Columbia Union Votes $40,000 for Sandy Relief Efforts

During year end meetings last week, Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee members voted to give $40,000 to the Allegheny East and New Jersey conferences to aid them in their super storm Sandy relief efforts. Pictured in prayer are (left to right) Rob Vandeman, union executive secretary; José H. Cortés, New Jersey Conference president; Henry J. Fordham, Allegheny East Conference president; Seth Bardu, union treasurer; and Dave Weigley, union president.

Potomac Conference officers also responded with a pledge to provide $20,000 to help with the effort. At the North American Division year end meetings a week ago, officers announced that they will appropriate $500,000 to the Adventist Community Services (ACS) Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund.” Additionally, the General Conference gave $200,000, the Atlantic Union Conference gave $30,000, the Guam Micronesia Mission gave $20,000, the Pacific Union Conference gave $10,000 and the Southern Union Conference gave $10,000 in support of Sandy relief efforts. This brings the total Adventist corporate giving to more than $800,000 but doesn’t include monies collected during two special “Sandy relief” offerings taken in churches across the division.—Story by Taashi Rowe/Visitor
At last week's year end meetings for the Columbia Union, Seth Bardu (pictured right), union treasurer, reported that tithe was up by 1.05 percent for the month ending September 30, compared to the same time last year. The total for the three quarters is $83.2 million. However, compared to the same time last year, the World Missions Fund was down by 1.15 percent with a total of $1.6 million. The Potomac Conference led the union in tithe dollars totaling $22.1 million. Allegheny East followed closely with $21.5 million in tithe. Next came Chesapeake Conference whose members returned $11 million in tithe.—Story by Taashi Rowe/Visitor

Columbia Union Recognizes Five Persons With a New Award

At year-end meetings last week, five Columbia Union Conference members were recognized for their contribution to the cause of Christ during a special luncheon held in their honor. This new award, called “Notable Persons of Honor,” spotlighted Joyce Newmyer (pictured), president of Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md.; Larry Boggess, president of the Mountain View Conference; José H. Cortés, president of the New Jersey Conference; Josephine Benton, a retired pastor; and Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park.

Written on the flame-shaped glass award were the following words: “Thank you for your inspiring example of leadership. You have been a blessing to many.”

“Thank you for your contribution to the cause of Christ,” Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union, said to the honorees. “You've made a difference to His cause.”—Story by
How One Chesapeake Member Blazed the Trail for Women in Ministry

Looking back, Josephine Benton, now 87, knows exactly where her desire to minister came from. Her father was a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist who frequently moved their family around the country. “I would sit and listen to my dad’s sermons, and I always knew that if I had been born a boy, I would have been a preacher,” she said. “But that path didn’t seem open to me.”

So she did the next best thing and majored in speech so she could teach pastors how to preach. When other denominations started becoming more open to women pastors, she took several pastoral courses at the Wesley Theological Seminary, which was then based in Takoma Park, Md. Little did Benton know this step would help her blaze a trail for women to fully minister in the Adventist Church.

She then applied to pastor in the Potomac Conference and went to speak with Dale Hannah, senior pastor of the Sligo church in Takoma Park. “I said to him, ‘If you ever want a woman on staff, let me know.’ I thought he would laugh and I would laugh, but he thought about it,” she recalled.—Story by Taashi Rowe/Visitor

Highland View Academy Principal Resigns

Citing health reasons, Gregg Cain, principal of the Highland View Academy (HVA) in Hagerstown, Md., recently announced that he is unable to continue in his role as principal beyond the current semester that ends January 11, 2013. The following is an excerpt from
an email he sent to parents:

“The conference and my HVA team have walked this most challenging journey with me, and I appreciate their support and encouragement. But the time has come for me to make a decision with respect to my overall health and for the health of our school. Therefore, I am resigning from the position of principal, effective at the end of this first semester.”

Cain came to HVA in July from Forest Lake Academy (Florida) where he served as vice principal. “We appreciate the many gifts that Gregg Cain has brought to HVA and the contributions he has made,” says Rick Remmers, Chesapeake Conference president. “We pray that he has a quick and full recovery of his health.” The HVA Board of Trustees has begun the process of finding a new principal.— *Story by Samantha Young/Chesapeake Conference*

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**Adventist Home Health Named a HomeCare Elite**

Adventist Home Health has been named to the top 500 of the 2012 HomeCare Elite, a compilation of the top-performing home health agencies in the United States. The HomeCare Elite identifies the top 25 percent of agencies and further highlights the top 100 and top 500 agencies overall.

Adventist Home Health is the only agency in the Maryland suburban area and one of only two agencies in the state of Maryland to achieve this level of recognition. HomeCare Elite winners are ranked by an analysis of publicly available performance measures in quality outcomes, process measure implementation, patient experience, quality improvement and financial performance.

“We are honored to receive this recognition, which is a testament to the quality of care that our dedicated clinicians provide to our patients every day,” said Keith Ballenger, vice president of Adventist Home Care Services, which oversees Adventist Home Health.— *Story by Danielle Lewald/Adventist HealthCare*
Allegheny East 12-Year Old Brings 42 to Christ in South Africa

Mpilo Norris, a 12-year-old evangelist from the Allegheny East Conference Liberty church in Baltimore, recently joined members of the University Heights church in New Brunswick, N.J., as they spent a week preaching to hundreds of seekers in the East Rand District in South Africa. At the end of the meetings, some 100 people gave their lives to Christ.

According to South African district pastor, Ziphozonke Mbatha, Norris “is a mature man of God who was able to proclaim the Good News of salvation with power, [and] he was able to conclude his sermon with an appeal for baptism.” He also holds Norris responsible for helping 42 people make decisions for baptism.

Norris said, “I thank God for allowing me to preach to the kids in South Africa. The point of my mission was to get kids to realize that the work of the gospel is not just for old folks, but that young people have a part to play too.”—Story by Beth Michaels/Visitor

Pennsylvania Member Celebrates 100th Birthday

Kathryn Ertel Kreger, a former teacher at Pennsylvania Conference’s Mountain View Christian School in Williamsport, celebrated her 100th birthday in September with the help of her friends from the Williamsport (Pa.) church and the school. The school’s current students presented her with cards and balloons.

Kreger taught at the Williamsport school for 27 years. Her husband, Herman, celebrated his 100th birthday in February. The Kregers had been very active in the Williamsport church for many years and still live in their own home.

The couple (pictured) was featured in a local newspaper and on a local television station.
When asked about their lives, Kathryn told both the newspaper and television personnel that they thank God every day for taking care of them and giving them long lives.—*Story by Elaine Scott*

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**Hundreds of Ohio Youth Make the “ConneXtion”**

More than 600 youth recently packed the Worthington (Ohio) church for the first joint youth rally between the Ohio and Allegheny West conferences (AWC). Called “Connextion,” the daylong event featured a youth band and a powerful message from Mackenzie Kambizi, pastor for AWC’s Parkwood church in Toledo.

The gathering also included selections from the Spring Valley Academy Choir in Centerville, the Mount Vernon Academy drama team from Mount Vernon, a Columbus-based drama team, special music from numerous groups, afternoon workshops and a hilarious (and yet very spiritual) presentation by Lyndy Phillips, a special guest from Dallas. The program ended with a night of basketball, volleyball, dodge ball and group games. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response, organizers are hoping to plan another program soon.—*Steve Carlson/Ohio Conference*

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**WAU Hosts Acro-Fest, Welcomes 750 Gymnasts**

More than 750 university, high school and home-schooled gymnasts from across the country recently visited Washington Adventist University (WAU) for Acro-Fest 2012. During the November 8-10 weekend, the campus was a blaze of color and teeming with activity. Acro-Fest is the largest Seventh-day Adventist athletic and interscholastic acrobatic event in the
Participants at the annual event represented some of the nation's best gymnastics teams from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The weekend is planned and produced by SDA Gymnastics, a worldwide organization of teams from Seventh-day Adventist schools.

Beyond the spellbinding display of gymnastic skills, the event provides great exposure for the host schools. The event's grand finale took place November 10 with performances from the host team, WAU’s Acro-Airs, as well as other participating teams. More than 1,000 people were in attendance.

Men Don Aprons to Benefit Takoma Academy

Takoma Academy’s (TA) Parent Association, led by Karen Benn-Marshall, recently hosted its second annual cooking fundraiser in the school gymnasium in Takoma Park, Md. This year the event showcased the culinary talents of TA's fathers, husbands, male faculty and staff. More than 25 men, adorned in aprons, stood behind their food stations with smiles of accomplishment, dividing their foods into appetizers, main courses, desserts and exotic beverages. The occasion is intended to benefit various projects on campus that promote instructional opportunities for students. This year the money goes toward science lab upgrades.

"I am always excited when the community comes together to support my school. Seeing parents having so much fun at events like these is great," commented Adriana Hayden, sophomore class president. "I can only imagine how much more can be achieved if more individuals participate so willingly."—David Turner/Takoma Academy
End Quote: I Don’t Feel More Special Before the Lord

“'Laying of the hands' is a public recognition of my calling by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I don’t feel more special before the Lord—I'm already His child—but I surely feel a higher responsibility that is proportionate to the divine grace and love that Jesus has promised me.”—Eliasib Fajardo, pastor of Potomac Conference’s Arlington, Metro NOVA and Sterling Spanish churches in Virginia, at his recent ordination. He is pictured with his wife, Yerusi, and children Jeriel and Jereli Adali.

Fin de la cita: No siento que sea más especial ante el Señor

“La imposición de manos' es un reconocimiento público de mi llamado a servir en la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día. No siento que sea más especial ante el Señor -yo ya soy su hijo- pero claro que siento una mayor responsabilidad que es proporcional a la divina gracia y amor que Jesús me ha prometido”. —Eliasib Fajardo, pastor de las iglesias Metro NOVA y Sterling
Spanish de Potomac Conference en Arlington, Virginia durante su reciente ordenación.

Columbia Union Members in the News

"Feed the Children" Comes to South Jersey

Adventist Home Health earns HomeCare Elite spot

Miniature horse serves as therapy animal in Erie

Area students reach out to victims of Hurricane Sandy

Church a growing young congregation committed to living Christian faith
UPCOMING EVENTS

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

MARYLAND

November 25, and December 2, 9: You are invited to attend free workshops that promote positive relationships and parenting skills for couples and singles. All sessions, which are facilitated in both Spanish and English, are designed to show participants how to communicate effectively, express appreciation, solve problems and parent in order to create lasting bonds. The Federal Leadership Institute is partnering with Seabrook church to deliver the workshops. There will be gift-card giveaways and FREE childcare and refreshments. The Spanish-speaking workshops are from 3-6 p.m. and English-speaking workshops are from 6-9 p.m. the church is located at 8900 Good Luck Road in Lanham, Md.

November 26: Takoma Academy’s Camarata singers under the direction of Lulu Mwangi Mupfumbu will provide music ministry at the Central Union Mission homeless shelter (1350 R. St., Washington, D.C. 20009). The worship service begins at 7 p.m. and Anthony Medley, senior pastor of the Emmanuel-Brinklow church, will deliver the devotional message. Come and be blessed by the music and spoken word. For more information, contact Carlos Medley at (301) 236-0093.


December 9: The second annual Sligo Adventist School Craft Show and Small Business Showcase will run from 11-3 p.m. for vendors and shoppers alike. Vendor tables are $35 and shopper admission is $1 (you also receive a raffle ticket for fabulous giveaways!), with those proceeds going to the Worthy Student Fund. This is a fabulous opportunity to promote your craft/small business and to get some Christmas shopping checked off your list! Applications are available online at http://www.sligoadventistschool.org/ under Parent Resources or call (301) 434-1417 for more information.

February 8-10, 2013: A Lifetime of LOVE Marriage Retreat is the fifth annual community marriage retreat weekend. It will be held on at Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, Md. Joan and Rich Liversidge will present the sessions, which run from Friday evening to Sunday morning. For more information, email MarriageEnrichment@comcast.net or contact Mark and Peggy Lee at (301) 801-2344 or Jeff and Sandy Hartz at (443) 864-6328. The early bird discount ends December 17.
Forward to a Friend, Subscribe or Send Us Stories

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.

To send us a news story, email us at visitor@columbiaunion.net. The deadline for all submissions is 10 a.m. each Tuesday.

Stay Connected:

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Columbia Union Votes $40,000 for Sandy Relief Efforts

Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 11/19/12

During year end meetings last week, Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee members voted to give $40,000 to the Allegheny East and New Jersey conferences to aid them in their superstorm Sandy relief efforts. The three union officers then prayed over José H. Cortés, New Jersey Conference president; and Henry J. Fordham, Allegheny East Conference president; as well as for the efforts of volunteers throughout New Jersey.

The vote followed a video presentation from the New Jersey Conference, which shared multiple stories of Seventh-day Adventists coming from inside and outside the state to help community members hurting as a result of the storm. One group, students at the Heritage Academy, came from as far away as Tennessee to help. “If you think kids just want to just text, you are wrong,” Cortés said standing up during the video presentation to point out how eager the students were to help. Cortés also reported that the conference has pulled their old conference office building off the market and is now using it as a base of operations for Adventist Community Services Disaster Response.

Potomac Conference officers also responded with a pledge to provide $20,000 to help with the effort. At the North American Division year end meetings a week ago, officers announced that they will appropriate $500,000 to the Adventist Community Services (ACS) Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund.” Additionally, the General Conference gave $200,000, the Atlantic Union Conference gave $30,000, the Guam Micronesia Mission gave $20,000, the Pacific Union Conference gave $10,000 and the Southern Union Conference gave $10,000 in support of Sandy relief efforts. This brings the total Adventist corporate giving to more than $800,000 but doesn't include monies collected during two special “Sandy relief” offerings taken in churches across the division.
Union Sees Third Quarter Tithe Gain

Committee members also heard several other reports including one from Seth Bardu, union treasurer. He reported that tithe was up by 1.05 percent for the month ending September 30, compared to the same time last year bringing the total for the three quarters to $83.2 million. However, compared to the same time last year, the World Missions Fund was down by 1.15 percent with a total of $1.6 million. The Potomac Conference led the union in tithe dollars totaling $22.1 million. Allegheny East followed closely with $21.5 million in tithe. Next came Chesapeake Conference members who returned $11 million in tithe.

Two Conferences Report on Evangelism

Two conferences also gave reports on how receiving $25,000 each from the union earmarked specifically for evangelism, impacted their outreach efforts this year. William T. Cox, president of the Allegheny West Conference, said in an effort to meet the growing ethnic segment in his conference, their Multilingual Ministries department planted four churches this year: a Hispanic church in Toledo, Ohio; a Hispanic church in Harrisburg, Pa.; a Korean church in Cleveland and a Brazilian church in Columbus, Ohio. “We are a family,” he said. “And we accept and value different ethnic groups.”

He also reported on a partnership with the Ohio Conference to host a Revelation Today evangelism series in Dayton, Ohio, featuring John Bradshaw of It Is Written ministries. In that meeting more than 500 individuals from churches in both conferences came together and spent time in prayer. On the opening night, 1,300 attended the meetings and each subsequent night an average of 549 attended. At the end of the meetings Elliot Smith, coordinator, estimated that some 800 were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some 166 made decisions for Christ, 86 requested baptism and 2,900 requested Bible studies. “We experienced a real revival,” Cox said. “We want to thank our colleague Raj [Attiken, Ohio Conference president] for partnering with us.”

Bill Miller, president of the Potomac Conference, said it was a joy to see how creative his members were in their ministry outreach. This year the New Market (Va.) church is hosting Journey to Bethlehem, a live interactive dramatization of first century Bethlehem held over the Christmas holidays. He also reported that 41 Hispanic churches are participating in a mega evangelism week and two church plants are slated for Leesburg and Dulles, Va.

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
Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president, presents Joyce Newmyer, Washington Adventist Hospital president, with the Notable Person of Honor award.

Columbia Union Recognizes Five Persons With a New Award
Story by Taashi Rowe/Visitor
Published 11/19/12

At year-end meetings last week, five Columbia Union Conference members were recognized for their contribution to the cause of Christ during a special luncheon held in their honor. This new award, called Notable Persons of Honor, spotlighted Joyce Newmyer, president of Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md.; Larry Boggess, president of the Mountain View Conference; José H. Cortés, president of the New Jersey Conference; Josephine Benton, a retired pastor; and Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park.

“Thank you for your contribution to the cause of Christ,” Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union, said to the honorees. “You’ve made a difference.”

Ken Denslow, assistant to the president of the North American Division, followed with a short devotional. “People who have grasped the legacy of hope speak up and make a difference in their communities,” he said. “So why not take the opportunity to thank people during their living years for the work they did to advance the legacy of hope in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? We thank you for your faithfulness.”

Honoree Joyce Newmyer joined the Adventist HealthCare team in August 2009 as the chief operating officer of Washington Adventist Hospital and became the president of the hospital at the beginning of 2011.

Under her leadership, Washington Adventist Hospital has substantially advanced our agenda of excellent patient care and exceptional patient experience, has built a highly engaged employee team and medical staff and has done so despite the challenges that the aging hospital facility presents,” said Rob Vandeman, Columbia Union executive secretary.

After receiving her award, Newmyer shared that when she was a little girl, she told her mom that she wanted to work for the church. Her mom responded by telling her that she only had only two choices, to be a teacher or a nurse. “I’m glad to be a part of the Columbia Union Conference where moms don’t have to tell their little girls that anymore,” she said. “It’s a privilege to work in a
Vandeman shared that Boggess, the next honoree, “was always searching for new methods to reach people. Elder Boggess has an open door policy and his vision and planning has been to encourage and train lay members to become successful, active witnesses so the church may grow.”

Boggess, filled with absolute surprise, even appeared too emotional to say much besides, “Thank you.”

“We’ve been talking about equality in ministry in the Columbia Union for 40 years,” Vandeman said before introducing the next honoree. “Shame on us that when Josphine Benton was an associate pastor at Sligo church [in Takoma Park, Md.], then senior pastor at the Rockville [Md.] church, that we as a church family didn’t have the courage to ordain her. We don’t know how to apologize as a church for the time it has taken us to recognize the contribution that you and other women have made to the ministry.”

Benton, 87, who was ordained as an elder in the 1970s and is now an elder at the Williamsport (Md.) church, seemed absolutely delighted. She shared a brief thank you and also thanked Vandeman for his part in helping her get hospital chaplain credentials while he was president of the Chesapeake Conference. Click here to read more about Benton.

Cortés, the next honoree, has been president of the New Jersey Conference since September 2007. Prior to that, he served as a pastor in the conference for 18 years. “Since José became president, there have been 4,200 baptisms,” Vandeman said. “It is said if José cuts himself shaving, he bleeds evangelism.”

Looking at the award, Cortés responded by saying, “I don’t deserve this privilege. All glory belongs to Jesus.”

Of the final honoree Vandeman said, “Before Dr. Spence came to the university, WAU was on a downward spiral, but thanks to Dr. Spence we have seen an overall financial turnaround, capital improvement and the second highest enrollment in the schools history this fall with 1,402 students. He is loved by the students, respected by the board and challenged by the faculty.”

Spence admitted that he was surprised to be named an honoree and said, “This goes toward the entire learning community.”
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There are no comments.

Anonymous

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Rob Vandeman, Columbia Union executive secretary, speaks of Josephine Benton’s accomplishments during the Notable Person of Honor award ceremony while Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, nods in appreciation.

How Josephine Benton Blazed the Trail for Women in Ministry

Story by Taashi Rowe/Visitor

Published 11/19/12

Looking back, Josephine Benton, now 87, knows exactly where her desire to minister came from. Her father was a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist who frequently moved their family around the country. “I would sit and listen to my dad’s sermons, and I always knew that if I had been born a boy, I would have been a preacher,” she said. “But that path didn’t seem open to me.”

So she did the next best thing and majored in speech so she could teach pastors how to preach. When other denominations started becoming more open to women pastors, she took several pastoral courses at the Wesley Theological Seminary, which was then based in Takoma Park, Md.

Little did Benton know this step would help her blaze a trail for women to fully minister in the Adventist Church.

She then applied to pastor in the Potomac Conference and went to speak with Dale Hannah, senior pastor of the Sligo church in Takoma Park. “I said to him, ‘If you ever want a woman on staff, let me know.’ I thought he would laugh and I would laugh, but he thought about it,” she recalled.

The Mohaven Papers

The conference however, turned her down. Benton, married with two sons, didn’t give up. She went to each member of the conference executive committee and shared her vision for ministry.

That was in 1973, the year she served on the famous General Conference ad hoc committee to study the role of women in ministry at Camp Mohaven in Danville, Ohio. The group of 13 men and 14 women published 29 “Mohaven Papers” and recommended that women be ordained as local church elders and that those with theological training be employed as associates in pastoral care. The group also proposed that a pilot program be developed to lead to ordination by 1975.

That same year, Benton was ordained as an elder, and she became an associate pastor at Sligo church. While she did get some support from members, she recalled one man approaching her as she walked through the hallways of the church. “He said, ‘Josephine you know I don’t believe in...”
what you’re doing.” I told him, ‘I know,’” she said. She also knew that he was thinking about Paul’s letter to the Corinthians where he wrote that women should be silent in church (see Cor. 14:34).

Despite that verse, Benton said, “I felt called to ministry, and even before I was hired, the Lord opened doors for me in ministry. I served as a chaplain at a camp and served at Loma Linda University [in California].”

When pressed more about the Corinthian verse, Benton pointed to Acts 10:23-48 where Peter meets Cornelius the gentile and the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word. “That text shows me that whomever God chooses to send His Spirit to, has no choice but to accept it.”

As she served at Sligo, she said, “There was enough work for me to do that didn’t require me to be ordained.” She joyfully ministered to children and singles and helped lead a church plant in nearby Washington, D.C. She then went on to the Rockville (Md.) church where she served as senior pastor from 1979 to 1982. Afterward she served as an administrator in the Adult Evening Program at what is now known as Washington Adventist University.

Back to Ministry

When Benton retired, she moved to the Hagerstown, Md.-area and secured a chaplaincy post at the Williamsport Retirement Village. She ministered there for 19 years. During that time, she worked with Rob Vandeman, then president of the Chesapeake Conference to get her chaplaincy license. She was thrilled. “I could now do weddings, which was a big thing because up until then I was only allowed to do funerals and anybody can do those,” she joked. As an elder at Chesapeake’s Williamsport (Md.) church she still gives Bible studies and ministers to those in need.

Benton said although it's taking a while for women pastors to gain their ordination credentials, she has seen it coming for a long time and believes it will come to the entire world church. She even watched the live stream of the Columbia Union Conference Special Constituency Meeting in July where the union became the first in the North American Division to ordain women without regard to gender.

Earlier this fall, when the Columbia Union approved 16 female pastors for ordination, it was a young female pastor at Sligo church who called to invite Benton to the first of such services in the union. A very happy Benton sat in the front row and watched the ordination of Debbie Eisele, a Sligo associate pastor. This was something that had not been possible when she served there 40 years ago.

“I’m Thankful God Opened the Door”
On that same day, Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, told her that union leaders also approved her name to receive emeritus ordination credentials. Benton who is now a grandmother of five and great-grandmother of five joked, “I’m glad they didn’t wait until 2015 to do this because by then I would be a very old woman.”

Last week Columbia Union leaders also presented Benton with their Notable Person of Honor award at their year-end meetings. “We’ve been talking about equality in ministry in the Columbia Union for 40 years,” Vandeman said before presenting Benton with the award. “Shame on us that when Josphine Benton was an associate pastor at Sligo church, then senior pastor at the Rockville church, that we as a church family didn’t have the courage to ordain her. We don’t know how to apologize as a church for the time it has taken us to recognize the contribution that you and other women have made to the ministry.”

On that same day, Joyce Newmyer, president of Washington Adventist Hospital, shook Benton’s hand and thanked her for blazing a trail for other women to serve as leaders in the church. After the awards ceremony, William Cox, president of the Allegheny West Conference, sought Benton out. “I just wanted to come and shake your hand and tell you, ‘Thank you for your service and commitment,’” he said.

With a smile on her face, Benton softly said, “I’m really thankful God opened the door for women to become pastors, even senior pastors at some of our churches. I’m just glad to see more people use their gifts for God’s church.”

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BARRINGTON Brennen
Reply
2 days ago

Great story. Now is the time. Let’s move forward. We’ve done enough study. We need action. Do you realize we never needed a vote to ordained women. From the beginning of our church we never said it could only be men. Let us get going.

Anonymous

Name: 
Email: 

Preview Comment

Name: 
Email: 
PLEASANTVILLE - Feed the Children has arrived in south Jersey to help with Hurricane Sandy relief efforts.

The Boardwalk Community Fellowship Church of Atlantic City, the Seashore Seventh Day Adventist Church of Pleasantville and the First Seventh Day Adventist Church of Newtonville all collected food and toiletries for 400 families affected by Hurricane Sandy.

"We realize that what we have the ability to give away is not going to solve everyone's problems, but it is going to show that we care," said Mark Tyler of Boardwalk Community Fellowship Church.

The goods collected will be distributed by Feed the Children to those in need in our area.
Adventist Home Health earns HomeCare Elite spot

Adventist Home Health has been named to the top 500 of the 2012 HomeCare Elite, a compilation of the top-performing U.S. home health agencies.

The HomeCare Elite identifies the top 25 percent of agencies and further highlights the top 100 and top 500 agencies overall.

Adventist Home Health is the only agency in the Maryland suburban area and one of only two agencies in the state of Maryland to achieve this level of recognition, according to an Adventist news release.

HomeCare Elite winners are ranked by an analysis of publicly available performance measures in quality outcomes, process measure implementation, patient experience, quality improvement and financial performance.

The 2012 HomeCare Elite is co-sponsored by National Research Corp., a provider of cross-continuum health care metrics and analytics, and DecisionHealth, the publisher of the independent newsletter Home Health Line.

Adventist Home Health serves the Maryland suburban area including Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, Howard and Anne Arundel counties.

This is the third year the agency has been awarded the HomeCare Elite distinction. It is part of the Rockville-based Adventist HealthCare.
Miniature horse serves as therapy animal in Erie

November 18, 2012 12:17 am
By Victor Fernandes / Erie Times-News

ERIE, Pa. -- Cimarron is curious, fun-loving and even mischievous at home. But it's difficult to get upset with him.

He has such a special way of bonding with people, he almost appears to be human.

"He's a unique horse," said Tina Borland, 50, of Platea, a private at-home caregiver whose 4-year-old miniature horse has provided therapy to the elderly as well as mentally and physically challenged people around Erie for the past three years.

Their work is done as part of the Horse Ministry, an outreach program Ms. Borland created in conjunction with the Erie Seventh-day Adventist Church, where Ms. Borland is a community service leader.

"It's amazing what the horse does for people. He just absolutely loves people," said Ms. Borland, who received Cimarron as a gift from her husband, Earl, in 2008. "He is quiet, submissive, laid-back. He just knows his job. It's just amazing. That's what makes him so special."

Cimarron might steal Ms. Borland's bucket and run away with it, or swipe the feather duster she uses to clean cobwebs in Cimarron's barn at Crazy Acres Ranch in Platea. But when he enters nursing homes or private homes, Ms. Borland said, a change comes over him.

Cimarron makes people smile and laugh. They feel better having him around, even for just a little while.

"You really have to be there to see the magic happen," said Ms. Borland, who fell for Cimarron at first sight four years ago. He was about 20 minutes old when Ms. Borland began petting him. At that moment, she was hooked. So was Cimarron. That's when Earl Borland gave him as a gift "just because he loves me," Tina Borland said.

She wanted others to feel that special connection. "I didn't want him to just see the pasture," Ms. Borland said.

He made the first of his annual appearances at Fairview Township's Memorial Day parade when he was 11 months old. Then, Ms. Borland said, "I got this idea of taking him to nursing homes."

Cimarron, who is about 34 inches tall, regularly climbs into Ms. Borland's van and heads out for his visits. He rides well in the van. He also likes elevators.
He rode an elevator during his first visit -- an unscheduled appearance at Pleasant Ridge Manor West in Girard.

Cimarron was greeted unexpectedly on the first floor by a resident and her aide. "I was worried about it. I wanted to [acclimate him] a little bit at a time," Ms. Borland said. "I had no choice but to walk him up to her."

Cimarron calmly laid his head in her lap. "Her hands brushed across his eyes back and forth," Ms. Borland said. "He just gave a big sigh."

Ms. Borland enjoys making these visits, too. Even when she feels too tired to move, "I'll still drag myself out of the house to get him and take him," she said. She has seen the positive impact Cimarron has on people. That's worth the extra effort, said Ms. Borland, who worked at Pleasant Ridge Manor from 1984 to 1998.

"I love taking care of people," she said. "I just know that these people need to be loved, and an animal gives unconditional love."

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Area students reach out to victims of Hurricane Sandy

Student choir members from Takoma Academy in Takoma Park spent Sunday, Nov. 11, in Atlantic City, N.J., helping victims of Hurricane Sandy with clean-up, meals and an impromptu concert.

Lulu Mupfumbu, choir director, said about 55 people, including some students from Washington Adventist University, Takoma Park, went on the trip to support the work being done through Adventist Community Services Center in the area.

“We delivered boxes of food, cleaning supplies and personal items,” Mupfumbu said.

Olivia Stanley, 16, a junior at the high school, said she was surprised by some of the damage she saw.

“We went to where the boardwalk was and it was nonexistent. There was a car buried in sand,” she said.

Her group went to a Red Cross tent and sang and prayed with the people, she said.

“It seemed like something little but when you saw the smiles on their faces, and they thanked you, you knew what you really did,” Anthony said.

Elementary school students from St. Andrew Apostle Catholic Church, Silver Spring, offered their help to those in need by collecting clothes, cleaning supplies, toiletries, towels, blankets, grocery gift cards and monetary donations to send to St. Benedict Catholic Church in Holmdel, N.J.

Additionally, parishioners at St. Andrew Apostle donated funds to help purchase about $8,000 worth of canned food and fresh fruit. Another donation secured the purchase of $1,000 worth of undergarments.

Students helped load the truck Nov. 9 and adult members of St. Andrews drove it to New Jersey for the delivery.
Church a growing young congregation committed to living Christian faith

On the second Saturday of every month, they wear jeans and T-shirts to worship not in a church but at the GoggleWorks.

They then proceed to volunteer at social service agencies or go out on Reading’s streets and serve food and drinks and talk about Jesus.

They are mostly quite young: 20s, 30s and 40s.

This is the heart of their Saturday, their day of worship at the city’s 4-year-old Grace Outlet Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The soul of their mission: “Connect the Disconnect.”

“We know that there are so many people in Berks who desire to help Reading, and we want them to know that we have that desire, too,” said Amy Newman, 30, of Shillington, a nurse and mother of two children, whose husband, Roland, 34, is a family physician with St. Joseph Medical Center at its Sixth and Walnut streets campus, the former Community General Hospital.

The Newmans are among a growing young congregation of Seventh-day Adventists who have made a commitment to worship in the city and serve those in need in a way they believe allows them to live their Christian faith.

“We live in a time when there is a deconstruction of religion, almost to the point that some people have difficulty even saying the name of Jesus,” said Roland Newman. “But the truth of Jesus is boiled down to the practicality of Jesus, who taught: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

“We are theologically conservative, but we are not traditional,” said Jason Foster, 34, one of two church pastors, the other being Kris Eckenroth, 35, both of Hamburg.

Eckenroth said since the church started in November 2008 with about 20 to 30 weekly worshipers, the attendance numbers have grown to more than 100.

“Our age range is pretty widespread, from infant to 80, but mostly we are attracting a lot of young adults,” Eckenroth said.

In fact, Eckenroth estimated that about 65 percent of the membership, before they came to Grace Outlet, no longer had been attending a church or were among the unchurched.

To what does he attribute the attraction of this relatively new congregation, renting space at the GoggleWorks?

“Jesus never becomes more real than when you are serving people and you do something intentional and make the effort to become part of a community,” he said.

“The way I would describe it is that all of us, and that includes many denominations and not just ours, are susceptible to being in a rut,” Foster said. “We are not moving away from the roots of what we believe, but, unfortunately, we sometimes get used to doing something a certain way and then attach a value to it, which really doesn’t have anything to do with our core beliefs. An element of stagnation then sets in.”
To avoid that stagnation, Grace Outlet steers clear of fixed formats for worship and mixes musical selections that range from traditional to contemporary.

"We don't necessarily want people to know what's coming next," Eckenroth said. "We will even change the direction of our seating for service. It's not that we're so committed to change for the sake of change, it's just that we want people to remain open and be interactive."

In that vein, church members embrace social action and variety: They conduct a Jeans Sabbath where congregation members dress down and hit the streets and provide food or deliver flowers; serve breakfasts at the Opportunity House shelter; and visit such places as the Olivet Boys and Girls Club, the Children's Home of Reading, the Animal Rescue League and the Villa St. Elizabeth, a city senior housing facility.

"What attracted us to the church is its energy, vibrancy and the willingness expressed to serve," said substitute teacher Lauren Pennala, 25, of Exeter Township, married to her state trooper husband, Stephen.

"We are both public servants and believe it's important to be active in your community," she said.

Heather Wlasniewski, 28, of Schuylkill Haven, Schuylkill County, a full-time mother, and her husband, Andy, also 28, an insurance adjuster, said they had a history of jumping around to several Seventh-day Adventist churches.

"We first came here one time in September 2009, and then my dad passed away in October," Wlasniewski said. "Upon learning of his death, Grace Outlet sent us a huge bouquet of roses. I just knew here is where we needed to be."

Another elementary school teacher, Meggan Shobe, 27, of Mount Penn, pointed out two features that drew her to Grace Outlet: "My husband and I came here and immediately felt a strong sense of family and belonging.

"We also wanted to come to a place where we felt needed and we could make a difference."

"For me personally, I'm not as interested in religion (as an institution), as I am in Jesus and having a meaningful relationship with him," said Erich Mace, 30, of Wyomissing, a chemical engineer, who attends Grace Outlet with his wife, Erin, 26, a second-grade teacher.

"Good acts are fine, but it is knowing Jesus and having a relationship with him that gives the greater meaning on the way to discovering that a practical Jesus is real in people's lives," he said.

"I grew up in a more traditional Catholic family and then moved to a nondenominational church, but I always had a lot of questions about God that just weren't being answered," Erin said. "Religion was more about rules and fears than it was about having a relationship."

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