Learning to Serve: La Vida Mission Trip
by Kristine Horvath

Over the past two years, the Niles Westside Seventh-day Adventist Junior and Earliteen Sabbath School leaders (Lisa Babcock, and Gregor & Lynn Staniszewski) have been trying to help their classes to experience Jesus first-hand. They have been working on teaching the young people ways to reach out to their community and beyond, in love and humility.

Since few projects can be done without money, they began raising money by doing “Rent-A-Kid” projects, doing yard work, gardening and odd jobs for donations toward the class’ chosen projects. Last year a ramp was built for a boy who needed wheelchair access to his home whose family lacked the funds to build it. This year more than $5,000 was raised for the purpose of a mission trip. Since a Maranatha trip was prohibitively expensive, and the age limitation would have kept many of the young people from going, they arranged to go to La Vida Mission in New Mexico.

La Vida Mission is a self-supporting ministry located on a Navajo reservation in the Lake Valley of San Juan County. It has been in existence for approximately forty years and is operated by lay members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is supported by the prayers and financial support of people all over the United States. The mission has an Adventist Church, evangelism center, post office, thrift store, and a family practice clinic that provide medical, optical and dental services to the mission residents, as well as their neighbors on the reservation. It provides free water to about 200 households. The mission also includes an elementary boarding school with twenty-one children and two teachers where, during the week, children live in dorm-houses with house parents who love them and care for them as their own children.

From July 7-16, 2011, six adults, twelve kids, four cars and forty-four hours of driving (round trip) were the make-up for the La Vida mission trip. Projects included roof repairs, painting the interior of a staff house and a classroom floor, installing a classroom heater, and a new swamp cooler in a home, sorting food and clothing donations, sewing bags to sell, making bookmarks for raising awareness, and decorating coin banks for donations. They also passed out fliers for the upcoming VBS.

The time spent at the mission wasn’t all work, though. The group was able to go hiking on the reservation, and see a cave and the ruins of an old trading post. They participated in the church service on Sabbath, leading song service, giving prayer, special music, taking up offering, and also helped with the sermon. On the way home to Michigan, they were able to stop at Mesa Verde to see the ruins of cliff dwelling Indians.

continued on page 3
Photo by Don Harris

We are in the great day of atonement, when our sins are, by confession and repentance, to go beforehand to judgement. God does not now accept a tame, spiritless testimony from His ministers. Such a testimony would not be present truth. The message for this time must be meat in due season to feed the church of God. But Satan has been seeking gradually to rob this message of its power, that the people may not be prepared to stand in the day of the Lord.

In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of the investigative judgment. The cases of the righteous dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment is to be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

~ True Revival: The Church’s Greatest Need
by Ellen G. White, pg. 12

Pastor Darrel

Adventurer & Pathfinder Clubs

The Adventurer Program is available to children that are not quite old enough to be Pathfinders (which is for grades 5-10), but who want to be involved in fun activities and progressive class work. It is open to all children in first through fourth grades. The Niles Westside Adventurers will meet on Mondays from 6 - 7:30 p.m. once school starts.

Adventurer and Pathfinder Registration will be during Niles Adventist School’s registration on Wednesday, August 17, from 4-6 p.m. At least one adult per family needs to attend Adventurer classes with the child. ~ Laurel Gaudin, Adventurer Leader; & Laura Hutchinson, Pathfinder Leader

Summer’s “Thirst-Ability”

Ever tried drinking warm water on a hot summer’s day? It just does not seem right. Add a drought, more than 100 degrees weekly, like in Texas, to summer and even hot water is welcome. You see it really depends on your “thirst-ability” – how truly thirsty are you? And your “thirst-ability” may depend on your dehydration, which depends on having water, hot or cold. The real question is, “Did your body get enough?” If the heat of the day causes us to desire water because we are dehydrated, how much more ought the “heat” of troubled days drive us to want more time with Jesus? How is your “thirst-ability” for God?

In Psalm 63, David talks about his thirst for God to the point where his soul has a “dehydrated” longing for God. David compares the impossibility of being satisfied without God to a land (wilderness) without water. Proverbs 30:15, 16 mentions the things that are never satisfied or have enough such as land without water, which is such a noticeably discontented place. Just so, a dehydrated soul without God may be just as notable. The greatest satisfying drive in David is for God’s living and abiding presence. There is nothing more satisfying than God’s providential presence with you. Holiness is still the deepest soul yearning for those who miss this living fountain: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” John 7:37, 38. Again Jesus said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whose eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” John 6:53-56. God wants us “hydrated” with Him. Don’t let summer’s heat dehydrate you—let your “thirst-ability” for God drive you to drink Him.

Blessed Blessings.

~ Laurel Gaudin, Adventurer Leader; & Laura Hutchinson, Pathfinder Leader
Meet Our New Members

Steven & Jessica Carlsen Family
by Gina Meekma with Steven Carlsen

Steven, Jessica, Callie (5), and Pace (3) Carlsen live in Dowagiac, Michigan. Jessica is from Nashville, Tennessee, and Steve is from Dowagiac. The Carlsons moved from Nashville to Dowagiac shortly after they got married to be near Steve’s family (including Steve Sr & Alma Carlsen).

Jessica and Steven came to Niles Westside because there are a lot of young families like theirs, and they love the children’s Sabbath School classes. Jessica recently joined the Adventist Church on Profession of Faith, and Steve transferred from Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs.

Steve works for the State of Michigan, and Jessica is a stay-at-home mom. They met in Nashville while Steve was in the Army and have been married for seven years.

The Carlsons love being outside and in the water. They enjoy fishing, boating, and camping, as well as spending time with family. Steve is a motorcycle enthusiast.

Welcome to the Niles Westside Church Family, Carlsen Family!

La Vida Mission Trip continued

Although they provided their own meals, our “mission trippers” were well cared for by the staff at La Vida Mission. The maintenance man and his wife brought ice cream for everyone one evening, and nearly every night one of the staff brought extra food for the group to eat. A special treat and a favorite of the young people was homemade Siopao (like a stuffed dumpling), which was also given to everyone as a snack on their way back home.

The Lord blessed our young people and leaders with no injuries and only a couple of minor illnesses while they were gone.

There were many opportunities for the group to experience God’s awesome power. A particularly awesome intervention happened on the return drive through southwestern Colorado when everyone was riding their brakes going down a very curvy mountain road. The Staniszewski’s van began shaking. Gregor thought it was probably the rotors causing the problem. After stopping in Silverton for gas, he felt he could no longer trust the van. Jeremy Loucks (one of the adults on the trip) test drove the van. Not able to determine the exact cause of the problem, they noticed a AAA vehicle behind them and flagged it down for help. They discovered they had been driving that steep curvy road with only one lug nut holding the driver’s side rear tire. Many prayers were sent up right there in the parking lot thanking God for His protection!
I was fortunate enough to experience a few days of the Niles Westside VBS this year, and I wish I could have been there the whole week! The theme was *Egypt: Joseph’s Journey from Prison to Palace*. It was such a great way to bring the story of Joseph to life, and I learned a lot about some of the customs of ancient Egypt as well!

I was amazed and dazzled at how our church and school were transformed into ancient Egypt, including the prison and palace for Joseph’s journey. Each day the children gathered in the sanctuary for worship, singing, celebration, and to learn the day’s Bible point, to which they responded “One True God!” The music was very fun. I watched the kids not only sing but really get into the actions. (My five-year-old son **Kalvin** is still singing them!)

The children were divided into multi-age groups to participate in the morning’s activities. This allowed the older children to help the younger ones, which worked really well. Led by their group leaders, the children made their rounds to each station to play a game, do a craft, eat a snack, or interact with Joseph, doing all these fun things while learning about Egypt, God, and the story of Joseph. They even had real animals to pet, including catching real fish with their bare hands (although I’m not quite sure how the animals felt about that at times 😅). VBS ended with more singing, and the children writing their “God-sightings” on paper bricks (which were fashioned into a pyramid on the wall).

The helpers (a.k.a. actors) in the marketplace dressed up like Egyptians and assisted the children in fun activities like making Egyptian headbands, painting sarcophagi, writing in hieroglyphics, making mud bricks, and weaving baskets. They played games including wrapping up in toilet paper like mummies, playing follow-the-leader, and having sponge relay races, to name a few. It was all so fun that I was sad when I had to miss it to go to work. Luckily, on the days I couldn’t attend, my son would promptly fill me in on what Joseph was doing that day and how funny the actors were.

This year’s VBS program didn’t include a skit like it has in previous years. But because the children have enjoyed skits so much in the past, Chris Shuler brain-stormed with **Alex Prouty** and others to write some skits for our Egypt theme. We were so fortunate to have the talents of **Doug Taylor** (Joseph), **Jamie Bennett** (Ramses), Steve Prouty (Arman), Chris Shuler (Farid), and Angela Shuler (Farzaneh)! They all did a wonderful job and had the children rolling in the aisles with laughter. They were truly a VBS highlight, and I’m still hearing (over a week later) how funny they were. Through it all, the children enjoyed learning more about what it really means to serve our “One True God,” and how a relationship with God can help us have a heart of forgiveness.

Evangelism and witnessing were emphasized throughout the week. While in the marketplace, children were encouraged to share their knowledge of the “One True God” with the “pagan Egyptians” running the shops. Missions were emphasized as well. Through offerings, the children raised $1,555.54 to purchase Arabic picture Bibles for fatherless children in Egypt, via the organization Coptic Orphans. The children watched their offerings build as with each $5 donation, a paper Bible was placed on a pyramid bulletin board. By the end of the week, the pyramid couldn’t even contain all of the Bibles!

This year a record number of 201 children attended our VBS throughout the week. The busiest day saw 176 children. I’m not sure what the stress level was for those in charge, but from my perspective, it went very smoothly (despite a big thunderstorm and high winds on Monday). This year we had the best attended Adventist VBS in the area, which definitely exceeded our expectations! That wouldn’t have been possible without **Erica Hippler** and **Gina Meekma** leading out and organizing this fantastic program, not to mention the more than seventy-five volunteers, including Niles Westside church members, people from other area churches, teens, and parents of VBS kids. So much work went into this program, and it definitely paid off. What a fantastic way to learn about God and witness to our community!

This article cannot express how, as a parent, I value what the VBS team has done for my child and all the others who attended. As an adult I certainly had fun, and I could definitely see all the kids having a great time around me. VBS is a fantastic, powerful ministry to our children, and I know many “seeds” were planted in the hearts of those who attended. I can’t wait to experience VBS with my child next summer! Thank you all so much for such a super week of fun. (I’d say we better plan for 300 kids next year! 😊)
Many of you may know that our family is volunteering at The King’s Children’s Home in Belmopan, Belize. This home, which currently houses around fifty children between the ages of one month and nineteen years, is run by Leonie Gillham, who is an Adventist lady that is doing her best to raise the kids at the home with Adventist values. However, 99 percent of the support Leonie receives at the home does not come from Adventist donations. Especially now, I am keenly aware of the long list of extraordinary places to invest in missions. There is such a giant need abroad that I realize it can be a strain on households constantly being asked to give. However, if you are in a position to give or have been looking for a mission to support, I believe this mission is worthy of your attention.

I am writing to ask for support in a couple of different areas:

1) As the new school year is just around the corner, many of the kids are in need of new school uniforms. Here, unfortunately, uniforms are not purchased, but sewn. The material for the uniforms, however, needs to be purchased, and we do not have the funds to do so. The cost of material is approximately $400.

2) We are hoping to plant a (large) garden and orchard for the home. Currently, the children live in a five-bedroom home stacked with bunks and no yard to play in. They are in the process of building a new home, just outside the city limits of Belmopan on nineteen acres. It is a beautiful location and will give the children many more things to do as they will have room to roam and play. It will also provide plenty of room to grow a garden for the kids.

We are really excited about this project! Right now, the children get very few fruits and vegetables. Their diet mostly consists of rice and beans, bread, and some chicken. Our plan is to grow broccoli, melons, tomatoes, peppers, and many other healthy foods for the kids to eat. Also, we would like to be able to sell some of these fruits and vegetables in order to sustain the garden. We have no tools or shed to house the tools as theft is very widespread here. These are things that need to be purchased also in order to start the garden.

Right now we are living in a volunteer house at the new building site. There is room in this home to host around fifty people. If anyone is interested in going on a mission trip, this is a wonderful place to do so!

If you are interested in either of these projects, please contact us at ekris33@aol.com or rsuttonmich@yahoo.com.

You can donate online using PayPal. Go to www.mexico-missions.org, scroll down to “Belize Mission Click Here.” It will pull up a website with our PayPal right at the top.

Thank you!

Rich, Kris, and Olivia Grace Sutton

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our church library isn’t just for kids. There are several wonderful series of sermons on DVD in our holdings. Lee & Morris Venden made a series, More About Jesus, which emphasizes Jesus’ character and the relationship He wants to have with us. I like to pop one or two into the player on Friday evenings shortly after sundown to start the Sabbath ~ Steve Warren
Welcome New Members!
Tamara Bell, Tara Staniszewski, and Brooklyn Wood were baptized on July 23.

Our Sympathy to Richard Makungu on the recent loss of his mother.

Thank you for your spiritual support during the loss of my beloved mother, Eunice Kabaso, in Zambia. ~ Richard Makungu

Ministerial Retreat: Pastors Darrel le Roux and Bill Dudgeon will be at Camp Au Sable from August 7-10 for the retreat. Pastor Darrel will then be on vacation from August 11-19. Please contact Sue Fattic, Head Elder, at 269-876-9356 or suefattic@mac.com, if you have pastoral needs during that time.

A big thank you to all of our awesome volunteers at Egypt VBS in July! We couldn’t have had such a successful program that reached so many children for Jesus without your help. ~ Erica Hippler & Gina Meekma

Nominating Committee Report:
- Communications - Public Relations Leader: Nicole Koenishof
- Social Committee: John Chung, Luis & Cathy Leonor, Bob & Dagi Benner
- Student Aid Committee ~ Fred Boothby, Erin Dockerty
- Elder: Dan Minter
- Deacon: Gregor Staniszewski
- Cradle Roll Assistant Leader: Dean Snow
- CareNet Committee (Deaconess): Lauretta Mann

Massage Help Needed at Niles Riverfest: We are planning to provide a free 5-minute “chair massage” to those who would like to have one during the Niles Riverfest, August 4-7. If you would be willing to participate in giving chair massages, please contact Rocco Sarli (269-684-3590 or rsarli@melwade.com). For those who would like to learn this simple technique, there is training available.

Food Art 4 Kids Help Needed at Riverfest: Please indicate to Tami le Roux (269-425-2161 or posbus4me@gmail.com) or sign up on the sheet in the church hallway for any two-hour slot you are willing to fill for kids, starting on Friday afternoon, August 5, from 3-5 p.m., and Sabbath, August 6, from 9-5. Thank you!

It’s almost school time again. Women’s Ministries would like to give backpacks and school supplies to Niles Adventist School to pass out as needed. If you can help with any of the items (contact the school for supply lists, or see the lists at www.nilesadventistschool.org, then click on the grades links), or stuff a backpack with the items, that would be great. We need them by Sabbath, August 13, in time for registration. There will be a bin to collect the items in the foyer back by the parking lot door. Thank you and God bless! ~ Denise Scroggs, Women’s Ministries

August’s fellowship lunch will be on Sabbath, August 13, at Rangeline Park in Berrien Springs. Please bring extra food and join us!

Women’s Night Out: Thursday, August 18, at 5:30 p.m. at Mandarin House (South Bend). Contact Denise Scroggs to RSVP (rn95@sbcglobal.net or 574-243-0141).

District 9 Family Camp at Camp Au Sable is just around the corner! If you are interested in a spiritual retreat for your Labor Day weekend, September 2-5, you will not want to miss this opportunity to unwind and be spirit-filled. Forms and additional information are available through the church office.
NAS is a multi-grade school. But what does that mean for the students that attend there? ~ Thank you to Staci Fagal for the following information:

☞ A multi-grade school generally has three or more grades per classroom. The lower grades tend to have more levels within each grade since they will be coming from such a wide variety of backgrounds, so it is better to have only two grades combined in first and second.

☞ While it is easier to teach one level at a time, there may be a variety of levels within each grade.

☞ A single grade teacher assumes that all students are working at the same level. If they are not, then they are behind.

☞ A multi-grade teacher can assume that students may be working at different levels, and has the resources to teach to those levels for each subject. There will be other students in that classroom that will be working on that level, but not necessarily in the same grade.

☞ In a progressive class, such as math, all of the students benefit from hearing the lesson taught. Most learning is taught in three stages: introduction, practice, and review. In a multi-grade classroom, this happens 2-3 years in a row, which increases a students chance of “getting it” and keeping it.

☞ In other classes, like science or history, the material is generally taught at the middle level, being more difficult for the lower level and more basic for the higher level. All students benefit from the higher level and basic questions that students have, or teachers pose. Tests and/or projects may be leveled to check for a level of understanding that is appropriate for each student’s grade.

☞ The curriculum guide, which is the requirements for each grade level for each subject, includes a lot of overlap for many subjects. English, for example, may introduce subject verb agreement in the second grade, but it is practiced and reviewed clear up through the sixth grade. In fact the only difference in the sixth, seventh, & eighth grade English textbooks are the sentences. The information is essentially the same, except it is called introduction, practice, or review in the different books.

☞ Students in multi-grade classrooms have the opportunity to interact with other students who may have more knowledge about a subject, as well as the chance to help someone understand through peer tutoring, which is when a student who understands a subject can help another student. Besides helping the teacher, the tutor is also being helped by showing his mastery of the subject, by explaining the concept in his own words, and even describing it in a variety of ways until there is understanding. The student is being helped by someone who has the time to go over a concept a number of times without other students getting restless; in a language that he may be more familiar with; and in a situation that may be less intimidating.

☞ Having a teacher at the beginning of the year who is familiar with you, your strengths and weaknesses makes the first weeks of school more valuable. A teacher can start right in without having to guess what was studied in years past. In fact, many teachers plan special activities based on what they know about their class’ interests. This would not be possible if it were a whole new set of students every year. Public schools are starting to catch on to this benefit, and many are “looping” teachers so they can have the same class for two years in a row.

☞ Having friends of mixed age groups is good for students. Working with and helping students of different ages and abilities reduces cliques and isolation, creating a more accepting and family environment.

Upcoming NAS Events

Now registering for the 2011-2012 School Year!

Summer Cleaning Bees ~ Sunday, August 7 & 14 ~ 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

School Closed ~ August 8-12 ~ Teachers Meetings

Registration ~ Wednesday, August 17 ~ 4 - 6 p.m.

School Board Meeting ~ Wednesday, August 17 ~ 7 p.m.

First Day of School & Pancake Breakfast ~ Monday, August 22 ~ 8:30 a.m.
Calendar of Events

August 1  Personal Ministries Meeting  7:30 p.m.
August 3  Midweek Manna  7 p.m.
August 4-7  Niles Riverfest
August 4  Deaconess Meeting  5:30 p.m.
August 6  Joe Kidder & Pastor Darrel  8:30 & 11 a.m.
August 7  School Cleaning Bee 1  9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
August 7-10  Ministerial Retreat - Pastors Away
August 8-12  School Closed - Teachers Meetings
August 8  Women’s Bible Study  10:30 a.m.
August 9  Finance Committee  7 p.m.
August 10 Midweek Manna  7 p.m.
August 11-19  Pastor Darrel on Vacation
August 13 Ray McAllister, Speaker  8:30 & 11 a.m.
  Fellowship Lunch at Rangeline Park  after 2nd svc
August 14  School Cleaning Bee 2  9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
August 17 NAS/Pathfinder/Adventurer Registration  4-6 p.m.
  School Board Meeting (NAS)  7 p.m.
  Midweek Manna  7 p.m.
August 18  Women’s Night Out - Mandarin House  5:30 p.m.
August 20  Pastor Darrel le Roux, Speaker  8:30 & 11 a.m.
  Teacher Dedication  11 a.m.
August 22  First Day of School at NAS  8:30 a.m.
  Women’s Bible Study  10:30 a.m.
August 23  Church Board Meeting  7 p.m.
August 24  Pathfinders (gym)  6:30 p.m.
  Midweek Manna  7 p.m.
August 26-28  Church Camp Out at Spaulding Lake
  Pathfinder Workshop at Camp Au Sable
August 27  Ben Rustemaj, Speaker  8:30 & 11 a.m.
August 28  Newsletter Items Due
August 29  Adventurers (gym)  6 p.m.
August 31  Pathfinders (gym)  6:30 p.m.
  Midweek Manna  7 p.m.

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Services

First Worship Service  Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.

Sabbath School  Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.

Second Worship Service  Saturdays, 11 a.m.

Midweek Manna  Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

August Birthday

Frank Chole  1  Kathy Wright  17
Erica Hippler  2  Valeska Wheeler  18
John Franklin  3  Patricia Hawley  19
Helen Hemminger  4  Lauren Leonor
Bryn Salvini  5  Chip Meekma
Marcella Cole  6  Jenn Cook
Ted Navalon  7  Susan Constable
Joe Lawrence  8  Robert Benjamin
Donna Ruedinger  9  Gerald Hawley
Kerry Frazier  10  Jillian Panigot
Fred Hebard  11  Robert Acosta
Justin Demler  12  Alma Carlsen
Nathan Dennis  13  Diamond Hawley
Virginia Cummings  14  Wm Liu
Benjamin Loenser  15  James Giver
Stephen Grooms  16  Melvin Ringer
Lorraine Hilliard  17  Lisa Jackson-Mitchell
William Navalon  18  Jean-Paul Robertson
Casey Scameheorn  19  Angela Simmons
Andrew VonMaur  20  Stanley Smith
Jeremiah Manda  21  Thomas Timm
Virginia Szucs  22  Christine Blankenship
Aubrubion Franklin  23  Shiuie Mondol
Salisa Hebard  24  Cathryn Leonor
Ethan Herrenitt  25  Mark Kent
Kris Sutton  26  Miles Cooper
Charles Jones  27  Jessica Feener
Jon Williams  28  Lynn Staniszewski
Linda Ringer  29  Kenneth Stout
Richard Robbins  30  Corina Leonor
Brenda McGregor  31  Mark Kent
Cassandra Chole  8  Marina Meagher
Jason Hippler  9  Cynthia Scherrer

Niles Westside News  August 2011  8