Emmanuel-Brinklow Honors Living Legends

Each year for the past seven years, Allegheny East’s Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., has hosted a special program that celebrates three people who have made a positive impact on the world. Last Sabbath, under the theme, “Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”, the church again honored three more at its Living Legends Awards for Service to Humanity program. The honorees were Bob Zellner, a civil rights activist; Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain; and Dennis Banks, a founder of the American Indian Movement. Click here to read more about the honorees.—Story by Taashi Rowe
Fire Guts Chestertown Sanctuary

Ten area fire companies responded to a two-alarm blaze at Chesapeake Conference’s Chestertown (Md.) church about 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 21. Police smelled smoke and went looking for the source of the fire, said Kevin McDaniel, pastor of the Chestertown church.

Fire gutted the sanctuary and damaged the older portion of the church. A newer section of the building sustained smoke damage, but can be repaired. “Members have shed a lot of tears,” said McDaniel, “but the good news is that no one was hurt. The building can be replaced, but people can’t.”

There is adequate insurance coverage for rebuilding. Local clergy and a funeral home have shown kindness by offering the use of their facilities for worship services until repairs are completed later this year. For the time being, the congregation plans to worship with the nearby Rock Hall church and will move services to the Chestertown fellowship hall following clean up of the smoke damage.—Story by Samantha Young

Survey Reveals Five Indicators for Church Growth

A 2010 survey of a wide variety of American congregations, titled FACTs on Growth 2010, recently shared several factors for growth. The Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership (CCSP) carried out the survey by sampling 11,077 diverse congregations, of which 400 were Seventh-day Adventist. Pulling from the Adventist subset, the report found that growing Adventist churches typically have the following traits: community involvement, strong spiritual life, intentionality, positive relationships and activities on Sabbath designed for unchurched people.
“I think if you compare it to Ellen White’s quote about ‘Christ’s method alone’ in Ministry of Healing, page 143, you will see that the five points are clearly related to what Spirit of Prophecy teaches,” says Monte Sahlin (pictured), CCSP executive secretary and Ohio Conference’s director of Research and Special Projects.

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Un estudio revela los cinco indicadores para hacer crecer su iglesia

Ha escuchado hablar de ellas antes. Tal vez hasta pertenece a una. ¿De qué estoy hablando? De iglesias cuya feligresía decrece. O, edificios de iglesia que, dado a la falta de adoradores, pasan de una denominación religiosa a otra. Algunas de esas iglesias se han cerrado permanentemente. Aunque retener un rebaño estable puede ayudar a evitar que una iglesia se cierre permanentemente, la mayoría de las iglesias no están satisfechas con únicamente pisar agua—desean crecer.

“El crecimiento en sí mismo, no es un blanco para la mayoría de las comunidades en América. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las congregaciones desean crecer para alcanzar a más personas con su mensaje, o por lo menos permanecer viables”, explica C. Kirk Hadaway, autor del recientemente publicado informe sobre el crecimiento de congregaciones. El informe, llamado FACTs on Growth 2010, (hechos sobre el crecimiento 2010), surgió de una encuesta del 2010 sobre once mil setenta y siete congregaciones diversas americanas. Entre ese número estaban cuatrocientas iglesias Adventistas del Séptimo Día. El resultado del subgrupo adventista cotejó el estudio más extenso y halló que las iglesias en crecimiento tienen una fuerte participación comunitaria, una sólida vida spiritual, son intencionales, fomentan las relaciones positivas, y tienen actividades para las personas que ! nunca han sido parte de una iglesia.

LEA MAS

Adventist HealthCare Partners With Local Mall

Adventist HealthCare, based in Rockville, Md., has partnered with Westfield Montgomery Mall in Bethesda, Md. Through this partnership, Adventist HealthCare and its entities will have promotional opportunities at the mall and the chance to take part in a variety of wellness activities.
One of their new opportunities is the Adventist HealthCare Walking Club. The club meets every Tuesday from 8-9:30 a.m. at the mall. Also each Tuesday morning, a different entity provides free blood pressure screenings, information on local health events and medical advice for members of the walking club, which already has more than 100 registrants since it began in December. In addition, Adventist HealthCare successfully held its third annual “Love Your Heart” Expo on February 11 at the mall. A walking club member is pictured trying out the Wii Fit.

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Cleveland-Area Pathfinders Participate in Bible Competition

Ohio Conference’s Westlake church hosted this year’s Cleveland Area Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE). Participants included two Pathfinder Clubs—Westlake’s Hungarian Heroes and the Chesterland Pathfinder Club from the First Seventh-day Adventist Community Church of Chesterland. Other participants included Frank D. Peden, the Northeast Ohio Pathfinder area coordinator, and Lee Kirschbaum, a member of the Akron church, who presented the questions.

The competition was intense, with the Hungarian Heroes advancing to the conference level of the competition, but according to Peden, “All are winners! Everyone who studied and learned is better for the experience.” Following the competition, the Pathfinders led vespers and both teams shared dinner and an evening of making new friends and playing games.—Story by Jean C. Sinka
Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md., recently hosted its inaugural President’s Day Invitational Middle School Basketball Tournament. The fun-filled weekend began on Sabbath evening with vespers. Games were played from Saturday night until the championship games on Monday afternoon. There were seven schools that made up six boys teams and five girls teams: Mt. Aetna Adventist School, Frederick Adventist Academy, G.E. Peters Adventist School, Atholton Adventist Academy, John Nevins Andrews Adventist School (JNA), Sligo Adventist School and Beltsville Seventh-day Adventist School.

The winning teams in the girls division were: first-place, John Nevins Andrews; second-place, Beltsville and third-place Sligo. The winning teams in the boys division were: first-place John Nevins Andrews; second-place Sligo and third-place Frederick. The tournament MVPs were JNA students Cameron Stowe and Kaila Charles, who both received scholarships to Highland View Academy.—Story by Tina Nipe

Liberty Member, ASI President Ministers to Children

Denise Hayden is president and CEO of Fine Line Services, Inc., a documentation and administrative support business. She is also president of the Columbia Union chapter of Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) and a member of the Liberty church in Baltimore. She joined ASI in 1990. After hearing all the testimonies at her first ASI convention, she asked God to give her a ministry that would change the world.

God would eventually use her passion for children to do remarkable things. For example, a young mother once came to Hayden for business services and as they conversed, Hayden talked at length about Jesus and business. Finally, the mother asked excitedly, “Can you take my children to church?” Over the next 10 years, Hayden would take more than 20 children to church, enroll
them in Pathfinders and Bible Bowl, feed and lodge them at camp meeting and other activities. To meet Hayden and other ASI members, come to the union convention March 8-11. The event will be held at the Vienna (Va.) church. Click here to register.

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**March Visitor Highlight**

Check out this month’s Visitor to discover how church-based early childhood education programs offer safe, Christ-centered and high quality schooling to youngsters across the Columbia Union territory, and why they are so important to their development.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE ACCOMPANYING VIDEO

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**Artículo especial de Visitor:**
**Desde el mismo comienzo**

Según Evelyn Sullivan, directora asociada del Departamento de Educación y Cuidado para la Primera Infancia (en inglés ECEC), de la Unión de Columbia, en los primeros años se prepara el camino para el desarrollo físico, espiritual, social, emocional, académico, y aún moral, del niño. Estos primeros años, dice ella, también son el mejor momento para presentarle a Jesús.

La oficina de Educación de la Unión, estableció el departamento en el otoño de 2008, para “asegurar que todos los niños y las familias tengan acceso a programas seguros, Cristo-céntricos, de alta calidad, y apropiados para la edad del desarrollo, que preparará a los niños para el éxito futuro”. —**Historia por A. Grace Brown**

Haga clic aquí para leer mas.
[Last month] I went back [to El Salvador] on my second mission trip [and took] another friend, McKenna Wear. McKenna and I were the only youth going on the mission trip. This time, I started planning ahead with my school to raise money for the orphanage. We were not exactly sure what we were going to do with the money, but we knew that God had a plan for it. The pre-K- to - 10th-grade students at Frederick Adventist School collectively raised over $1,100.

Not only did we bring money to have fun [at a water park] with the orphans, we also brought many bags of clothes, shoes and toys for them. When I travelled outside the campus in El Salvador, I realized how bad off the people were outside. Inside the compound, everything was much better. The kids at the orphanage told me they were are so happy they are there.

I thank God for what I am so blessed to have. I pray that I am again able to go back to visit, work with the kids and realize my dream of becoming a student missionary there.—Kate Carbaugh, a 10th-grade student at Frederick Adventist School

READ MORE

CORRECTION

In last week’s “Columbia Union Garners Four Health Awards” story, we incorrectly stated that the Columbia Union Conference had the most physical activity miles. We actually had the second most physical activity miles—213,768. We regret the error. Click here to view the updated story.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2: Metro Area Adventist Young Adults (MAAYA) would like to invite you out for “First (1st) Fridays” on March 2 at 7:30 p.m. In conjunction with the Howard University Adventist Student Organization and 4Him Drama Ministry, they will present a dramatic interpretation of God’s Word and His plan for our salvation. First Fridays will be held at the First church, which is located at 810 Shepherd Street, NW, in Washington, D.C. For more information, contact Anthony Barnes at (301) 204-7059 or Trevor Fraser at (909) 648-4955.
March 2-3: “Connecting to Jesus: Meeting God Where You Are” is the theme for the Courthouse Road church’s winter revival. Pastor Will Johns will present the series, which starts this Friday, March 2 at 7 p.m. with the message “Seeing With New Eyes.” It continues with Saturday morning service at 11 a.m. and a final presentation at 2 on Sabbath afternoon. The church is located at 530 Courthouse Road in Richmond, Va.

March 2-31: Driven: Who’s Navigating Your Life? All are invited to come out and attend this powerful evangelistic series that is sure to cause you to think about who’s navigating your life. Paul Graham, Restoration Praise Center’s senior pastor, will host the series, which will feature the following guest speakers: Pastor Gregory Nelson on March 2-3, Mario Broussard on March 9-10, Pastor Jamie Kowlessar on March 16-17, Pastor Abraham Jules on March 23-24 and Pastor Furman Fordham on March 30-31. Come out each weekend during the following times: Friday night beginning at 7:30, Saturday morning beginning at 11 and Saturday afternoon beginning at 5. The church is located at 10411 Greenbelt Road in Lanham, Md.

March 8-11: The Columbia Union chapter of the Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) convention will feature Ivor Myers, speaker/director of Power of the Lamb Ministries; the Guild of Adventist Musicians and Henry Wright, pastor of the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va. The convention will be held at Potomac Conference’s Vienna (Va.) church, located at 344 Courthouse Road SW in Vienna. For more information visit www.asicolumbiaunion.netasi.org or register at www.plusline.org.

March 10: Kelly Mowrer Presents “Into His Presence With Praise” on Sabbath morning at 11 a.m. at the Staunton (Va.) church at 1000 North Coalter Street. You are invited to come renew your faith through beautiful music and stories of beloved hymns. An inspiring speaker, pianist and recording artist, Mowrer travels in full-time ministry telling of God’s great grace and love. She also hosts two television programs, Praise and His Words Are Life. For more information, call (540) 886-8081.

March 14: Frederick Adventist School invites any interested student in grades 7-9 to attend their Junior Academy Days. Frederick Adventist School’s junior academy offers a rigorous academic program with a low teacher-to-student ratio, affordable tuition, financial aid and merit scholarships available. For more information or to RSVP, email Teresa Kelchner at teresakelchner@comcast.net or call her at (301) 788-9522. The school also offers tours every Wednesday. To schedule a visit, call (301) 663-0363.

March 15: Vienna Adventist Academy’s Open House will start at 6 p.m. Vienna
Adventist Academy is a private, Christian school that educates children from pre-kindergarten through 8th-grade. They are located at 340 Courthouse Road, SW, in Vienna, Va. For more information, visit www.viennaadventistacademy.org, call (703)938-6200 or send an email to viennaadventistacademy@gmail.com.

March 22: Dupont Park Adventist School Open House runs from 9-11 a.m. This school for pre-schoolers thru 10th-graders, is located at 3942 Alabama Avenue, SE, in Washington, D.C. They will have another open house on April 26. For more information about the school, call (202) 583-8500.

April 15: Kettering College’s Fourth Annual Spring Into Health 5K Run/Walk starts at 2 p.m. at the college (3737 Southern Boulevard in Kettering, Ohio). Registration and packet pick-up begins at 1 p.m. in front of the school. The cost is just $25 for participants registering before Wednesday, April 4, and the first 250 registrants are guaranteed a T-shirt. More information and a link to online registration can be found at KC.edu/5K.

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To share the Visitor News Bulletin with friends and church members across the Columbia Union, click the “Forward to a Friend” link below so all the photos and copy will appear correctly. Also, encourage them to sign up for the email at www.columbiaunion.org/emailnews. Thank you!

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Emmanuel-Brinklow Honors Living Legends

Story by Taashi Rowe; photos by Taashi Rowe and Roy Thomas

Published 2/29/12

Each year for the past seven years, Allegheny East's Emmanuel Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., has hosted a special program that celebrates three people who have made a positive impact on the world. Last Sabbath under the theme “Am I My Brother's Keeper,” the church again honored three more at its Living Legends Awards for Service to Humanity program. Bob Zellner, whose parents were once members of the Klu Klux Klan, became a civil rights activist after interviewing Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks for a sociology paper. Zellner, then a college student, was struck by something Parks told him: “When you see something wrong, you have to make a stand for it. You can’t study it forever.” Zellner went on to become the first white field secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—a notable civil rights group.

Upon receiving his award, Barry Black, the first Seventh-day Adventist and first African-American chaplain of the U.S. Senate, said he was happy to be loved and celebrated by his own Adventist family. Black, a staunch advocate of Adventist education who, along with his wife, has helped pay the tuitions of several students to Adventist institutions, added that, “If you are a legend and not serving humanity, you are only a legend in your mind.” He listed his mother, Pearline Black; his wife, Brenda; Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Jesus Christ as his four sources of inspiration for service.

“This is my Academy Award,” said Dennis Banks, one of the founders of the American Indian Movement, as he accepted his award. “I may receive another award down the road but nothing can top this one!” As an activist, Banks has fought to protect the rights of native nations, renew...
spirituality among the tribes and create opportunities for native Americans. Banks spoke of injustice and oppression happening not just in the United States, but also across the world and noted, “It is our mandatory duty to keep going forward and never lay down in the face of the enemy.” Banks is also an advocate for health and has walked across the United States seven times.

Organized by Doreen Hines, the program’s executive director, and Markus Williams, the program’s artistic director, the evening also featured inspiring music, a short documentary and poetry.
Monte Sahlin is executive secretary of Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership, the organization behind the study.

You’ve heard about them before. You may even used to belong to one of them. What am I talking about? Churches with declining memberships. Or church buildings that, because of a lack of worshipers, pass from one denomination to another. Some of those churches have even been permanently shuttered. While keeping a stable flock can help a church stave off permanent closure, most churches are not satisfied with just treading water—they want to grow.

“Growth for its own sake is not a goal for most religious communities in America. But most congregations do want to grow in order to reach more people with their message, or at least to stay viable,” explained C. Kirk Hadaway, author of a newly released report on congregational growth. The report, called FACTs on Growth 2010, comes from a 2010 survey of 11,077 diverse American congregations. Among that number were 400 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The results from the Adventist subset paralleled the larger study and found that growing churches have strong community involvement, a strong spiritual life, are intentional, foster positive relationships and have activities for unchurched people.

We spoke to Monte Sahlin, executive secretary of Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership, the organization behind the FACTs on Growth 2010 report. Sahlin is also the Ohio Conference’s director of Research and Special Projects and looked at the Adventist surveys. He explains how each of the following ingredients helps churches to grow:

1. Community Involvement: “Growing Adventist churches have a strong correlation with nontraditional community service activities. That is, clothing programs, food pantries and health education classes do not correlate with growth, but job training and job finding programs do. Family counseling services, 12-step groups, homeless shelters, programs for senior citizens and after-school programs for underprivileged children in the neighborhood also contribute to growth.

2. Strong Spiritual Life: “Growing Adventist churches have a strong correlation with a high percentage of the attendees (members and nonmembers) reporting that ‘this church helps me feel close to God.’ Prayer Ministries, small groups, etc., are key in this.”

3. Intentionality: “Growing Adventist churches focus on mission more than anything else and develop specific goals and strategies for reaching out beyond their membership.”

4. Positive Relationships: “Growing Adventist churches are more likely than the average Adventist church to be congregations that are welcoming, warm and open. They do not pressure people or have much conflict.”

5. Activities on Sabbath for Unchurched People: “This can take the form of a community Bible class, a “seeker” worship service on Friday night or Sabbath afternoon, or more occasional events such as a “Friend Day” when all of the members are encouraged to bring an unchurched friend.”

For those seeking more guidance on how to implement these principles, Sahlin recommends reading Ellen White’s Ministry of Healing. He sees a clear relation to the above five steps on page 143, where she recommends Christ’s Method Alone for outreach. The North American Division
also provides full resources for this approach via ifollowdiscipleship.org.

Are you implementing these things at your church? Visit our Facebook page and let us know what has worked for you!
Monte Sahlin es el secretario ejecutivo de Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership, la organización detrás de este estudio.

Un estudio revela los cinco indicadores para hacer crecer su iglesia

Historia por el personal de Visitor
Publicado el 27 de febrero de 2012

Ha escuchado hablar de ellas antes. Tal vez hasta pertenece a una. ¿De qué estoy hablando? De iglesias cuya feligresía decrece. O, edificios de iglesia que, dado a la falta de adoradores, pasan de una denominación religiosa a otra. Algunas de esas iglesias se han cerrado permanentemente.

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"El crecimiento en sí mismo, no es un blanco para la mayoría de las comunidades en América. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las congregaciones desean crecer para alcanzar a más personas con su mensaje, o por lo menos permanecer viables", explica C. Kirk Hadaway, autor del recientemente publicado informe sobre el crecimiento de congregaciones. El informe, llamado FACTs on Growth 2010, (hechos sobre el crecimiento 2010), surgió de una encuesta del 2010 sobre once mil setenta y siete congregaciones diversas americanas. Entre ese número estaban cuatrocientas iglesias Adventistas del Séptimo Día. El resultado del subgrupo adventista cotejó el estudio más extenso y halló que las iglesias en crecimiento tienen una fuerte participación comunitaria, una sólida vida espiritual, son intencionales, fomentan las relaciones positivas, y tienen actividades para las personas que nunca han sido parte de una iglesia.

Hablamos con Monte Sahlin, secretario ejecutivo de Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership (colaboración de estudios de congregaciones cooperativas), la organización detrás de FACTs on Growth 2010. Sahlin también es director de proyectos especiales e investigación en la Asociación de Ohio, y analizó el estudio adventista. Explica cómo cada uno de los siguientes ingredientes ayuda a una iglesia a crecer:

1. Participación en la comunidad: "Las iglesias adventistas crecientes tienen una correlación fuerte con las actividades no tradicionales de servicio a la comunidad. Eso es, programas de ropa, despensas de alimento, y clases de educación sobre la salud, no se correlacionan con el crecimiento, pero la preparación laboral y programas de búsqueda de empleo sí. Los servicios de asesoramiento familiar, grupos de doce pasos, centros de acogidas, programas para ancianos y extraescolares para niños menos privilegiados del barrio, también contribuyen al crecimiento.

2. Una sólida vida espiritual: "Las iglesias adventistas crecientes tienen una correlación fuerte con un porcentaje alto de los que asisten (miembros y no miembros) que dicen: 'esta iglesia me ayuda a sentirme cerca de Dios'. Los ministerios de la oración, los grupos pequeños, etc., son clave en esto".
3. Intencionalidad: "Las iglesias adventistas crecientes se enfocan en su misión más que otra cosa, y desarrollan objetivos y estrategias específicos para alcanzar más allá de su feligresía.

4. Relaciones positivas: "Las iglesias adventistas crecientes están más susceptibles que la iglesia adventista promedio, a ser congregaciones más acogedoras, cordiales, y abiertas. No presionan a las personas ni tienen muchos conflictos.

5. Actividades en sábado para las personas que nunca han sido parte de una iglesia: “Esto puede tomar la forma de clases de Biblia en la comunidad, un servicio de adoración el viernes de noche o sábado de tarde para personas que “buscan”, o eventos más ocasionales como el ‘Día de la Amistad’, cuando se anima a la feligresía a traer a un amigo que nunca ha sido parte de una iglesia”.

Para los que buscan más ayuda en cómo implementar estos principios, Sahlin recomienda leer el libro de Elena de White, *El ministerio de curación*. Él ve una relación clara a los cinco pasos mencionados anteriormente en la página 102, donde ella recomienda únicamente el método de Cristo para alcanzar a los demás. La División Norteamericana también provee recursos completos acerca estos métodos en [ifollowdiscipleship.org](http://www.columbiaunion.org/article/970/news/noticias/archivos-de-noti...). ¿Está implementando estas cosas en su iglesia? Visite nuestra página de Facebook y ¡déjenos saber lo que ha funcionado para usted!
Desde el mismo comienzo
La educación en la primera infancia ofrece prometedores comienzos para los pequeños

Histórica por A. Grace Brown
Publicado 2/29/2012

“Dios me ama—aún cuando me equivoco. Aún cuando lo hago a propósito”. Si usted pudiera enseñarle esta verdad a un niño, ¿cómo lo haría y cuando comenzaría? ¿Esperaría hasta que por lo menos pueda caminar? ¿Hablar? ¿Escribir?

Los estudios realizados por Child Welfare Information Gateway, muestran que el crecimiento más rápido del cerebro que experimentan los niños, es durante los primeros años de sus vidas. Para cuando un niño normal cumpla los tres años, su cerebro ha formado cerca de 1,000 trillones de conexiones—el doble de lo que tiene un adulto! El cerebro de un niño permanecerá densamente conectado hasta alrededor de los once años, el momento en que el cerebro comienza el proceso de “podar” para reducir las conexiones extras o no usadas, y crear orden en las que permanecen.

Según Evelyn Sullivan, directora asociada del Departamento de Educación y Cuidado para la Primera Infancia (en inglés ECEC), de la Unión de Columbia, en los primeros años del niño—especialmente desde el nacimiento hasta la edad de los cinco años—se prepara el camino para el desarrollo físico, espiritual, social, emocional, académico, y aún moral. Por eso es tan importante que los primeros años estén llenos de amor, seguridad, y oportunidades para la exploración creativa. Estos primeros años, dice ella, también son el mejor momento para presentarle a Jesús.

Sullivan explica que los niños aprenden a través del juego y la interacción práctica, y al usar los cinco sentidos en cada experiencia—desde hacer las compras y jugar hasta leer historias juntos—se provee momentos maravillosos para la enseñanza de largo alcance. Los padres y maestros son los adultos primarios y primeros que un niño conocerá, y por lo tanto los más importantes en la vida de un niño. Al recorrer las experiencias normales en la crianza de un niño, los padres tienen la maravillosa oportunidad y responsabilidad de influenciar cada aspecto del desarrollo de su niño.

Compartiendo la responsabilidad

Hay otros adultos interesados que comparten esta responsabilidad, señala Sullivan, y entre ellos está la iglesia y sus educadores. La Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día ha colaborado con los padres desde 1870 para apoyar la educación integral de la mente, el cuerpo, y el espíritu. Sin embargo, en los recientes años, los programas de educación en la primera infancia han llegado a...
cumplir una función más crítica en los niños pequeños.

La Oficina de Educación de la Unión, estableció el Departamento de ECEC en el otoño del 2008 para “asegurar que todos los niños y las familias tengan acceso a programas seguros, Cristo-céntricos, de alta calidad, y apropiados para la edad del desarrollo, que preparará a los niños para el éxito futuro”. La oficina ECEC también fomenta la vigilancia en el desarrollo del niño para que se pueda tratar temprano, cualquier retraso o necesidades especiales en el aprendizaje, lo que podrá dar resultados positivos en los años futuros.

Sullivan comparte lo siguiente: “Sería algo maravilloso si un padre en cada hogar pudiera quedarse en casa y enseñar a sus niños hasta el segundo grado, pero tristemente en la sociedad actual, esto no es práctico. Los primeros cinco años de la vida de un niño son esenciales para el aprendizaje. Si un padre no puede proveer la preparación necesaria en el hogar, entonces la experiencia preescolar en un ambiente cristiano podrá facilitar el proceso de aprendizaje. Los niños que asisten a programas de primera infancia demuestran mejores habilidades sociales y mejor capacidad de atención. Sin embargo, no existe un sólo método de instrucción adecuado para todos los niños”.

Hay sesenta y dos programas de primera infancia en la Unión de Columbia que sirven a casi 1,500 niños entre las edades de seis meses y los cinco años de edad. Los programas varían desde centros para la primera infancia o preescolares, dirigidos por las iglesias o escuelas, hasta programas más sistemáticos de pre jardín, dirigidos por las escuelas. Treinta y tres de estos lugares participan actualmente de un programa piloto y usan Gold Assessment (una herramienta para el asesoramiento de observación continua que se basa en la investigación, para los niños desde su nacimiento hasta jardín de infantes) y Creative Curriculum System (un plan de estudio actualizado para el nivel preescolar, publicado en julio del 2011). Los miembros del personal ECEC, recientemente recibieron formación práctica para aprender cómo implementar el currículo.

El amor de Dios en acción

Los educadores de ECEC en la Unión de Columbia utilizan el juego organizado e imaginativo, la música, el movimiento, y la lectura guiada para reconocer los intereses, fortalezas, y personalidad del niño. La preparación del personal los capacita para aplicar las mejores prácticas en nutrir el desarrollo del niño y minimizar o reversar los efectos de las condiciones sociales o del desarrollo, como el trastorno por déficit de atención con
Desde que abrió en el 2002, Friendship Child Development Center de la Asociación de Chesapeake, en Linthicum Heights, Md., ha utilizado el juego, las manualidades, la música y juegos para desarrollar las habilidades sociales, físicas, mentales, y espirituales de sus estudiantes.

La presencia de la educación y el cuidado en la primera infancia de la Unión de Columbia provee además, mayores oportunidades de alcance y evangelismo en el sistema educativo adventista, dice Sullivan. Muchos padres de las comunidades locales están buscando cuidado de alta calidad o pre escolar para sus bebés y niños pequeños. Cuando se inscriben en el programa ECEC, los padres y los niños experimentarán el amor de Dios en acción, y serán expuestos a la continuidad de calidad de la educación primaria y secundaria disponible a sus niños durante su crecimiento.

Trudy Shiroma Koeffler sabe esto de primera mano. Ella es maestra de pre jardín y jardín de infante en la Asociación de Pensilvania. “Como educadora de primera infancia, soy ejemplo de cómo se manejan las situaciones en la clase. Si soy bondadosa, cariñosa, paciente y misericordiosa, ellos me creerán cuando les diga que Dios los ama.”

Un tercio de los estudiantes de Koeffler, en la escuela primaria adventista de Lehigh Valley, en Whitehall, Pa., no asisten a la iglesia, pero repetidamente han visto a Dios obrar en sus estudiantes al acercar a familias enteras a Él. Ella recuerda: “Recientemente tuve una maravillosa experiencia, en que uno de estos estudiantes expresó su deseo de entregar su corazón a Jesús. Este mismo estudiante se iba a mudar en enero porque su padre había recibido una promoción de trabajo. Después del programa escolar navideño, el padre se me acercó con lágrimas en sus ojos. Me dijo: ‘estamos reconsiderando el traslado porque nuestro hijo no quiere dejar esta escuela’. El siguiente día la madre me escribió una nota diciendo que tenía buenas noticias para mí. Habían decidido dejar a su hijo en mi clase hasta el fin del año escolar. Creo que el programa Cristo-céntrico ayudó a estos padres a ver el amor en nuestra escuela”.

**Los sólidos comienzos importan**

Ahora más que antes, los educadores han llegado a comprender lo importante que son los comienzos en la vida de un niño. Los padres pueden hacer mucho por preparar las tiernas mentes de sus bebés y pequeñitos para el camino que les espera, y los maestros en la educación de la primera infancia en la Unión de Columbia están preparados, disponibles y deseados de ayudar en este proceso.

“Es nuestro deber cristiano asegurar que todos los niños tengan acceso al cuidado y la educación de calidad en su temprana edad, porque la educación es un flujo continuo y comienza en la infancia de donde parte para su desarrollo”, comparte Vickie Wilkerson, directora de Sharon Temple Child Care Learning Center, de la Asociación de Allegheny del Este, en Wilmington, Del. Ella añade: “Como cristianos, podemos ayudar a fomentar un ambiente saludable, seguro, bondadoso, y favorable que estime el crecimiento y desarrollo del niño entero…donde un niño pueda prosperar y llegar a alcanzar todo su potencial”.

Mientras los niños crecen y participan de la conversación, todos los adultos que forman parte de...
sus vidas pueden hacer preguntas que estimulen niveles más altos del pensamiento crítico, y animar a los niños a contar historias acerca de ellos mismos. Y es de esperarse que las historias que cuenten sean de sus encuentros personales con el Dios que siempre los ha amado–desde el mismo comienzo.

**La vida de un niño**
Frederick Student Shares Life-Changing Mission Trip Experience
Story and photos by Kate Carbaugh
Published 2/22/2012

I'm Kate Carbaugh, a 10th-grade student at Frederick Adventist School in Frederick, Md. I have a story to share with you about my favorite place in El Salvador. It is the Hogar Escuela Adventista. In 2009 my grandparents planned to go on a mission trip with the Chesapeake Conference’s Frederick Adventist Church. They really wanted me to go along with them. I was only 13 years old and was not prepared to go to a different country. Honestly, I did not want to go without my mom. When they got back, they spoke about the orphanage and the kids and how they were so sweet and how [they] loved all the missionaries that went along on the trip.

When 2010 rolled around, I decided to go to El Salvador along with my dad, my best friend, Sarah, and others from the church. The trip was from the end of December to the beginning of January. I had such a good time. Everything my grandparents said was not only true, but, even better. I met so many new people and made new friends. Since we were younger girls, my friend and I where supposed to work from nine o'clock in the morning until lunchtime. We worked to build a retaining wall.

You do have to work hard, but it pays off because when you are finished, you can go play with the younger kids. We spent lots of time playing with the kids. We would often be grabbed by a little girl and pulled across the path to the swing set. I knew a little Spanish from growing up in a Hispanic family, but there was still a huge gap. No matter. We were able to teach the little girls, aged 8 to 12 many songs in English. When the little girls went up to sing special music on Sabbath morning, to our surprise, they came and dragged me up to sing with them. I had such a wonderful experience. When I came back home, I was already planning for the next time I would go to El Salvador.

[Last month] I went back [to El Salvador] on my second mission trip [and took] another friend, McKenna Wear. McKenna and I were the only youth going on the mission trip. This time, I started planning ahead with my school to raise money for the orphanage. We were not exactly sure what we were going to do with the money, but we knew that God had a plan for it. The preK-10th grade students at Frederick Adventist School collectively raised over $1,100. Each class set a goal of $15 per student in that class. McKenna and I worked with the principal and the student council leaders to give an extra incentive. Our school wears a uniform, so we decided that if the whole class met their fundraising goal, the class would win an entire week of dress down privileges. The 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grade classes won!

With the money, we were able to take every kid at [Hogar Escuela Adventista] as well as the staff and our entire church group to a water park the Sunday before we returned to the United States. All the kids had an amazing time. I received many hugs from all the kids and a whole lot of thanks.
The kids made a special thank you note for us to bring back to school.

Not only did we bring money to have fun with the orphans, we also brought many bags of clothes, shoes and toys for them. In the picture, you may think this is my messy teenage bedroom at home, but it shows you all the things we were able to bring for the children at the orphanage.

When the orphanage ran out of money to finish the wall project, we helped paint some of the houses the kids lived in. It was so much easier painting in the shade of the trees than working in the sun carrying heavy cinderblocks back and forth. At the end of the week, we finished the girls’ house and half of the boys’ house. Many of the kids actually wanted to help us paint. Wherever we went, we had a group of kids following us. I think one day we had more paint on our arms, legs, clothes and hair than [on] the wall we had been painting! The kids thought it was hilarious to see the younger missionaries covered in paint. I felt so special to be accepted by all of these kids. It's so amazing to watch and see all these kids I met last year, grow up.

When I travelled outside the campus in El Salvador, I realized how bad off the people were outside. Outside, there was trash everywhere. People were living in rundown shacks. Inside the compound, everything was much better. The kids at the orphanage told me they were so happy they are there. They are truly blessed that they have a safe place to call their home. It may not be as nice as our homes in the United States, but it is much better than what life is like beyond the gates of the campus.

I thank God for what I am so blessed to have. I pray that I am again able to go back to visit, work with the kids, and realize my dream of becoming a student missionary there.
After painting the girls' and boys' homes, Kate and McKenna display their paint covered hands.
Columbia Union Garners Four Health Awards

Story by Visitor Staff
Published 2/23/2012

The Columbia Union Conference’s entities recently won four health awards at the North American Division’s (NAD) Health Summit in Florida. They won after rising to a challenge that Katia Reinert, NAD’s Health Ministries director issued to Seventh-day Adventists all across the division last year: get active. The result? Seventh-day Adventist Church members reported some 2 million miles of physical activity! At their recent health summit in Florida, the division recognized organizations with outstanding participation in what they call the Adventists InStep for Life initiative.

The Columbia Union received an award for having the largest number of community gardens and participation rates—topping eight other unions. They garnered the second most miles out of all the unions. The union is also home to Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary in New Market, Va.—the school with the highest miles and participation rates in the entire division. They had 739 miles of physical activity or about 175.53 percent participation!

Allegheny East, one of the union’s eight conferences, was recognized for having the highest participation rates, most community gardens and most physical activity miles in all the Columbia Union. It also came in second in the division for its numbers of gardens, miles and participation rates. A. Leah Scott, the conference’s Health Ministries director, also accepted a second award, this time on behalf of the Pine Forge church.

The union’s Kettering Adventist HealthCare, based in Kettering, Ohio, also received an award in recognition of the number of miles and for the percentage of employee participation compared to other health systems across the division.

Click here to learn how Allegheny East topped the union’s seven other conferences.

CORRECTION: This story was updated on February 27, 2012. We incorrectly stated that the Columbia Union Conference had the most physical activity miles. We actually had the second most physical activity miles—213,768.
Dan Jackson, NAD president, presents an award to Leah Scott (right), Health Ministries director of the Allegheny East Conference while Regina Benjamin, MD, U.S. Surgeon General, looks on.

Katia Reinert, NAD Health Ministries director, spearheaded the Let’s Move Day initiative.