our ACoS CoC accreditation with commendation."

In order to receive accreditation by the CoC, hospitals must successfully undergo a rigorous evaluation and performance review, and demonstrate a commitment to providing the highest level of quality cancer care. The process includes an on-site evaluation during which the hospital is required to demonstrate compliance with multiple standards that represent the broad scope of the cancer program such as cancer committee leadership, cancer data management, comprehensive clinical services, research, community outreach and quality improvement.

This accreditation indicates that the quality of cancer care services offered at Washington Adventist Hospital is in line with some of our nation’s top cancer treatment centers,” said Shailendra Kumar, M.D., Cancer Committee Chairman.

The CoC surveyor, Claro L. Pio Roda, M.D., FACS, commented that “One of the strengths of Washington Adventist Hospital's program is a strong focus on the lower income demographic of patients served, their disparities and their barriers to care. CoC approval is nationally recognized by organizations such as The Joint Commission, American Cancer Society, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the National Quality Forum and the National Cancer Institute as having established performance measures for the provision of high-quality cancer care. Currently in the United States, 80 percent of cancer patients are diagnosed and treated at a CoC-approved cancer program.

Washington Adventist Hospital is a 232-bed acute-care facility located in Takoma Park, Maryland. Washington Adventist Hospital is Montgomery County’s first cardiac center, performing hundreds of open-heart surgeries and thousands of heart catheterizations each year. The Hospital is the first accredited Cycle III Chest Pain Center in the DC Metro Area. Washington Adventist Hospital is part of Adventist HealthCare, an integrated health-care delivery system based in Rockville, Maryland, that is one of the largest employers in the state of Maryland.
The U.S. Senate's current focus on potential filibuster reform spotlights an important question: Where do the rights of religious groups begin and end?

While context always is important, the 113th Congress also presents another fascinating way to consider this question that it is the most religiously diverse ever. How amazing that the first Hindu and first Buddhist ever elected to Congress achieved that status in the same election! Additionally, Dr. Raul Ruiz (CA-36) became just the fifth Seventh-day Adventist elected to Congress.

We are reminded again about America's wonderfully unique status as a melting pot. As a place where one's religion should never be an impediment to achievement. Yet the question remains: How will these (and other) non-mainstream religious groups be treated in the upcoming Congress? Will their views be sought out by House and Senate leaders interested in addressing the needs of minority constituencies? Or will they be largely ignored or, worse yet, muted?

Congressman Ruiz's election coincides with an important milestone for the faith to which he subscribes: The Seventh-day Adventist church turns 150 years old in 2013.

As a relatively little-known faith (though rapidly growing both in the U.S. and around the world), the Adventists are no strangers to being in the religious minority. Perhaps that is part of the reason the church always has fought for religious liberty protecting the "freedom of conscience for all people."

Today, the Adventist church remains perhaps the staunchest defender of religious liberty around the world and a leader in advocating for separation of church and state. Having often found itself fighting for the rights of the oppressed against those entities that would dictate in matters of conscience and suppress freedom of religion, there is much about the Adventist church for other people of faith to also join in celebrating as the church commemorates this significant milestone.

As the new Congress prepares to be sworn in, we can all hope -- and pray -- that those who would lead us will actively act on and benefit from the perspectives of those who hail from other walks of religious life.

The more voices, the more diverse points of view heard from, the better the chances we can collectively continue to ensure the ability for all people to follow their conscience. Together we thrive.
Iranian-born Saeed Abedini, the father of two, became a pastor after converting to Christianity in 2000. Major international media are focusing on his imprisonment in Iran for his religious beliefs.

Abedini, who periodically traveled to his native Iran to establish and manage an orphanage, was arrested and convicted of endangering national security. The Christian Post last week reported he was helping Christians in underground churches. He is now being tortured and forced to recant his Christian faith, the Post reported.

“It appears Abedini is being held and persecuted solely because of his faith, and we join others in calling for his immediate release,” said IRLA Secretary-General John Graz, who also serves as director for the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the Seventh-day Adventist world church. “Arresting someone because he changes his religion should not be accepted by those whose believe in human dignity,” Graz said. “We hope the Iranian authorities will release Pastor Abedini as soon as possible.”

In a February 13 letter to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, an informal group of NGOs and activists requested the secretary to “exhaust every possible option” to ensure Abedini’s release and call on Iran to meet its commitment of upholding human rights.

“Iran is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly recognizes the fundamental human right to choose one’s own religion and freedom from arbitrary detention,” the letter stated.

Other signatory groups include the American Islamic Congress, Christian Solidarity International, and World Relief.

The group’s letter came a day following a similar letter to Secretary Kerry from 12 members of the U.S. Senate and 37 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Reports indicate Abedini is subject to solitary confinement, beatings and aggressive interrogations at Evin Prison, known for holding many political prisoners. Abedini was sentenced to eight years in prison at a trial last month, which numerous human rights groups said was a sham.

On January 25, a U.S. State Department spokeswoman called for Abedini’s release, condemning Iran’s violation of human rights and freedom of religion. White House spokesman Jay Carney on January 28 issued a similar appeal.

Abedini, a 32-year-old father of two, converted from Islam to Christianity in 2000. He since traveled to Iran to manage an orphanage in the northern city of Rasht.

The American Center for Law and Justice has established a petition for Abedini’s release and will meet with UN Human Rights officials next month.
Prayer Call - Apr 4, Thu
10:00 PM - Join Prayer Call
anytime between 10 p.m.
Eastern Time, April...

AYM Week of Youth
Evangelism #2 (NEC, SNEC,
NJC) - Apr 6, Sat

GC Spring Meeting - Apr 12,
Fri - A General Conference
Business Meeting with world
divisions of...

Creating a Vibrant Health
Ministry - Apr 12, Fri -
Adventist Health Ministries of
the North Pacific Union...

More Calendar

NewsPoints Newsletter
Find an Adventist
Church in your neighborhood
More

Your Church can have a
beautiful website for free!
Click for Details

What has helped you most in your personal Christian growth?
Take the Poll
Landmark study released at International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition held at Loma Linda University Health.

(PrWEB) February 25, 2013

People who eat a plant-based Mediterranean diet supplemented with nuts or virgin olive oil can enjoy long-term benefits that can include a 30 percent reduction in the risk of cardiovascular disease, according to a landmark global study released today at the sixth International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition hosted by Loma Linda University Health.

The study, to appear in the New England Journal of Medicine, involved 7,447 individuals (55-80 years old) at high risk for cardiovascular disease but with no symptoms.

The results favor two Mediterranean diets (one supplemented with nuts, the other with virgin olive oil) over a low-fat diet for beneficial effects on intermediate outcomes that include body weight, blood pressure, insulin resistance, blood lipid oxidation and systemic inflammation.

The study, called “PREDIMED” for “PREvención con Dieta MEDiterránea” (Prevention with Mediterranean Diet) began in 2003 and was completed in 2011. Participants were followed for an average of 4.8 years.

“The aim of PREDIMED was to determine whether a plant-based Mediterranean diet, supplemented with either tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds and hazelnuts or virgin olive oil, when compared to a low-fat diet, can help prevent cardiovascular diseases such as cardiovascular death, heart attack and stroke,” said Dr. Miguel Angel Martinez of the University of Navarra, Spain, a lead investigator of the study, which was released simultaneously in Loma Linda University Health.

“What we found was that a Mediterranean diet offers a preventive efficacy that was also assessed on secondary variables including death from all causes, and incidence of diabetes and metabolic syndrome,” added Martinez, a physician, epidemiologist and nutrition researcher.

The Mediterranean diet is a pattern of eating similar to the traditional dietary habits of people living in the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. This includes fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, whole grains and nutritious fats, including walnuts and olive oil.

PREDIMED is a parallel group, multi-center, single-blind, randomized clinical trial conducted by 16 research groups in seven communities in Spain. Participants were given dietetic support and quarterly education sessions to ensure compliance. Energy intake was not specifically restricted in any intervention group. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups:

- Low-fat diet (control group)
- Mediterranean diet supplemented with virgin olive oil (50 ml per day); or
- Mediterranean diet supplemented with 30 g mixed nuts per day (15 g walnuts, 7.5 g almonds and 7.5 g hazelnuts)
“This study is a prime example of the type of international research being shared at this conference of 800 academics, dieticians and others dedicated to advancing research about the benefits of plant-based diets,” said Dr. J Sabaté, chair of the International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition and chair of the Department of Nutrition at Loma Linda University’s School of Public Health.

Sabaté served as principal investigator in a nutrition research study that directly linked the consumption of walnuts to significant reductions in serum cholesterol. His findings were published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1993.

“Twenty years ago we released a study showing the health benefits of nuts,” Sabaté said. “Now, the results of a trial, also released at Loma Linda, further demonstrate that a plant-based diet, infused with nutritious unrefined plant fats, can long-lasting effects for heart health and a productive and a productive life.”

The Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition, held every five years, also features the release of research on such topics as the between diet and longevity, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and how vegetarian diets can reduce weight.

For details, please visit http://www.predimed.org or http://www.walnuts.org/med-diet.

Complete information on the Congress, including abstracts of the presentations, can be found at http://www.VegetarianNutrition.org.

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About Loma Linda University Health (LLUH)

Loma Linda University Health includes Loma Linda University’s eight professional schools, Loma Linda University Medical Center’s six hospitals and more than 900 faculty physicians located in the Inland Empire of Southern California. Established in 1905, LLUH is a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers over 100 academic programs and provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. A Seventh-day Adventist organization, LLUH is a faith-based health system with a mission "to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ." To learn more, please visit http://lomalindahealth.org.

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NEW YORK (AP) — With the Boy Scouts of America entangled in a furor over its ban on gays, lesser-known youth organizations across the ideological spectrum see an opportunity. They wonder if the turmoil might prompt some families to give them a closer look as options for their boys.

They range from Bible-based programs run by conservative religious organizations to coed, inclusive groups, including those founded on the basis of pagan beliefs.

None of the groups has the size or iconic status of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), though some have been around for many decades.

Leaders of several of the groups, in public statements and interviews with The Associated Press, made clear they are following the Boy Scouts' predicament with interest and pondering possible ramifications for their own prospects — not seeking to profit from "someone else's misfortune," as one leader said.

The BSA, founded in 1910 and now serving about 2.66 million boys, is deliberating a possible shift in its long-standing policy of excluding gays as youth members or adult leaders.

In May, the BSA's 1,400-member National Council is expected to consider a proposal to ease the ban by allowing some of local Scout units to decide for themselves whether to admit gays. Gay-rights groups say the plan is inadequate, and no units should be allowed to discriminate, while some conservative religious leaders and advocacy groups want the ban to stay in place nationwide.

As a result, there has been consternation on both the left and right of the Scouting community, and warnings of possible defections depending on what decision is made in May.

For families that do seek an alternative to the Boy Scouts, here are some of the options:

**FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS**


Founded in 1908, this is a program run by Southern Baptist churches for boys in first through sixth grade.

The SBC's Women's Missionary Union, which oversees the program, estimates that it has about 6,300 adult leaders and 31,000 youth members. Its curriculum shares many features with the Boy Scouts — including camping trips and model race-car competitions — but it also stresses a goal of providing boys with "godly characteristics" and a "biblical worldview.

Of the major religious denominations which sponsor large numbers of Boy Scout units, the Southern Baptists have been among the most outspoken in urging the BSA to keep the ban on gays.

The SBC's official news agency, Baptist Press, recently reported that the Royal Ambassador program might spread to Southern Baptist churches if the BSA's ban is lifted.

The article quoted Don Hinkle, editor of the Missouri Baptist Convention's newspaper, as reminiscing fondly about his boyhood experience with the Royal Ambassadors.

"Perhaps in these sad, self-destructing days for the Boy Scouts of America, God will use RAs in a new and powerful way."
bring honor and glory to Him," Hinkle told Baptist Press.

In addition to the Royal Ambassadors, the SBC also oversees the Challengers, a program for boys aged 12-17.

—The Assemblies of God's Royal Rangers http://royalrangers.com/

Founded in 1962 by one of the largest Pentecostal denominations, the Royal Rangers have about 81,000 youth members in about 4,000 units, according to church headquarters.

"We provide Christ-like character formation and servant leadership development for boys and young men in a highly relational and fun environment," says the Rangers' mission statement.

Every four years, the organization brings together several thousand boys and adult leaders for a "Camporama" at the Rangers' campground in Eagle Rock, Mo. Last summer's event featured a high-ropes course, two zip lines, a water slide and a lumberjack show.

Like the Southern Baptists, the Assemblies of God considers homosexuality immoral and has urged the Boy Scouts not to lift the ban on gays. A statement to that effect, from the denomination's leader, has been posted on the Rangers' website.

"We are saddened and disappointed to hear that Boy Scouts of America, an organization long devoted to biblical values, now considering loosening the principles in which it was founded," says the Rev. George O. Wood. "We pray the BSA give careful consideration to this matter and hold firm to the beliefs that have made it a strong and influential organization for more than 100 years."

—The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Pathfinders http://bit.ly/ViNzhg

Dating back more than 60 years, the coed Pathfinders program serves about 35,000 boys and girls ages 10-15 in the U.S. and Canada, according to James Black, the church's director of youth ministries for North America.

Black said the program resembles the Boy Scouts in many respects, with an emphasis on camping, plus an array of badges and patches that the youth members can work for.

Unlike the Scouts, however, the Pathfinders operate as a church-based ministry, with a priority placed on community service. However, Black said boys and girls are welcome to join even if not from Seventh-day Adventist families.

Amid the Boy Scouts' turmoil, there's been an upsurge of inquiries from parents about possible participation in the Pathfinders, Black said.

"We don't want to gain off of someone else's misfortune — but we want to be there as an available option for healthy, meaningful programs," he said. "We wish the best for the Boy Scouts. ... Our hearts and prayers go out to them."

—The Calvinist Cadet Corps http://www.calvinistcadets.org/

Founded in 1952, with a headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich., this is a non-denominational but staunchly religious scouting-style program.

Office manager Kathy Door said the corps currently serves about 9,900 boys in 550 clubs in the U.S. and Canada, with strong bases of support in Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and the Pacific Coast.
"When someone who hasn't heard of us asks questions, we tell them we're sort of along the lines of Scouting but we are much more conservative," Door said. "There are Bible lessons at every meeting."

Most of the participants come from churches with Calvinist roots, such as the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church.

Door said the Cadet Corps was not trying to capitalize on the Boy Scouts' current predicament, but had received inquiries recent days from leaders of several local Boy Scout units interested in learning more about the corps.


This organization for Roman Catholic boys and young men ages 10-18 was founded in 1925 and claims a youth membership of more than 25,000, including some in units in Mexico and the Philippines.

The Squires, says the program's Web site, "is an athletic team, a youth group, a social club, a cultural and civic improvement association, a management training course, a civil rights organization and a spiritual development program all rolled into one."

SECULAR PROGRAMS

—Camp Fire http://www.campfireusa.org/

Founded in 1910 as Camp Fire Girls of America, this organization changed its name and became coed in 1975. Boys now comprise almost half of its 300,000 youth participants, according to spokeswoman Catherine Lufkin.

While the Boy Scouts have drawn some criticism for excluding gays and atheists, Camp Fire stresses its inclusiveness says it welcomes youth and families regardless of race, creed, gender, social status, disability or sexual orientation.

Lufkin said young people view Camp Fire's diversity as an asset and enjoy making friends who are different from themselves.

Like the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts of the USA, and other major youth organizations, Camp Fire has seen its member ranks decline in recent decades, though Lufkin said the numbers have stabilized in recent years.

Nonetheless, Camp Fire adopted a new logo last year and has striven to develop "rebranding" strategies to attract new participants.

"The hard truth is that the vast majority of parents and youth — from all walks of life — know nothing about us anym CEO Cathy Tisdale wrote in a newsletter last summer.

—Navigators USA http://navigatorsusa.org/

This alternative scouting organization has its roots in a Boy Scout troop based in New York City's East Harlem neighborhood and sponsored by the Unitarian Church of All Souls.

The troop broke away from the BSA in 2003 out of disagreement with the exclusionary membership policies, and so the volunteer leaders decided to continue independently as a coed, inclusive movement.

The group's growth outside New York was slow at first, but founder and executive director Robin Bossert says the number of chapters has surged from 16 to 42 in the past year, with an average of about a dozen youths per unit. He attributes
growth in part to the controversies surrounding the Boy Scouts.

Bossert said Navigators USA emphasizes outdoor activities — "to combat nature-deficit disorder" — as well as community service projects.

—

The Baden-Powell Service Association http://bpsa-us.org/

The BPSA was founded in 2008 by David Atchley of Washington, Mo., who as a leader of his son's Cub Scout pack had clashed with regional BSA leaders over his efforts to adopt a nondiscrimination code.

Atchley, a software engineer, said the BPSA has grown steadily in the past two years, from just a handful of units to 19 ranging from Kingston, N.Y., and Exeter, N.H., to Albuquerque, N.M., and Sunnyvale, Calif.

Like the Navigators, the group is coed, with an inclusive membership policy, and Atchley says the contrast with the Boy Scouts has been a factor in its growth.

The organization takes its name from Robert Baden-Powell, whose initiatives in Britain in starting in 1907 launched the international Scouting movement.

Atchley said the BPSA, inspired by its namesake, focuses on outdoor skills and community service.

"It's back to basics, instead of broadening the program to appeal to everybody under the sun," he said, referring to the Scouts' efforts to modernize and diversify their activities.

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SpiralScouts International http://www.spiralscouts.org/

This coed organization originated in 2001 at the Aquarian Tabernacle Church in Index, Wash., which serves a Wiccan community.

Though developed on the basis of pagan beliefs and practices, it is open to youth and families of any faith — or no religious affiliation. Its units are known as circles; it also welcomes individual families who are designated as "hearth.""Spokeswoman Rachel Scott said the U.S. component comprises about 150 adult volunteers and 350 youth scouts, age 3-18, in 45 circles and hearths.

The mix of genders is a key principle, according to the group's Web site.

"Our program encourages girls and boys to learn, play, and work together under the direction of leaders of both genders as a way of showing by example that both men and women are capable and cooperative leaders," it says.

SpiralScouts has gone public with its disapproval of the Boy Scouts' membership policies, offering to extend its highest rank to Eagle Scouts who have returned their badges to the BSA in protest over those policies.

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Loma Linda University Health Recognized for its Participation in Walk With Ease Program by Arthritis Foundation

PRWeb – Mon, Jan 28, 2013

With nearly 400 walkers on campus, LLU Health outpaced many other area participating organizations in the Walk With Ease program. Loma Linda, Calif. (PRWEB) January 28, 2013

Loma Linda University Health has received the 2012 Partners in Progress Award from the Inland Empire office of the Arthritis Foundation, in recognition of LLU Health’s high participation in the foundation’s Walk With Ease program. With nearly 400 walkers on campus, LLU Health outpaced many other area participating organizations in the Walk With Ease program. The program asked participants to walk three times per week for six weeks, which can help reduce arthritis pain while improving flexibility, strength, balance, and overall health.

“A lot of people with arthritis think they can’t exercise,” says Olivia Moses, DrPH, administrator for LLU Health’s Living Whole employee wellness program, a system-wide strategy to help all staff reach their best health. “But an appropriate exercise program can have great benefits. This was the first time we have participated in Walk with Ease, and we were excited to have been involved.”

The Living Whole campus wellness program offered Walk With Ease during the summer to employees at three locations across LLU Health: the LLU Behavioral Medicine Center, LLU Medical Center–East Campus, and LLUAHSC Support Building. Participants received a Walk With Ease guidebook as well as incentives such as safety whistles and first aid.

Photo caption: The Inland Empire office of the Arthritis Foundation presented the 2012 Partners in Progress Award to Loma Linda University Health during the foundation’s recognition banquet on Dec. 4. In the picture are (l to r): Dr. Emmanuel Peter Katsaros, rheumatology program director at Loma Linda University Medical Center; Kris Sutton, assistant to the Loma Linda University Health’s Living Whole employee wellness program; Olivia Moses, DrPH, administrator of Living Whole employee wellness program; David Hahn, chair of the Arthritis Foundation Inland Empire Advisory Board; and Monica Caraballo, executive director of Arthritis Foundation Inland Empire.

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About Loma Linda University Health (LLUH)

Loma Linda University Health includes Loma Linda University's eight professional schools, Loma Linda University Medical Center's six hospitals and 900 faculty physicians located in the Inland Empire of Southern California. Established in 1905, LLUH is a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers more than 100 academic programs; provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. A Seventh-day Adventist organization, LLUH is a faith-based health system with a mission "to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ."

Herbert Atienza
Brittany Bower (left), a WAU junior biology major, poses for a photo with a local girl during a recent mission trip. Bower is shoeless after giving hers away to a girl she met on the trip who had none.

On Washington Adventist University (WAU) Ministry Department’s “Cruise with a Purpose,” last month, Brittany Bower proved the perfect example of Christian humility and compassion.

Moved by the plight of a young girl, who arrived at a mission event in the Dominican Republic without shoes, Bower, a junior biology major at the Takoma Park, Md., university, promptly removed hers and handed them to the teenager. She spent the rest of the afternoon in her socks until a group member loaned her a pair of size 13 flip-flops.

“It actually began with a little boy who kept tugging at my clothes. I had given him a shirt and some pants but he needed some shoes,” Bower recalls. “I felt badly that I did not have an extra pair for the little boy, so when I saw this girl, who was about 12 or 13, without shoes, it was a chance to make up for it.”

Bower, an aspiring dentist, was one of 17 WAU students who sailed aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Enchantment of the Seas for the nine days and 10 nights long trip, led by Chaplain Kaneil Williams, and sponsored by Zack Plantak, PhD, chair of the religion department. The trip was the first of its kind for the school.

While they thoroughly enjoyed life aboard the cruise liner and the adventure of travel, it was the opportunity to serve that beckoned and fulfilled them most.

For Chenelle Chichester, who graduated in December with a bachelor’s in healthcare administration and is an active member of the United States Air force National Guard, the trip brought the concept of service into sharper
focus. “I have said the words, ‘service before self’ many times before,” she said. “[But] this trip brought new meaning to these words, as I went on my first mission ever. Only [this time] I was a soldier in the Lord’s army. The experience really changed my life and I look forward to cruise 2014. “

The group’s first stop was the La Perla community in Puerto Rico, known as one of the island’s most notorious neighborhoods for violence and drug trafficking. Undeterred, the group played a friendly basketball match with residents before moving to the local community center for worship and the distribution of clothing, toys, and health and food supplies, all donated by WAU students.

On their second stop, St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the group led devotion and played volleyball with students from the St. Thomas/St. John Seventh-day Adventist Academy, distributed bags of toys and supplies to students at Nanna Baby Care, a state funded orphanage, and played games with troubled young people at the Sea View Adolescent Center while encouraging them to make the right choices for their future.

The last stop was Samana, Dominican Republic. Students led worship with members of the community in Downtown Wilmore and painted a local church.

“The distribution in Wilmore was the highlight of our mission trip,” said Chaplain Williams. “In the midst of rain showers, students passed out pain medicines, vitamins and supplies to residents. None complained and everyone worked together to make sure that everyone got something’

It was here that Bower gave away the shoes off her feet and gave real meaning to Jesus’ teaching: “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me” (Matt. 25:45).

“That experience was worth the whole trip,” Williams said.

“Cruise with a Mission 2013” has helped to redefine what mission work looks like in a post-modern context, he added. “Cruise ships can be more that floating resorts if we let them. Though we could not omit the pleasures of the setting, we found a way to make that experience peripheral to our purpose, which was to serve those whom we met.”

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