Finalist Teams from 18 NAD conferences and the Southern England Conference participated in the 2013 Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) North American Division (NAD) Finals, April 19 and 20. Pathfinders from across the United States, Canada and England, ages 10 to 16, showed their knowledge of the Bible books of Acts and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians by answering 90 questions of varying difficulty and point value. Teams had to receive at least 90% of the highest score in order to qualify for the first place level. MORE

CHIP, the Complete Health Improvement Program, has reached a new milestone. The Research-tested Interventions Program (RTIP) announced last week that CHIP is now included on its official website. This is exciting news because RTIP is associated with the prestigious National Institutes for Health and is the Consumer Reports of health intervention programs. See the press release below for full details on this latest evidence of CHIP’s credibility and effectiveness.

Adventists in the News

Spring season is critical time for food pantries

George Harris’ “Pigford III” Passion Sets Fulton County Interfaith Health Summit Ablaze

New Shady Grove hospital chief has history of innovation

Navajo Mission Team makes an impact in Arizona

Therapy brings neurology patients hope

Adventist Hanford to receive national surgery awards

Announcements

Adventist Community Services (ACS) is recognized as one of the five leading mass care agencies. In the last year alone, thousands of ACS volunteers have given of their time, talents, and resources to serve individuals and communities affected by disasters, such as tornadoes, fires, severe storms, floods, shootings, and explosions. Volunteers continue to provide services in response to Hurricane Sandy. Volunteers have

May 1, 2013

Special Days:

May Focus: Community Services

May 4, Community Services Sabbath

May 11, Youth Sabbath

May 18, Single Adults Sabbath

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

Adventist Hanford to receive national surgery awards

http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=84ac041b8b705798057dab6f2&id=502fa17d5b6e=3075540be8[5/1/2013 1:32:51 PM]
distributed items such as personal care supplies, cleaning supplies, clothes, food, water, and educational books and have provided much needed emotional and spiritual support.

The Disaster and Famine Relief Offering will be collected on Sabbath, May 11. Ten percent of this annual offering supports the disaster response efforts of Adventist Community Services in North America, Guam, Micronesia, and Bermuda, while 90 percent supports Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International. A downloadable bulletin insert for churches is available here: MORE

Many Adventists are realizing their desire and need for training in how to best help people in need. The two four-day session Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program (NLCP) focuses on three areas: Leadership, Management, and Social Dimensions of Evangelism. Session I includes eight workshops with training in providing leadership, raising funds, combining theology and sociology and practice mission in the midst of an urban setting, and much more. Learn how you can be most effective in being the hands of Jesus for people who are in need of assistance. The next NLCP course (Session I) will be at the Southeastern California Conference in Riverside, Calif., June 17-20. Register by May 29 and save $100. MORE

Surprised by Love, the second in the Journey of Joy DVD Bible study series from NAD Women's Ministries, features Elizabeth Talbot, speaker/director of the Jesus 101 Biblical Institute. Biblical literacy is an area of special focus of Women's Ministries and Talbot's insights into the Bible and the role of Jesus as our “Go’el” (kinsman-redeemer) have captivated women for several years at women's retreats. The new studies, Surprised by Love, based on her book by the same title, explains how the entire Bible reveals God’s amazing love for each of us. It will be available in time for camp meeting through AdventSource and local or online Adventist Book Centers. The series, in English and Spanish, is ideal for everyone who wants to dig deeper into the Word, whether individually or, perhaps most effectively, in small groups.
**REACH: Healthy leadership and management**

Adventists make friends over breakfast

"This meeting opened up the channels of communication," said Ward 6 Councilman Fred Schultz, one of the Takoma Park councilmen at their breakfast meeting with area Adventist leaders.

It was more like the floodgates: "We are praying for local schools," said one church member. "We offer health screenings, organize street fairs and host a concert series," reported another. "Our 1,100 members offer job fairs, clothing drives, mentoring programs, hot lunches, blanket drives, ESL classes..." announced another. "We are hosting a Mother's Day brunch for single mothers," said a representative from the local ACS. One Adventist representative after another reported on the things they have done or were doing for the community.

Councilman Schultz and the others in attendance, who listened intently for nearly two hours, shook his head in disbelief. **MORE**
AUBURN, Maine (NEWS CENTER) -- Food pantries across the state are feeling the pinch as the spring season is typically a slow time for donations, and Good Shepherd Food Bank said this year the need is high again.

Good Shepherd serves 600 organizations across the state, many of which are seeing an increase in demand for fresh fruits and vegetables.

One of those organizations is Seventh Day Adventist Church in Auburn. Food Pantry Director Pam Blake-Strout said her pantry provides food to nearly 500 families each week. She said most of them look for fresh fruit and vegetables for nutrition, which is what her pantry relies on for donations this time of year.

"The people coming in, we have a lot of seniors coming in, and I'm telling you, they're literally in tears saying I wouldn't be able to have any of this if it wasn't for us being able to get it from the food pantries," Blake-Strout said.

Good Shepherd Food Bank said it's also seeing an increase in demand for fresh produce. Last year, fruits, vegetables, proteins, and dairy accounted for half of its total distribution.

"The problem is that low-income families really lack access to nutritious food, and there's a real barrier there," Good Shepherd President Kristen Miale said. "The average consumer knows that sometimes the healthiest food tends to be the most cost prohibitive."

As a way to solve that problem, Good Shepherd has been working with local farmers to provide fresh food to families in need.

Just last year, the food bank purchased more than 400,000 lbs. from local farmers. That's on top of the 500,000 lbs. Good Shepherd said was donated from local farms.

Feed Maine Food Drive

On Saturday, May 4th, NEWS CENTER crews will be at five Hannaford Supermarkets throughout the state collecting donations of food and money to benefit the Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Crews will be at Sanford, Scarborough, Auburn, Augusta, and Bangor locations. For more on the event, click here.
George Harris' "Pigford III" Passion Sets Fulton County Interfaith Health Summit Ablaze

Press Release
>PRWEB.COM Newswire

Decatur, Georgia (PRWEB) April 28, 2013

After meeting Alvin Kibble, VP/North American Division, Seventh-day Adventist Church, April, 11, 2013, Harris reported sponsoring Adventist interest for the Pigford III Executive Order campaign to end food deserts by developing corner store markets for Black farm grown produce. During his April 18 remarks, 150 members attending the Fulton County Interfaith Health Coalition rose to give Harris two thunderous standing ovations.

To the Summit Members he said, my "citizenship passion" is dedicated to petitioning President Obama for executive order privatization of injunctive relief provisions of the Pigford vs. Glickman consent decree, April 14, 1999, Civil Action No. 97–1978. The production loans resulting from the campaign will empower Black farmers to grow fresh produce for food desert markets, challenging the epidemic of diet related health issues that plague food desert residents.

Summit Leaders, Mary Wilson and Lee Lambert, immediately set up radio interviews for Harris at WAOK AM/1380, which have generated mentorship for the "Pigford III" petition campaign at New Covenant Communications, LLC, and Sidney Woods. And, Jamie Dukes Show, after just 5 minutes of Harris' "Pigford III" Petition presentation has engaged professional sports associates in support of our 100,000 petitioners’ mission.

By appointing Orlan Johnson its new Director/North American Division/Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has created its organizational liaison to the Obama Administration. Orlan Johnson is a man of faith, who professionally monitors regulatory transactions in financial markets, as former Chairman/Securities Investors Protection Corporation, appointed by President Obama. Arranged by Alvin Kibble, Harris and Johnson will meet Friday, May 3rd. for formal introduction of the "Pigford III" executive order request, supported by 100,000 petitioners.

For more information on the petition and to lend support for private development of Black Belt Family Farms, visit http://www.centerforfamilyfarmdevelopment.com.

About the Center for Family Farm Development, Inc.:

CFFD, Inc. is a non-profit community development corporation founded in...
1986 by George E Harris, Jr. Its mission is to create markets for Black American farm products. Telephone: 404-378-3803

George E. Harris, Jr. Chairman/CEO: georgeh70(at)comcast(dot)net

Read the full story at http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/4/prweb10677755.htm
New Shady Grove hospital chief has history of innovation

by Daniel Leaderman Staff writer

http://www.gazette.net/article/20130425/NEWS/130429480/-1/new-shady-grove-hospital-chief-has-history-of-innovation&template=gazette

Sackett brought new approach to patient management to Colorado facility

by Daniel Leaderman Staff writer

The new president of Shady Grove Adventist Hospital says he's a “born and raised” hospital administrator; his father and brother are also in the business.

"I tell people we’re very boring at Thanksgiving because all do is talk about health care," joked John Sackett, 56, who began his tenure at Shady Grove on April 8.

The hospital’s previous president, Dennis Hansen, left at the end of March to start a health-care consulting company.

Before coming to the Washington, D.C.-area, Sackett spent 24 years as president and CEO of Avista Adventist Hospital, and oversaw the 1990 opening of the hospital’s current location in Louisville, Colo. Sackett said Avista was designed with a focus on the patient experience, with all private rooms and a kitchen that provided room service for patients.

Though proud of the work that he’s done there, Sackett — who has cystic fibrosis — said his health would eventually require him to move to a lower elevation and that the offer from Shady Grove came at a good time.

"John has a great track record of partnering with physicians," said Terry Forde, who used to work with Sackett in Colorado and is now the chief operating officer of Adventist HealthCare. Sackett was known for his innovations involving electronic records and patient management, he said.

Avista didn’t have the financial resources to employ many doctors, so most of its physicians were in private practice, making it difficult to track patient data across the system and rate its performance treating patients.

As an exercise, Avista undertook a costly and time-consuming examination of the paper records of patients with asthma and diabetes, which showed that there was much room for improvement in aspects of their treatment, Sackett said.

Rather than react defensively, the physicians were excited to have the data because it gave them a tangible, measurable way to improve, Sackett said.

As a result, Sackett oversaw the implementation of the hospital’s Integrated Physicians Network, which made sure the doctors — most of whom were in private practice — were all using the same electronic medical record system and database of patient information. When all of a patient’s doctors access to that patients history and test results, it cuts down on unnecessary procedures and redundant tests, Sackett said.

The network also gives the hospital data about the patient population they wouldn’t otherwise have had, such as a precise number of diabetic patients, Sackett said.

That data allowed doctors and their staff to better track which patients needed to be coming in for regular hemoglobin checks but weren’t. Staff could then work with the patients, involving the doctors only when necessary, and ultimately saving money on treatment, Sackett said.
The integrated system led to a standard of quality and cooperation among the doctors that isn’t often seen among independent physicians, said Jim Boyle, Avista’s board chair, adding that Sackett was “a visionary leader in the integration process.”

Sackett said he’s still learning about the operations of Shady Grove — which, with 331 beds, is about three times the size of Avista — and is in the process of identifying his priorities. He plans to discuss the idea of an integrated electronic records system with the hospital’s doctors, most of whom are independent and not employed by the hospital.

“The goal for Adventist HealthCare is to reach world-class excellence, and I think it’s possible. I want to be a part of that,” Sackett said, adding that he defines world-class as 90th percentile on performance ratings such as patient satisfaction.

“It’s hard. Most hospitals never do it,” he said.

A U.S. News & World Reports survey gives Shady Grove mostly “average” grades for patient satisfaction, with 55 percent of respondents giving the hospital a “high” ranking overall and 60 percent definitely willing to recommend the facility to friends and family — both scores below the national average. Avista, by comparison, received an 81 percent rating on the same criteria.

Sackett said he was still learning about the Shady Grove system and would be working with the board and medical staff to identify specific benchmarks for meeting that goal.

Apart from his new responsibilities at Shady Grove, Sackett says he plans to spend a lot of his free time as a Washington, D.C., tourist.

“This is a place I’ve always thought would be fun to live, because I love history,” Sackett said.

dleaderman@gazette.net
Navajo Mission Team makes an impact in Arizona

Members of the Southwestern Adventist University and Chisholm Trail Academy Navajo Mission Team meet in front of the Diné Youth Complex, a boys and girls club in Fort Defiance during their spring break mission trip to the Navajo Nation. (Courtesy Roger Mikesell)

Southwestern Adventist University and Chisholm Trail Academy teamed up in March to sponsor another mission trip to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Fort Defiance, Ariz.

Thirty-eight people from Keene and the surrounding area used their spring break to participate in building projects, landscaping, gardening ventures and youth activities. Following a 10-year tradition started by Dr. Randy Butler, former criminal justice professor at Southwestern, 14 students from CTA and 14 Southwestern students, along with trip organizer Dr. Bill Kilgore and a group of 10 sponsors, spent 10 days on the Navajo Reservation. Kilgore is vice president for spiritual development at the university.

The Reservation is notorious for having the highest rate of alcoholism, diabetes, and suicide in the country, Kilgore said. Fifty-five percent of the population is unemployed, the average family income is $14,000, and 41 percent of the Navajo population is under the age of 19 — almost double the national average — which makes it a prime place for a mission trip right here in the United States, he said.

The group unloaded in a snow storm upon arriving the first Friday of the trip at The Good Shepherd Mission, an old Episcopal Mission in the heart of the Navajo Nation. By the middle of the week, the daytime temperatures were in the 50s and 60s as the team labored preparing top soil for the mission's agricultural project designed to encourage the use of traditional Navajo planting methods. The plants grown will eventually be given to local youth to enable them to begin their own gardens.

Over the past several years, mission teams have transformed the Rio Puerco Youth Center, which is owned and operated by Rez Refuge Ministries, from a dilapidated, abandoned house to a functioning counseling and activity center, Kilgore said.

“A Christian social worker now lives on site to help with the growing needs in the community,” Kilgore said.

The mission team performed landscaping at the center and participated in community clean-up projects in what had been a gang-infested neighborhood near the Rio Puerco Youth Center, Kilgore said.

In nearby Gallup, N.M., students and sponsors worked in family groups to help complete a retaining wall at the church. Also, the team members added more than 100 yards of graveled trail to a project that began last year which provided a beautiful foot path in brush land and rocky hill country winding through the property of the Gallup All Nations Adventist Church.

A new opportunity for ministry opened this year for the team as they were invited by the boys and girls club on the reservation to assist daily in the recreation program for the youth during their spring break at the Navajo nation facilities in town, Kilgore said.

“As a tremendous gesture of kindness and acceptance, they were greeted by a hot meal prepared by the local community youth leaders," he said.
At the end of every work day, the work crew split into groups to spend time with the community's young people at the youth center.

“The teenagers in the community were invited to play basketball on a small court just behind the youth center with the young people from our group enthusiastically leading out,” Kilgore said. A story hour was organized for the younger children where they had fun making crafts, balloon animals and listening to stories in the youth center. The story hour grew from an average of five or six children last year to 21 one night this year, Kilgore said.

During the trip, time was carved out to absorb the culture, learning from local Navajo Christians who talked about what life is like on the Rez, and how the Navajo people are coming to know Jesus in spite of being raised in a culture that is steeped in superstitious tradition. The butte and canyons also provided beautiful scenery for hikes on several occasions.

“It was wonderful to see so many people work so well together to pull off an amazing mission trip,” Kilgore said. “From the students who maintained positive, ‘can-do’ attitudes, to the sponsors who worked tirelessly to organize the work, they all collectively made an impact on the Navajo community in Fort Defiance.”

While addressing the participants of the trip, Butler said, “On behalf of Rez Refuge Ministries, I want to thank all of you for your dedication and service to your fellow brothers and sisters on the Rez. This was an outstanding trip. The Lord blessed us with good weather, contacts, and no serious injuries. Through your work and witness, you touched a lot of lives.”

*Randy Butler, Susan Grady and Bill Kilgore combined to contribute to this article.*
Therapy brings neurology patients hope

May 1, 2013

Therapy brings neurology patients hope By Chris Michlewicz cmichlewicz@ourcoloradonews.com Colorado Community Media | 0 comments

Posted:

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 12:18 pm | Updated: 10:44 am, Thu Apr 25, 2013.

By Chris Michlewicz cmichlewicz@ourcoloradonews.com

Patients with neurological impairments are using exaggerated movements to regain balance and muscle dexterity.

Modeled after Lee Silverman Voice Treatment LOUD, a program designed to improve enunciation and speech volume in Parkinson’s patients, the “BIG” version is helping people like Nina Fatchett regain independence.

The 70–year–old Parker woman was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis two years ago and visits the Center for Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine at Parker Adventist Hospital four times a week for exercise sessions with June Hartmann, the lead occupational therapist for outpatient rehabilitation. The hospital became certified in LSVT BIG in December, and the few patients who have gone through the specialized treatment have shown vast improvements in mobility.

Fatchett’s normal walking pace had become a shuffle, her balance was shaky, and she lost range of motion in her arms. But four visits to Hartmann per week for the last month, plus daily half-hour–long sessions at home, have helped her accomplish everyday tasks that had become difficult.

“It’s easier to get towels out of the washer because those are heavy, and I can reach up and put the dishes away,” Fatchett said. “Things like that make a big difference.”

And “big” is a key word in the therapy. Hartmann said changes in the brain’s ability to communicate with the rest of the body cause the slower movements to go unrecognized by the patients. The deliberate movements involved in the exercises feel big to them, but they are actually moving normally, Hartmann says. Therapists record before and after videos to monitor progress, and patients are often stunned by their improvement.

“She gets it all back because she’s doing these every day,” Hartmann says of Fatchett’s prescribed exercises.

The exaggerated movements used in BIG borrow from the LSVT LOUD therapy, which gained popularity after being developed in the 1990s by a group of Colorado researchers. Parkinson’s patients often begin to mumble because of neurological damage, and medical experts discovered that facial muscles and speech memory can be retrained.

In the LOUD therapy, patients are given tasks to build their vocal strength.

They are instructed, for instance, to practice specific frequently used phrases and then repeat those sentences in everyday settings, like the grocery store or at home. Muscle memory eventually takes over and speech clarity and volume improve, said Susie Peterson, who oversees the LOUD program at Parker Adventist.

LSVT BIG was quickly found to have a tremendous impact on other patients with neurological impairments.

“It was designed for the Parkinson’s patients, but right now I’m doing it with two stroke patients, because they have the motion, but they haven’t figured out, ‘how do I loosen my trunk? How do I get better balance?’” Hartmann said.
Fatchett can't drive — she credits her husband for “faithfully” driving her to every therapy appointment — but she no longer uses a walker and can take larger steps when walking and navigate stairs more easily. The home exercises have become routine, but it helps having Hartmann coaching her on the correct movements.

Fatchett, a Parker resident for 37 years, said she does not expect MS to take away her ability to speak, precluding the need for LOUD therapy.

"I talk a lot," she says, with a laugh.

Posted in on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 12:18 pm. Updated: 10:44 am.
Adventist Hanford to receive national surgery awards

Adventist Medical Center – Hanford will receive national surgery quality awards at a ceremony today that begins at 5:30 p.m.

Adventist Medical Center – Hanford has been selected for national surgery quality awards from Blue Shield and HealthGrades and will be honored at an awards presentation today.

Wayne Ferch, president and CEO of Adventist Health/Central Valley Network, will make presentations and be joined by Andrea Kofl, vice president and chief nursing officer and Dr. Richard Ellsworth, OB/GYN and chief of medical staff.

Adventist Medical Center – Hanford has been named a Blue Distinction Center+ in knee and hip replacement. Blue Shield gives this award to hospitals that have been recognized for their expertise and efficiency in delivering specialty care, and Adventist Hanford is one of 31 hospitals in the state to receive this distinction.

The hospital also received a 2013 HealthGrades Excellence Award in joint replacement, which places Adventist – Hanford in the top 10 percent in the nation in this category. Five-star awards in hip fracture repair, hip replacement, knee replacement, gynecologic surgery and cholecystectomy were also awarded for 2013.

The awards presentation will take place from 5:30 to 6 p.m. at Adventist Medical Center – Hanford Conference Center, located at 115 Mall Drive in Hanford.

For more information, contact Malissa Rose at (559) 840–6821 or at This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. .
Disaster & Famine Relief Offering – May 11, 2013

*Jesus said*, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40.

Adventist Community Services (ACS) is recognized as one of the five leading mass care agencies. In the last year alone, thousands of ACS volunteers have given of their time, talents, and resources to serve individuals and communities affected by disasters, such as: tornadoes, fires, severe storms, floodings, shootings, and explosions. Volunteers continue to provide services in response to Hurricane Sandy. Volunteers have distributed items such as personal care supplies, cleaning supplies, clothes, food, water, and educational books and have provided much needed emotional and spiritual support.

Ten percent of this annual offering supports the disaster response efforts of Adventist Community Services in North America, Guam, Micronesia, and Bermuda while 90 percent supports Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International.

Your financial donations are needed more than ever before. Please prayerfully consider giving a generous donation to support your church’s efforts to provide relief to individuals and communities affected by disaster.

(YES!), a ministry of Adventist Community Services (ACS), engages young people in discipleship with two purposes – to change their lives while they change the world. YES! involves them in all of ACS’s ministries: Community Development, Crisis Care, Tutoring and Mentoring, Elder Care, Disaster Response and the Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program. It teaches and promotes mentorship, leadership, and a spirit of active service.

If you think you would like to start a YES! program in your area, many resources are available to you, such as the YES! Leadership Certification Program, YES! QuickStart Guide, and numerous print resources. MORE
2013 - Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program

Linking Potential with Opportunity

Session I: June 17-20, 2013
Session II: September 23-26, 2013

REGISTRATION

Southeastern California Conference
Headquarters
11330 Pierce Street
Riverside, CA 92505

Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program (NLCP) is designed to equip pastors, church administration and nonprofit leaders with strategies and professional skills to successfully lead. NLCP focuses on three major learning outcomes; a) leadership skills, b) improvement of management knowledge, and c) changes in attitude of social dimensions of evangelism.

This intensive two session program is taught by a group of professionals who teach participants how to operate and minister effectively.

This training is provided by North American Division (NAD) Adventist Community Services, in partnership with Washington Adventist University Center for Metropolitan Ministry, Andrews University, Philanthropic Services for Institutions, General Conference Sabbath School/Personal Ministries, Adventist World Radio and Adventist Risk Management.

Participants will learn:

Leadership:

- To improve participants' abilities to affect individual, organization, and community changes.

Management:

- To improve participants' abilities to effectively handle the administrative responsibilities of nonprofit management.

Social Dimensions of Evangelism:

- To improve participants' abilities through biblical concepts of holistic ministry to minister in dynamic environments.

"It was a pleasure to be involved in such a meaningful, useful and well planned training. I found that the Non-Profit Leadership Training is essential to church leaders and organizers and could be beneficial to many more in our congregations. I believe there are many who sit in the pews who are not motivated to use their leadership gifts from God. This is the type of preparation that will bump us up a few notches preparing us for more effective ministry. My plan is to use this in conjunction with my formal training to be a more effective servant leader."
Again, thank you for your ministry.” - Michele Gamble
Fred Shultz was one of four members of the Takoma Park City Council to meet with Adventist leaders last Friday.

“I am a conduit from residents to the city, and I’d like to be able to tell them about the services of your church that can help them,” said Fred Schultz, Ward 6 councilman for Takoma Park, Md. “This meeting opened up the channels of communication.”

It was more like the floodgates: “We offer a number of free health screenings to the community and you’d have to go online to our website to see a list of the many health-related classes we offer,” said Judy Lichty, director of Health and Wellness for Adventist HealthCare, parent company of Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md.

“We are praying for local schools,” said Chris Daley, a member of the city’s Sligo church, who is helping coordinate their new prayer initiative for safety and security at local schools. He and another member then read a prayer they’ve written for schools, which ends with, “May the securing presence of Your guardian angels be residents at each school and with each student.”

Jeff Taylor, associate pastor at Takoma Park (Md.) church, followed the prayer with a list of the activities his church offers the community: “At Takoma Park church, we offer health screenings, organize street fairs and host a concert series,” he shared, adding that they had a classical concert last weekend and, this fall, will host a gospel choir from Howard University in Washington, D.C., all open to the community.

“At the Metropolitan church right down the street in Hyattsville, Md., our 1,100 members offer job fairs, clothing drives, mentoring programs, hot lunches for homeless persons, blanket drives, an ESL [English as a Second Language] class to help the growing number of immigrants in the community, financial services, exercise classes, baby blessings for community families and a program for autistic children,” announced Brenda Billingy, senior pastor.

“On May 5 we are hosting a Mother’s Day brunch for single mothers,” said Vee Akehurst, executive assistant, representing Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington.
This community staple, which also houses a food pantry and clothing distribution center and offers job training and computer classes, is located about a mile from the campus Washington Adventist University (WAU) shares with Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md.

It’s also where, on the second Friday of each month, a group of Seventh-day Adventist pastors, principals, presidents and other leaders meet to fellowship over breakfast, share ideas, address mutual concerns and host community leaders.

They call themselves, Adventist Community Action Council (ACAC) and their purpose, printed in bold lettering atop each month’s agenda, reads: “To coordinate the resources of the Adventist organizations in the Takoma Park area and to address key community issues.”

Last Friday, the group, chaired by Erwin Mack, head elder at Sligo church and a longtime educator and business owner, who signs some of his emails, “Retired, but not disinterested,” hosted Shultz and three other members of the Takoma Park City Council. The acting city administrator and two representatives of the city’s police department also joined them.

After breakfast in WAU’s Wilkinson Hall, they assembled around a large table with about 30 leaders from 15 local Adventist organizations. From Joyce Newmyer, president of WAH and her vice president, Geoff Morgan, to Doug Morgan (no relation), interim general manager at WGTS, and its parent, WAU, whose president Weymouth Spence, started the meeting off with a presentation by some of his award-winning business students about their work in the community and the trademark, “This is Washington Adventist University.” Around the table they went, each one introducing themselves, sharing their role in the church and how they serve the community.

Councilman Schultz, and the others in attendance, who listened intently for nearly two hours, shook his head in disbelief. “Very impressive,” he said after the meeting. “It provided an opportunity for those of us on the city council to understand that there are a lot of services offered by the Seventh-day Adventist Church that we and the community don’t know about.”

Erwin Mack couldn’t agree more. That’s why he started the group 10 years ago with Monte Sahlin, then vice president for Ministries Development at the Columbia Union Conference. Though Sahlin now works for the Ohio Conference, Mack continues to keep the group moving and growing to help raise public awareness of his church in the community. “We cannot hide our lights under the proverbial ‘bushel baskets’ and then wonder why our secular friends don’t know more about us,” he wrote in the email invitation to the Adventist leaders.

His continuing efforts to convene the group each month; longtime connections with community, county and state officials; and “gentle reminders” are appreciated, valued, and having impact.

“Thank you for having the vision and execution of the ACAC program,” wrote Chris Daley via email after the meeting. “You saw the value and sharing the value with the Takoma Park city leadership, which was most appreciated.”

Washington Adventist University business students share how they are helping community members.
Doug Morgan, acting general manager for WGTS 91.9 FM, and Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University, share a laugh.

Erwin Mack, head elder at Sligo church, helped start the Adventist Community Action Council (ACAC) some 10 years ago.
COMMENTS POLICY: The Columbia Union Conference Visitor encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments are subject to approval but will not be edited. Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.