March 14, 2012

Columbia Union Youth Participate in Prayer Congress

Last weekend Columbia Union Conference youth joined some 2,500 attendees and 1,100 delegates at the third Just Claim It youth congress in Greensboro, N.C. Sponsored by the North American Division, the congress brings together youth for prayer and Bible study, leadership training, reclaiming the forgotten, ministry in action and shepherding. Click here to see a video where several Columbia Union youth talk about why they are helping to sort clothing for the less fortunate.

Adventist Hospitals
Recognized for Supporting Uninsured

The Montgomery County Council of Maryland recently recognized the Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, and the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Gaithersburg, for supporting the uninsured in the community. Both hospitals participate in the Montgomery Cares initiative and help to expand access to care by offering health services to uninsured and low-income residents. Montgomery Cares supports more than two dozen independent, nonprofit clinics in Montgomery County.

Pictured receiving the award are Dean Teague (fourth from left), WAH vice president of Operations; Skip Margot (third from right), Shady Grove’s chief nurse executive and vice president of Patient Care Services; and Eunmee Shim (second from right), Shady Grove’s vice president of operations.—Story by PRISM

Enrollment at G.E. Peters Doubles

“I don’t sleep,” John Alberty confesses. “All I do is think about George E. Peters.” The 36-year-old principal of the pre-Kindergarten thru 8 school in Hyattsville, Md., came on board last fall when the school only had 42 students and there were concerns about shutting down. They now have 94 students and the preschool program has a waiting list.

This Allegheny East Conference school, which was remodeled after sustaining tornado damage in 2008, is bright, spacious and up to date.

There is a lot to be excited about at G.E. Peters these days: the school is going green, they just ordered new computers and they are working on becoming a STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Math) school. “It’s not me,” says Alberty, who is pictured with Ci-Arra Dottin in science class. “It’s God, because at the end of the day, my job is a testimony.”—Story and photo by Taashi Rowe

READ MORE
In Fulton, Maryland, Members Learn to Share Faith

“What scares you about sharing your faith?”

The question posed by Kumar Dixit, administrative pastor at Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., drew a myriad answers from attendees to his Sabbath afternoon workshop.

Confidence, a better command of Scripture and knowing how to approach people topped the list of reasons cited. One woman posited, “We all have opportunities to share faith every day, but how do we open that door without knocking on doors?” Pastor Dixit, perched on a stool in the center of their semicircle and using a music stand as his pulpit, smiled confidently and launched into his “Say What? How to Share Your Faith Seminar.”

Although Dixit (pictured) promoted his seminar on the church’s website, in the church bulletin, through social media and even in last week’s Visitor News Bulletin, only 19 people took advantage of the promise of free childcare and a lunch buffet of chili, cornbread, salad and home-baked desserts.—Story by Celeste Ryan Blyden; Photos by Elizabeth Moore

READ MORE AND WATCH AN EXCERPT OF THE PRESENTATION

Missionaries Invite Others to Join Their Team

“About seven years ago, we asked God, ‘Where? What? When? How can we serve You?’ We would rather work for the Lord than man,” Tom and Cindy Sitler share. So they retired in order to spend their time doing mission work. They call North Augusta, S.C., home, but are on the road much of the year. They’ve put in electricity for an orphanage in Honduras, wired an airport for Adventist World Aviation and distributed more than 6,000 books at rest
areas and churches.

But they spend a good portion of their year working on the Blue Mountain Academy campus in Hamburg, Pa. They are currently improving the camp facilities at both Kamp Keystone and Grove City. One of their biggest projects has been remodeling cabins in Kamp Keystone. The Sitlers would like to remodel all the cabins this year. But they’ll need help. Tom estimates that it will take three people per cabin and seven working days to complete each building. If you’d like to join this short-term missionary team, contact Ron Christman by April 27 at rchristman@paconference.org or at (610) 374-8331.—Story by Tamyra Horst

Mount Vernon Students Serve in Guatemala

Mount Vernon Academy (MVA), based in Mount Vernon, Ohio, recently sponsored a mission trip to the International Child Care orphanage in Las Pinos, Guatemala. The students spent the week painting the classrooms, halls and offices of the school and orphanage—and did a tremendous job, according to their principal Robert Stevenson. They also worshiped, played soccer and made friends with the Guatemalan children.

The work was challenging and the bugs were real, but after all the work, students experienced a trip to the lost city of Tikal, a zip-line adventure through the jungle and a shopping trip to the lakeside resort town of Flores. “We strive to make missions real for our MVA students,” Stevenson said, “to help them see that service for Christ is not always a walk on the beach but a trip to the wild side.”

New Hope Kids Featured on Hope Channel

Eight-year-old Marissa Chappel and 9-year-old Lauren Gantman of Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., along with Ann Roda, New
Hope’s associate pastor, were recent guests on the Hope Channel’s newly launched, live show, Let’s Pray. The interactive television program allows viewers to submit prayer requests by phone, Facebook and Twitter, and to ask other viewers to pray for them.

During the broadcast, Roda discussed the importance of teaching children about prayer, citing examples of what is modeled at New Hope’s Kids Church, such as prayer postures, praying the names of God and providing an environment where children can be themselves while praying. Chappel and Gantman both shared the importance of prayer in their lives. Referring to prayer positions, Chappel said, “When we open our arms during prayer we are receiving God and letting Him fill our bodies. When we lie down (prostrate prayer), we are giving ourselves to God.”

Pictured from left are Gantman, Chappel and Roda, who talk with Let’s Pray hosts Kandus Thorp and David Franklin.—Story by Samantha Young

Did You Become an Adventist?

“How Did You Become an Adventist

“I was born in a Seventh-day Adventist home. My parents were an example of good disciples. committed Christians and church planters. I questioned my beliefs but never took religion seriously. Right after high school, I decided theology. That was a surprise for my family, [and] me! All I could say was, ‘I believe God me.’

I remember the day when I arrived at Montemorelos University (in Mexico). The Religious Department took me in his office “There’s no room for a 17-year-old, you are plus you don’t look like a minister, go and something else.” After that I started praying

¿Cómo Te Conviertes En Un Adventista Del Séptimo Día?
“En 1981, mi maestro de guitarra, un laico fiel de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día, tuvo el valor de invitar a mis padres a una comida especial un viernes de noche. Los seis asistimos. Cantaron varios cantos desconocidos pero al vez hermosos, leyeron un pasaje de la Biblia, y después participamos de una comida vegetariana rara pero deliciosa. Allí mismo inició una gran amistad, y después de nueve meses de estudiar la Biblia, decidimos unirnos a la iglesia. Yo tenía doce años. Veinte años más tarde, realicé una reunión de evangelismo en Argentina, en la misma iglesia donde me bauticé. Mi maestro de guitarra estaba allí, y no puedo olvidar las lágrimas de alegría que habían en sus ojos.”—Walter Castro, director de los Ministerios Multilingües y Plantación de Iglesia en Allegheny West Conference

The North American Division Wants Your Best Sermon

Ministers (active or retired) and graduate ministerial students in North America are invited to submit their best stewardship sermons. Up to 10 outstanding sermons will be selected and awarded $1,000 each.

“We know there are many exceptional stewardship sermons and we would like to share them with other ministers and leaders throughout North America,” states John Mathews, Stewardship director for the North America Division. Stewardship is a central biblical theme and faithful stewardship by members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church makes it possible for the church to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ.

Tithe, offerings, theology of money, eschatology and money are just some of the stewardship topics on which sermons may focus. For additional suggestions and for details about this contest visit www.iGiveSDA.org/contest or contact Lori Bryan at (301) 680-6432 or at lori.bryan@nad.adventist.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click here for a complete listing of upcoming events around the Columbia Union Conference.

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 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.

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Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 3/14/2011

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Alberty believes that one of the reasons why the school may be growing is because he does not also teach, which frees him up to observe teachers, handle disciplinary problems and evangelize about the school's offerings. Prior to coming to G.E. Peters, Alberty was an assistant principal for three years at the John Phillip Souza Middle School, a public school in Washington, D.C. He holds degrees in speech pathology—a bachelor's from Alabama A&M University and a master's from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

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In Fulton, Maryland, Members Learn to Share Faith

Story by Celeste Ryan Blyden; Photos by Elizabeth Moore

Published 3/14/12

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Confidence, a better command of Scripture and knowing how to approach people topped the list of reasons cited. One woman posited, “We all have opportunities to share faith every day, but how do we open that door without knocking on doors?”

Many of the young and young at heart gathered, nodded or sent glances of agreement her way and then looked to the presenter for answers.

Pastor Dixit, perched on a stool in the center of their semicircle and using a music stand as his pulpit, smiled confidently and launched into his “Say What? How to Share Your Faith Seminar.”

First, he needlessly pointed out that learning to share faith was not a popular topic in Seventh-day Adventist churches and scored low on the totem poll in surveys conducted about local church priorities. Although Dixit promoted his seminar on the church’s website, in the church bulletin, through social media and even in last week’s Visitor News Bulletin, only 19 people took advantage of the promise of free childcare and a lunch buffet of chili, cornbread, salad and home-baked desserts. There were more people in the baptismal class held simultaneously by senior pastor David Newman. In addition, the three-hour seminar was held in the tiny upper room above the church’s sprawling—and empty—sanctuary.

“We have 700 members and only four among this group are here,” Dixit admitted. The others were from area Adventist churches, and two were not church members at all but came to learn how to share their faith.
And Dixit, a master presenter, didn’t disappoint. Clad in his typical uniform of dress shirt, dress pants and, on this day, red dress socks (he often sheds his shoes during presentations), he led the group through a 32-page outline. “If you want to share your faith, this is your job description,” he declared. “You must genuinely care, you must be a sort of spiritual social worker and you must be a resource. In other words, you must build relational bridges.”

He punctuated his teaching points by sharing stories of people he met and helped bring to Christ using that approach. There was Zac, an Apple Store employee who fixed his computer, accepted an invitation to attend a God Encounters weekend and now visits periodically; Kareem, who joined after his girlfriend brought him to New Hope because she didn’t think her Adventist church was a safe place to introduce people to her faith tradition; and the Buddhist he commandeered to teach Sabbath School hoping she would study her way to the truth. (She did and he baptized her.) And just last week, there was the suicidal man who texted their pastor-on-call cell phone in desperation. “He came home, and his wife sat him down and handed him a piece of paper saying that after 10 years of marriage, she wanted a divorce,” Dixit recalled. “He was devastated and has texted me multiple times this week, but I was there for him. ‘Dude,’ I said, ‘don’t do anything stupid.’”

So far he hasn’t, and Dixit used the best option he knows to draw him and the others to Christ — sharing his personal testimony of where God found him, how his life changed and what’s happened since. On Sabbath afternoon, he encouraged attendees to do the same, and, through practice sessions, slowly helped allay their fears of witnessing for Christ.

“It was nice to hear the testimonies,” said Lynitta Karley, a member of Potomac Conference’s Remnant church in Silver Spring, Md. “I learned that it’s not our job to convict, and God has a way of helping us relate to others; He brings the right people to us.”

For Dixit, that revelation meant he had succeeded. Nineteen down, many more to go.