May 1, 2013

24 WAU Students End School Year With Baptisms

Spiritual activities at Washington Adventist University (WAU) ended on a high note this year with the baptism of 24 students last Sabbath. The baptisms were the outcome of a revival week that the Office of Ministry held from March 31 to April 6.

“The baptisms were the crowning of our spiritual activities this year,” said Baraka Muganda, vice president for Ministry. “Washington Adventist University is not only impacting the academic lives of our students; we are transforming their spiritual lives as well.”

Freshman biology major Jibrill Morris, one of the new converts, said getting baptized was the most important commitment of his life. “I have never fully committed myself to anyone or anything. I felt like I was living my life on a halfway mark, and I wanted to change that and be all I can for Jesus,” he said.

Muganda is pictured getting ready to baptize Edson Depina, a graduating senior who majored in business marketing.— Story by Grace Virtue; Photo by Ralph Vieux

READ MORE
Olney Prep Gets $1.55 Million for New Building

Staff members at Potomac Conference’s Olney Adventist Preparatory School in Olney, Md., say they’ve witnessed God’s will in action recently. The school, which has been operating out of the Olney (Md.) church and temporary buildings since it opened nearly 15 years ago, spent years searching for property on which to construct a permanent facility. The board and administration recently felt that God, instead, was leading them to build on their current property. The school began prayerfully considering how a small school and church could financially build in one of the most expensive areas of the country.

God was already working behind-the-scenes laying the groundwork for a partner to aid in the building process and funding. The Commonweal Foundation, a foundation, which operates and supports educational programs and projects assisting underserved children and youth, recently granted $1.55 million toward the project and is also providing them with project managers. The Potomac Conference also donated $250,000 to help with the new building. Excited students are pictured in hardhats.—Story by Potomac Conference Staff

READ MORE

Allegheny East Gymnast Witnesses by Honoring the Sabbath

Since the age of six, gymnastics has been a part of 14-year-old Reyna Patterson’s life. As with any Seventh-day Adventist Christian athlete, Patterson,
who attends Allegheny East Conference’s Pine Forge (Pa.) church, has had to face the challenge of her gym practices and meets being scheduled during Sabbath hours. Some gyms were totally unsympathetic to any religious convictions and others allowed her to participate, but did not allow her to advance to the next level.

So Patterson’s mother suggested she just try tumbling for fun, without a thought of competing. Patterson agreed that was a good idea. After some time of recreational tumbling, one of the coaches at the gym approached her about joining their team gymnastics program. She was eager to do so, but she was nervous about addressing the Sabbath issue with her coaches. Based on her previous experience, she knew some practices and meets would spill over into Sabbath hours. Click here to read the rest of her story.—Story by LaTasha Hewitt

READ MORE

100 Ohio Young Adults Seek Connection to God at GODenounters

“Everyone wants to connect … [but] nobody wants to talk about connecting. They want to experience it,” says Steven Carlson, Youth Ministries director for the Ohio Conference. Carlson says that talking about God is a very different experience
than experiencing Him, and that is what he hoped to illustrate at the conference’s first GODencounters young adult weekend. “A God who longs for connection … for a relationship, for an encounter, that’s what GODencounters is all about,” he adds.

Carlson believes they reached their goal for the weekend, which was held at the conference’s Camp Mohaven Retreat and Conference Center in Danville. Nearly 100 young adults from across the state and beyond filled meeting rooms to worship, pray and experience God. GODencounters is “a movement of young adults who are wholeheartedly pursuing a relationship with Jesus Christ, a worldwide movement sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Carlson adds, “[It’s] about encountering God where you are today; going after a God Who came after us first.”—Story by Heidi Shoemaker

**READ MORE**

**New Jersey Pre-Teen Raises $800 for Cancer Research**

For the past year, 12-year-old Veronica Rodriguez and other kids at the New Jersey Conference’s Robbinsville church, have been actively raising money for cancer research. Rodriguez raised more than $800 for the St. Baldricks Foundation, which gives the funds to various research groups studying children’s cancers. The fundraisers take place on St. Patrick’s Day.
The children got people to donate money and then on St. Patrick’s Day, they shaved their heads to show support for children with cancer. After Rodriguez got her head shaved, many other children did the same. She had been planning to do this for over a year. She and at least one other girl also donated their hair to Locks for Love, which uses the hair to make wigs for cancer patients.

Veronica’s family and friends are very proud of her for caring so much about other people that she was willing to give up her hair. She is also the granddaughter of Jim Greene, executive secretary for the New Jersey Conference, and Joyce, a conference treasurer.

Columbia Union Teams Place First in NAD Bible Quiz

On Sabbath, April 20, some 38 teams, representing eight unions and one international team, participated in the second North American Division (NAD) Pathfinder Bible Experience in Lincoln, Neb.

Six of the teams were from the Columbia Union—the Beltsville Broncos Blue and Purple teams from the Potomac Conference, the Westlake Witnesses from the Ohio Conference, the Triadelphia Sparks from the Chesapeake Conference and the Liberty Light Bearers teams 1 and 2 from the Allegheny East Conference.

The Pathfinder Bible Experience began at 3 p.m. and went for a little over three hours. Some 90 questions were asked on the books of Acts and I & II Thessalonians. A total of 26 teams placed first, including the Beltsville Broncos Blue and Purple teams, Westlake Witnesses (pictured), Triadelphia Sparks and Liberty Light Bearers team 2.—Story by Pamela Scheib

Adventist HealthCare Dedicates New Office Space
Adventist HealthCare leadership, employees, City of Gaithersburg officials and members of the Adventist HealthCare Board of Trustees celebrated their new office space with a dedication service and ribbon cutting held on Tuesday, April 16.

Nearly 200 people attended the event, held on the sixth floor of the new offices at 820 West Diamond Avenue, in Gaithersburg, Md. Bill Robertson (pictured right), president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare, opened the dedication by explaining the significance of continuing to carry out their mission of serving their community.

Sidney A. Katz (pictured, left), City of Gaithersburg mayor and several other city officials attended the dedication. Mayor Katz also presented Robertson with a proclamation announcing Tuesday, April 16, 2013, as “Adventist HealthCare Day” in Gaithersburg. As part of the move, the city contributed $160,000 in economic development grant funding, which helped with renovations. Adventist HealthCare’s corporate offices were previously housed in nearby Rockville, Md.—Story by Laura Cook

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**Visitor Poetry Contest Deadline is May 10**

If you write poems about God’s love, answers to prayer or any other inspirational or spiritual theme, you could get published in the Visitor magazine—and be a blessing to others! Entrants could win a first-place prize in three age categories—6-10, 11-17, or 18 and over—or win the grand prize for unpublished works. There will also be a special category of “poetweets”—poems of 140 characters or less uploaded to Twitter @VisitorNews using #VisitorPoetweet. All styles are welcome. Submit entries by May 10 to
24 WAU Students Baptized, Olney Prep Gets $1.5 Mil

sjones@columbiaunion.net or mail to Visitor Poetry Contest, 5427 Twin Knolls Rd., Columbia, MD 21045. Click here for more details.

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**Visitor invita a la feligresía a enviar poemas originales**

Si usted escribe poemas sobre el amor de Dios, la contestación a la oración, u otros temas inspiradores o espirituales, usted podría salir en la revista *Visitor*—¡y a la vez bendecir a otros!

Los participantes podrían ganar el premio de primer lugar en categorías de tres edades—6 a 10, 11 a 17, o mayores de 18 años—o ganar el gran premio de obras *inéditas*. También habrá una categoría especial de “poetastweets”—poemas de ciento cuarenta caracteres o menos cargado a Twitter @VisitorNews usando #VisitorPoetweet. Se aceptan todos los estilos en inglés o español. Envíelos a más tardar el 10 de mayo a sjones@columbiaunion.net o por correo a Visitor Poetry Contest, 5427 Twin Knolls Rd., Columbia, MD 21045.

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**Watch Footage From the iAbide Pastors Convention**

Last week hundreds of pastors and some of their spouses gathered to be refilled, renewed and
refreshed at the Columbia Union’s iAbide pastors convention. It was the first one held in the union in nine years. Click [here](http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=fe12b9595dd2970cee6479d5&id=8f475b359d) to watch the most recent *Columbia Union Story* featuring the convention.

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**End Quote: I was Inspired to Learn More of the Gospel**

“I was inspired to learn more of the gospel and engage in studies and conversations that might help fulfill the Great Commission. It was refreshing to see others in my age group have a vast knowledge of Scripture and desire to have a relationship with God. As one of the youngest individuals in my home church, it has helped me to truly see how God can use me in the church and the world. [I came away committed to] limiting my secular entertainment and music with the desire to eliminate it altogether as the Holy Spirit reminded me that just because something is not necessarily bad, does not make it good. Things that seem harmless can still take away...
our attention from the mission God has given us."—Angelina Dickson, a member of Mountain View Conference’s Weirton (W.Va.) church, reflects on the recent conference-wide young adult prayer conference

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

MARYLAND

May 4: The Sligo church invites kids of all ages to attend “Live & Muddy,” a presentation on dinosaurs and more. Guide magazine’s Rich Aguilera will host. The program begins at 4 p.m. The church is located at 7700 Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park, Md. Click here for more information.

May 11: The Southern Asian church will celebrate 25 years of ministry. It is the first Southern Asian church in North America and the largest in the world. The anniversary begins with the celebratory worship service at 11 a.m. in the church sanctuary, followed by a fellowship lunch. Other highlights of the day include a concert at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary featuring international gospel singer Vijay Benedict and the instrumental and vocal talents of members of the congregation. An 8 p.m. social program of fun and friendship will showcase the more secular talents of the congregation and will be held in the church’s fellowship hall. The church is located at 2001 East Randolph Road in Silver Spring, Md. For more information about the celebration, visit www.sasdac.org.

WEST VIRGINIA

May 17-19: The Voice of Prophecy and Mountain View conference are hosting a Discover Bible School training weekend. During this three-day session, attendees will learn about prayer and soul-winning, how to give a Bible study and how to obtain decisions in a Bible study. For more information, or to sign up, contact the conference office at (304-422-4581) and ask for Valerie Morikone. Registration ends April 30.

Having trouble viewing this email? Click here to read it online. For more news and up-to-date information from the Columbia Union Conference, visit columbiaunion.org.
24 WAU Students Baptized, Olney Prep Gets $1.5 Mil
Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

24 WAU Students End School Year With Baptisms

Story by Grace Virtue; Photos by Ralph Vieux and Randolph Robin Published 5/1/2013

Baraka Muganda, Washington Adventist University’s vice president for Ministry, gets ready to baptize Edson Depina, a graduating senior majoring in business marketing.

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“The baptisms were the crowning of our spiritual activities this year,” said Baraka Muganda, vice president for Ministry. “Washington Adventist University is not only impacting the academic lives of our students; we are transforming their spiritual lives as well.”

Freshman biology major Jibrill Morris, one of the new converts, said baptism was the most important commitment of his life. “I have never fully committed myself to anyone or anything. I felt like I was living my life on a halfway mark, and I wanted to change that and be all I can for Jesus,” he said.

Whitney Syriaque, a junior psychology major, said she made the commitment in order to leave the past behind and focus on what is ahead. “I am cleansed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and that will be the only past that I will remember,” she said.

Jordhon Horelien, a sophomore communication major, said of his decision for baptism, “I wanted my relationship with God to be stronger. I believe that God has a calling on my life and I shouldn’t waste time chasing worldly things.”

Regina Johnson, chaplain for Ministry, could not be happier.

“April 27th was one of the best days of my life! I had the opportunity to witness God’s Hand move on 24 students. The baptisms were the beginning of what God wants to do with Washington Adventist University.”

The baptisms, which took place at the campus’ Sligo church, was followed by a fellowship picnic on the WAU Commons. The next revival week will be held during spring 2014.
COMMENTS POLICY: The Columbia Union Conference Visitor encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments are subject to approval but will not be edited.

Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.
Olney Prep Gets $1.55 Million for New Building

Story by Potomac Conference Staff Published 5/1/13

Olney Adventist Preparatory School students are excited for the educational opportunities the new facility will offer them and are ready to get to work!

Staff members at Potomac Conference's Olney Adventist Preparatory School in Olney, Md., say they've witnessed God's will in action recently. The school, which has been operating out of the Olney (Md.) church and temporary buildings since it opened nearly 15 years ago, spent years searching for property on which to construct a permanent facility. The board and administration recently felt that God, instead, was leading them to build on their current property. The school began prayerfully considering how a small school and church could financially build in one of the most expensive areas of the country.

God was already working behind-the-scenes laying the groundwork for a partner to aid in the building process and funding. The Commonweal Foundation, a foundation, which operates and supports educational programs and projects assisting underserved children and youth, recently granted $1.55 million toward the project and is also providing them with project managers. The Potomac Conference also donated $250,000 to help with the new building.

“Our community knows God is not stopping here,” says Jami Walker, principal. “Prayer warriors from around the conference have joined the Olney community in praying over permits and the building process as a whole. With God’s leadership, the future of Olney Prep remains bright!”

They continue to raise additional funds for the new building and future of the school. Olney Prep students consistently place in the top 5 percent on standardized test scores nationally. Learn more about the school at olneyprep.org.

Jami Walker, Olney prep principal says, "With God's leadership, the future of Olney Prep remains bright!"
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Reyna Patterson, a member of Allegheny East Conference's Pine Forge (Pa.) church, performs a gymnastics routine.

Since the age of six, gymnastics has been a part of 14-year-old Reyna Patterson's life. As with any Seventh-day Adventist Christian athlete, Patterson, who is a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Pine Forge (Pa.) church, has had to face the challenge of her gym practices and meets being scheduled during Sabbath hours. Some gyms were totally unsympathetic to any religious convictions and others allowed her to participate, but did not allow her to advance to the next level.

After some time, Patterson’s mother suggested she just try tumbling for fun, without a thought of competing. Patterson agreed that was a good idea. After some time of recreational tumbling, one of the coaches at the gym approached her about joining their team gymnastics program. She was eager to do so, but she was nervous about addressing the Sabbath issue with her coaches. Based on her previous experience, she knew some practices and meets would spill over into Sabbath hours.

However, she was pleasantly surprised. Not only were the coaches supportive, they were also accommodating. They worked with her practice times to avoid Sabbath conflicts, and one coach went so far as to conduct their own research on Seventh-day Adventism.

Patterson’s first year of competing was relatively seamless and her team placed first several times in local competitions. In 2011, her team was doing so well that they qualified to compete nationally. Patterson was anxious to travel to California for the meet but then she discovered her team was scheduled to compete at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning. She was unable to compete, and her team did not place.

Patterson’s coach was so disappointed for her that she vowed that in the future, she would do what she could to make sure their meet was not held during Sabbath.

And that she did. In the fall of 2012, Patterson’s team traveled to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., to compete in the nationals. This time, Patterson’s team meet was scheduled for 9 a.m. on Friday morning. Her team placed third.

Patterson’s resolve to honor the Sabbath over her beloved hobby has allowed her to minister to her friends. “Because I stuck to my beliefs, I have been asked several times about my religion, and I can witness for Jesus,” she says.

This year, Patterson’s team will be competing in Los Angeles, and once again, she will be able to compete. “I found out at a very early age, if you stand up for what you believe and become a living witness, God will open doors,”
Reyna Patterson, who is pictured with her teammates and coach, says by keeping the Sabbath she has been able to witness to others.
100 Ohio Young Adults Seek Connection to God at GODencounters

Story by Heidi Shoemaker; Photos by the Ohio Conference Youth Department Published 4/30/13

“Everyone wants to connect … [but] nobody wants to talk about connecting. They want to experience it,” says Steven Carlson, youth director for the Ohio Conference. Carlson says that talking about God is a very different experience than experiencing Him, and that is what he hoped to illustrate at the conference’s first GODencounters young adult weekend. “A God who longs for connection … for a relationship, for an encounter, that’s what GODencounters is all about,” he adds. Carlson believes they reached their goal for the weekend, which was held at the conference’s Camp Mohaven Retreat and Conference Center in Danville. Nearly 100 young adults from across the state and beyond filled meeting rooms to worship, pray and experience God. GODencounters is “a movement of young adults who are wholeheartedly pursuing a relationship with Jesus Christ, a worldwide movement sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Carlson adds, “[It’s] about encountering God where you are today; going after a God Who came after us first.” Weekend sessions included uplifting praise music led by Carlson and his worship team, followed with talks by Matthew Gamble (pictured). Gamble is the senior pastor at the Elmshaven church in St. Helena, Calif., a senior consultant with the Center for Creative Ministry and an advisor to the North American Division Young Adult Advisory. He encourages young adults to explore the concept of grace, follow Jesus as a “counter-cultural alternative to the rat race” and live free and light in Christ.

There were also times for attendees to meet at café tables or in “Living.Room.Sessions” to discuss questions, like “In what area of your life do you need to trust God more?” and “Why do you personally worship God?” Christopher Atkins of Toledo said of the weekend, “I was blown away by some of the thought-provoking conversations I had, and overall just blessed to be a part of it.” K.C. Schaefer of Dayton posted on Facebook, “I was blessed to be a small part of God’s huge plans of this weekend. …God did some serious encountering.” Kayla Robinson, who visited all the way from Eau Claire, Mich., added, “I think the best thing I can say about GODencounters is that it provides a way to meet God in a more personal way than maybe you have before. It allows you to clear your head and actually listen to Him. It was amazing!” For more information and to learn what will take place at the 2014 event, visit ohiosidayouth.org/event/godencounters.

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Visitor Hosts Poetry Contest

If you write poems about God’s love, answers to prayer or any other inspirational or spiritual theme, you could get published in the Visitor magazine—and be a blessing to others!

Here are the poem parameters:

1. Poems need to be 200 words or less each.
2. Deadline for submissions is **May 10**. Send them to sjones@columbiaunion.net or mail to Visitor Poetry Contest, 5427 Twin Knolls Rd, Columbia, MD 21045.
3. Entrants can enter in one of four categories:
   A. Ages 6-10
   B. Ages 11-17
   C. Ages 18 and over
   D. Poetweets—poems of 140 characters or less uploaded to Twitter @VisitorNews using #VisitorPoetweet.
4. Poems need to be an inspirational/spiritual theme. Any style is acceptable.
5. All poems must be previously unpublished, original work.
6. Participants must be active members of Adventist churches in the Columbia Union.
7. Participants will need to send in a professional headshot, along with their age and the name of their church.
8. There will be prizes for first-place winners in each of the four categories.
9. Winners will be published in an upcoming issue of Visitor magazine.

Disclaimer: all judging will be done by Visitor staff, all decisions are final, and we reserve the right to use the poems elsewhere.
Upcoming Events Around the Columbia Union

**NATIONAL**

**September 1:** Enter the 2014 "Forever Faithful" International Camporee theme songwriting contest by September 1. Click here to enter the contest. If your submission is chosen, you could win two free tickets to the camporee and the honor of having your music become the 2014 Forever Faithful International Camporee official theme song. For more information, contact Justin Yang or Stacy-Ann Thomas.

**NEW JERSEY**

April 26–28: Trinity Temple Academy's alumni, family and friends are invited to celebrate the academy's 80th anniversary during this year's alumni weekend. Organizers will be celebrating and honoring classmates and graduates, presenting alumni awards and rededicating themselves to the future of the school. The weekend begins at the school with a meet and greet with guest speaker and alumnus Pastor Marvin McLean. On Sabbath Pastor Ronald Reeves, an alumnus, will speak for the divine service at Trinity Temple, which is located in Hillside, N.J. Saturday night's event, called "The Celebration of Trinity Temple Academy," will take place at the Pantagis Renaissance featuring guest speaker Pastor S. Peter Campbell and performances by a live band. On Sunday there will be a special alumni brunch at Trinity Temple, 11 to 2 p.m. For more information, visit trinitytempleacademy.com.