Adventist HealthCare Recognizes Chesapeake Member for Compassionate Care

Last week, during a special service, Adventist HealthCare (AHC) recognized Judy Vandeman, a registered nurse with the surgical services department at Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md., as the hospital’s 2013 Compassionate Care Award winner. Vandeman is a member at Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., where she attends with her husband, Rob Vandeman, who serves as executive secretary for the Columbia Union Conference.

Each year the award is given to recognize an AHC employee, volunteer or auxiliary member who integrates the organization’s mission—to “demonstrate God’s care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing”—into their work.

Vandeman, who has served WAH for nearly 30 years, received multiple nominations from her colleagues. One recognized how she gives every patient “VIP treatment” regardless of age or socioeconomic status. Vandeman is pictured with William “Bill” G. Robertson, AHC’s president and CEO.—Story by Cindy Glass
Adventists Respond After Tornados Tear Thru Oklahoma, North Texas

On Monday, May 20, the second consecutive day of tornadoes in Oklahoma, an EF5 tornado with peak winds of 190 mph, tore through part of the state, touching down on the town of New Castle, Moore and other Oklahoma City suburbs. The latest count reveals that 24 people are confirmed dead, at least seven of them children. Authorities are continuing to search the rubble. Only a few days before another tornado hit North Texas.

“Please remember to pray for the many victims of this tragedy, and for all of our faithful ACS and rescue and relief workers and volunteers,” said Sung Kwon, executive director of the North American Division’s (NAD) Adventist Community Services (ACS).

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) coordinators is assessing how they can help those impacted by the storms. In some cases they have already responded.

If you would like to help, financial donations are always the most useful since they can be used immediately for whatever needs arise. Donate online or mail a check to ACS Disaster Response, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

Potomac Church Provides Practical Help to Family in Need

On May 19, members of Potomac Conference’s Courthouse Road church in Richmond, Va., launched their first Home Help Project, and some 25 volunteers, from kids to...
Under the direction of Ryan Brossfield, project coordinator and professional landscaper, the outside of the house was completely transformed in just two hours. They also installed a new dryer, which a generous Courthouse church member, donated.

Bonnie was in the hospital when all this happened but Ralph, shared, “At times it seems like it all piles up, adds up, but we know Who can lift our burdens. I appreciate that He sent emissaries to do His work and help us! Thank you so very much!” When he witnessed the final result, his eyes filled with tears.—Story by Potomac Conference Staff
Adventist HealthCare Recognizes Chesapeake Member for Compassionate Care

Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler thanked the congregation for being a beacon of light in the community for 30 years; and Pastor Jim Greene, the conference’s executive secretary, offered words of recognition. Lonnie Melashenko, former director/speaker for the Voice of Prophecy radio program and Columbia Union reviver, served as the guest speaker. Melashenko shared that God loves misfits and can transform them by His grace.

“It was wonderful to see familiar faces as well as meet new people at the 30th-anniversary weekend,” says Andrea Sestak, a longtime member. “I am energized about what we can accomplish in the next 30 years with God’s help.”—Story by Bianca Morales; Photos by Jim Greene

Chesapeake Conference Selects New Superintendent

Last week the Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee elected Jacqueline Messenger, MA, as their new conference superintendent of education. She succeeds Carole Smith who has announced plans to retire effective June 30.

“I will continue to walk hand in hand with God, asking for His guidance,” said Messenger following the meeting. “As a leader, mentor and supporter, I look forward to working with our educators and school boards—all our stakeholders—to build and
strengthen [Seventh-day] Adventist Christian education here in Chesapeake Conference."

Messenger has been the conference associate superintendent since 2005. She is an active strategic planner for conference education initiatives, chairs the conference curriculum committee, manages school evaluations and recently served on the Spencerville Adventist Academy building committee for the Spencerville, Md.-school.

"[Jacqueline’s] … experience and enthusiasm will be an asset to our schools as they build Christ-centered programs of excellence," says Rick Remmers, conference president.—Story by Samantha Young

READ MORE ON CHESAPEAKE’S WEBSITE

York Students Win Highest Robotics Honors

York Adventist Christian School’s (YACS) Junior Jets (pictured) in York, Pa., recently won highest honors during the FIRST LEGO League’s Adventist
Robotics League in Hamburg. Every fall the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) releases a new challenge, which is based on a real-world scientific topic. This year’s topic focused on senior solutions. Each competition’s challenge has three parts: the Robot Game, the Project, and the FLL Core Values. YACS’ team consisted of seven children aged 9-14 and one coach. Each student learned to program the Lego NXT robot, as well as, run a mission during a timed competition.

The YACS Junior Jets participated in the challenge by programming their autonomous robot to score points on a themed playing field (robot game), developed a solution to the problem of elderly people falling or being mugged (project), and learned and put into practice all of the FLL Core Values. The team is made up of Makayla Smith, Cristian Romero, Elizabeth Smith, Luisito Seda, Uriah Amparo, Darius Smith, Montana Sigel and Coach John Lemkelde. Congratulations to the Junior Jets.

Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary Teacher Wins Award

Jim Minty, a teacher at Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary School in New Market, Va., was recently presented with a national award. Minty is among 10 teachers selected this spring by the Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF) to receive a 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award. The award includes a medallion and $2,000 gift sponsored by Andrews University (Mich.).
According to his colleagues, Minty teaches valuable skills to his students in the fifth and eighth grades. He adapts assignments to a variety of learners. He also arrives at school early and stays late to help students. His classes had a combined average in the 95th percentile on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

“Without a doubt, Jim is a true professional educator [who is] dedicated to his students learning,” says Keith Hallam, vice president of education of the Potomac Conference.

“I believe as strongly today as when I started that our young people need good teachers, good role models and good friends as they are growing up,” Minty says. “That is what I strive to be each day with God’s help.” Minty is pictured receiving his award from Joyce White, an AAF representative.

READ MORE ON POTOMAC’S WEBSITE

Allegheny West Church Initiates Disabilities Ministries Emphasis

Ephesus church leaders Donald L. Burden, senior pastor, and Sharon L. Bowen, director of Disabilities Ministries, decided to blaze a trail in the Allegheny West Conference as advocates for persons with disabilities. In
fact, the Columbus, Ohio, congregation is striving to become a state-of-the-art house of worship that will accommodate and include persons with disabilities.

Ephesus recently got their mission underway by hosting the church’s first Disabilities Awareness Sabbath, inviting Anil Lewis (pictured center), director of strategic communications for the National Federation of the Blind, as their featured speaker.

Bowen reports that Lewis captivated the congregation with his words of inspiration and enlightenment and admonished people not to feel sorry for persons with disabilities. He instructed listeners to include the disabled, to give parity versus pity and not to discriminate against them because of a disability. “Recognize the ability, not the disability,” he said.— Story by Allegheny West Conference Staff; Photos by Stephanie Hunt

READ MORE

Washington Adventist Gives Free Health Screenings to Latina Women

Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md., provided free health screenings, physician consultations and wellness education as a sponsor of Telemundo Washington’s fifth annual “Fiesta de las Madres” on Sunday, May 19. This vibrant, outdoor expo in nearby Silver Spring, Md., celebrates Hispanic and Latina women in the community and provides pertinent information, access to much needed services and a fun-filled day for families.

Some 200 attendees participated in WAH’s free health screenings, which included body
Adventist HealthCare Recognizes Chesapeake Member for Compassionate Care

composition and a derma scan test/facial skin analysis. Attendees also had the opportunity to review their results and have Adventist HealthCare medical experts answer their health questions. Free health information and consultations were also available in the areas of diabetes and nutrition, breast cancer and breast health and maternal/child health. Dr. Cynthia Plate, a general surgeon at WAH, is pictured offering advice on breast health.—Story by Danielle Lewald

Allegheny East Church Adds Six Members

Allegheny East Conference’s New Joy fellowship, which is based in Hagerstown, Md., recently held a baptismal service at Chesapeake’s Willow Brook, also located in Hagerstown. Members of both churches celebrated the six newly baptized members.

Two young siblings Lauren Armstrong and Tristan Armstrong, committed to an early beginning in the service of Christ. DeWayne Jackson (pictured standing), Fran Tyson, Kristy Bowers and her son, Robert Bowers, III, clearly voiced their commitment to shouldering the privilege and responsibility of membership in the local church and in the worldwide fellowship of believers.—Story by Faith Crumbly

Readers Discuss Why Young People Leave the Church

Several of our readers are still vigorously discussing an article summarizing a presentation made during the last Columbia Union Executive Committee meeting on May 16. In the article titled "Columbia Union Leaders Discuss Young
Correction

In the May 15 edition of the Visitor New Bulletin, we misspelled the name of one of our winners in the Visitor Calendar contest. Two-year-old Alivia McDowell's name was incorrectly spelled Alicia. We regret the error.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

MARYLAND

June 1: Miracle Temple in Baltimore is hosting a Children's Concert at 6 p.m. They are inviting all of the area churches to come and join this worship experience. The church is located at 100 South Rock Glen Road. For more information, visit miracletemple.net.

June 2: Warren Sears, a member of Chesapeake Conference's Bell Branch church in will be signing his book Adventures Of A Witness for Jesus from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Potomac Adventist Book Store. The store is located at 12004 Cherry Hill Road in Silver
**Spring, Md.**

**June 2:** “Faces Around the Cross” will feature storytelling in costume, food and fellowship from 2 to 5 p.m. at the St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church is located at 141 South Potomac Road in Hagerstown, Md. For more information, contact Faith Johnson Crumbly, the executive director and a member of the Allegheny East Conference’s New Joy Fellowship at usstorytellers@gmail.com.

**June 3:** Sligo church’s Scholarshipping Our Sisters chapter is hosting a tea and silent auction to raise money to help Seventh-day Adventist women worldwide pay for college. The event will be held at 7 p.m. in the church’s fellowship room, and the church is located at 7700 Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park, Md.

**June 7-9:** Campestre Hispano (Chesapeake Conference's Hispanic Camp Meeting) promises a weekend of rich experience under the theme, “Gozosos al Compartir a Jesús” (“The Joy of Sharing Jesus”), June 7-9, on the campus of Highland View Academy. Beginning Friday evening at 7 p.m. there is a concert by Ruth E. Sandoval and message by well-known evangelist Alejandro Bullón. Throughout the weekend the speakers are Pastor Alejandro Bullón and Rubén Ramos, Columbia Union assistant to the president for Multilingual Ministries. Sabbath afternoon features a graduation ceremony for the students of the School of Theology and Discipleship. The camp meeting ends Sunday morning with a garden of prayer, music and closing message. For meals and lodging information, or to register to attend, please contact your church pastor. For a full schedule of events visit ccosda.org.

**June 9:** There will be a zumbathon taking place from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Seabrook church’s activity center to benefit the Maddy Wagon non-profit organization supporting the Garrett Family. Their 4-year-old daughter, Madison, is battling stage 4 cancer. The donation to get in is $20 (or more if so moved) and will be accepted at the door. Every penny raised will go directly to the family. For more information, contact Tania Allen at (301) 613-6596 or allen.tania@yahoo.com. The church is located at 8888 Good Luck Road in Lanham, Md.

**June 9:** Discover which wild plants are edible by participating in a one-day class, Sunday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., at the Mount Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. The $48 fee includes two meals (made with edible wild plants gathered during class time), guided identification hikes, lectures, textbook and color plant identification packets. Must register to participate. To register, call (301) 824-6045, or email mtaetnacamp@myactv.net.

**NEW JERSEY**

**June 2:** Sapphire Throne Media is presenting a one-day camp meeting and revival at the Robbinsville (N.J.) church. Registration is necessary, and the registration deadline is May 26. There will be eight different seminars from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Lunch is provided). Topics include “Your Creation Armor,” “The Successful Family,” “Supercharged Health,” “Evangelism made Easy,” “Disaster and our Response,” “Ellen White’s Dreams and Visions Campaign” and “The Elijah Message and The Prophetic View.”
For registration details, download the camp meeting flyer at SapphireThroneMedia.com, or email eric@SapphireThroneMedia.com.

PENSylvannia
May 31-June 2: The Allegheny East Conference is hosting two-day workshop on how to raise money and other resources for local ministries and hear about innovative outreach ministries that can be replicated in your area. There will also be a full disaster response training with the train the trainer and leadership modules. Joe and Sherry Watts, North American Division’s Adventist Community Services Disaster Response leaders will lead the training. The weekend training will begin at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 31st and end at noon on June 2nd. Click here to learn more and to register.

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To send us a news story or announcement, email us at visitor@columbiaunion.net. The deadline for all submissions is 12 p.m. each Tuesday.

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Adventist HealthCare Recognizes Spencerville Member, Nurse for Compassionate Care

Story by Cindy Glass Published 5/28/13

Judy Vandeman, a Spencerville church member and nurse at Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md., receives a plaque from Bill Robertson, Adventist HealthCare president and CEO, honoring her as WAH's 2013 Compassionate Care Award winner.

Last week, during a special service, Adventist HealthCare (AHC) recognized Judy Vandeman, a registered nurse with the surgical services department at Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH), as the hospital’s 2013 Compassionate Care Award winner. Vandeman is a member at Chesapeake Conference's Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., where she attends with her husband, Rob Vandeman, who serves as executive secretary for the Columbia Union Conference. Each year the award is given to recognize an AHC employee, volunteer or auxiliary member who integrates the organization’s mission—to “demonstrate God’s care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing”—into their work. Candidates for the award are nominated for the exceptional way they display compassion in ministering to patients, patients’ loved ones and their own colleagues. Awardees are chosen from each of AHC’s entities, which include Washington Adventist Hospital, based in Takoma Park, Md.; Shady Grove Adventist Hospital; Adventist Home Care Services; Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland; Adventist Behavioral Health and Hackettsstown Regional Medical Center. This year AHC leaders considered more than 120 nominees for the awards. Vandeman, who has served WAH for nearly 30 years, received multiple nominations from her colleagues. One recognized how she gives every patient "VIP treatment" regardless of age or socioeconomic status. Another mentioned how Vandeman prays with patients who are especially nervous and how her "gentleness and soft voice bring a calming ease to patients during these situations." Another nominator wrote, “I have worked at Washington Adventist for more than 40 years and have never met nor worked with a more compassionate, kind, gentle nurse than Judy.” During a special service on May 16, Joyce Newmyer, WAH president, announced Vandeman as the hospital’s winner out of 20 nominees. On May 20, Robert G. “Bill” Robertson, AHC president and CEO, recognized all six entity winners in front of some 350 attendees of the organization's annual mission conference. “It is truly a blessing and a privilege to be able to work with so many compassionate caregivers, such as Judy, who demonstrates God’s care to everyone as we provide health and healing to our community,” says Ismael Gama, associate vice president of Mission Integration and Spiritual Care at Adventist HealthCare.

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.
Two Courthouse Road members take on a stubborn shrub in the Clark family’s yard.

Members of Potomac Conference’s Courthouse Road church in Richmond, Va., recently saw one of their New Year’s resolutions come to fruition. At a meeting in January, the church’s board members looked for new ways to help their community. Rick Johns, pastor for the Courthouse Road church, got in touch with the Chesterfield County Social Services Department and shared the church’s desire to help the elderly and disabled with yard work and home repairs. Kathy Prerun, the county’s volunteer coordinator, said she thought that was a great idea and that of all their partnerships with different churches in the county, Courthouse was the first to offer to help in this unique way.

On May 19, the church launched their first Home Help Project, and some 25 volunteers, from kids to grandparents, turned out to help the Clark family. The family was not able to do yard work as Bonnie Clark has spent the last 18 months in and out of the hospital with some severe health challenges and her husband, Ralph, is confined to using a scooter to get around. They were also in need of a clothes dryer as theirs had broken down.

Under the direction of Ryan Brossfield, project coordinator and professional landscaper, the outside of the house
was completely transformed in just two hours. But that is not all, while the outside of house was being renovated, a few members worked inside to clean the laundry area and install a brand new dryer, which a generous Courthouse church member, donated.

Bonnie was in the hospital when all this happened but Ralph, shared, "At times it seems like it all piles up, adds up, but we know Who can lift our burdens. I appreciate that He sent emissaries to do His work and help us! Thank you so very much!" When he witnessed the final result, his eyes filled with tears.

Pastor Johns encouraged members the following Sabbath saying, "We may come every Sabbath to hear a sermon, but the real sermon is what we did last Sunday at the Clark home—that is spreading the gospel."

Click here to view a video from that Sunday.

Due to health challenges, the Clark family was unable to tackle yard work.
Courthouse Road members cut a tree down to size.

Pastor Rick Johns (right) told his congregants the following Sabbath that helping the Clark family was the real sermon.

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The Lake Nelson Youth choir minister through music.

Two Sabbaths ago, more than 400 people filled New Jersey Conference's Lake Nelson church in Piscataway for its 30th anniversary. To prepare for this special homecoming event, members mailed hundreds of invitations to former church members as well as individuals in the surrounding communities who requested Bible studies or literature from Seventh-day Adventist media centers in recent months. In addition, Pathfinders distributed more than a thousand postcards to homes in the neighborhood while the Adventurers shared fliers with attendees at a local street fair.

Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler thanked the congregation for being a beacon of light in the community for 30 years; and Pastor Jim Greene, the conference's executive secretary, offered words of recognition.

Even though they are currently without a pastor, Lake Nelson members are very committed to continuing to fulfill the Great Commission. Lonnie Melashenko, former director/speaker for the Voice of Prophecy radio program and Columbia Union revivalist, served as the guest speaker. Melashenko shared that God loves misfits and can transform them by His grace. His inspirational messages, taken from Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord" motivated both young and old to prayerfully “think outside the box” as they prepare for the NY13 Revelation of Hope evangelistic efforts and reach more souls for Christ.

Members of this diverse community share one thing in common: their love for Christ and their love for one another. “I've attended Lake Nelson for 20 years and can honestly say that I absolutely love the diversity of the congregation and the sense of community,” shared Andrea Sestak, a church member. "It was wonderful to see familiar faces as well as meet new people at the 30th-anniversary weekend. There are so many ways to make a difference and have an impact on our friends and neighbors in Piscataway; I am energized about what we can accomplish in the next 30 years with God's help.”

Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler addresses the Lake Nelson congregation.

Pastor Lonnie Melashenko encourages members to think outside the box
Church elders sing along with Lonnie Melashenko (fourth) and Pastor Mario Thorp (fifth).

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Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists


May 30, 2013

Jacqueline Messenger Named Education Superintendent

For immediate release

Release date: 22 May 2013

The Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee elected Jacqueline Messenger, MA, conference superintendent of education yesterday. She succeeds Carole Smith who has announced plans to retire effective June 30. “I will continue to walk hand in hand with God, asking for His guidance,” said Messenger following the meeting. “As a leader, mentor and supporter, I look forward to working with our educators and school boards—all our stakeholders—to build and strengthen Adventist Christian education here in Chesapeake Conference. Messenger has been the conference associate superintendent since 2005. She is an active strategic planner for conference education initiatives, chairs the conference curriculum committee, manages school evaluations, and recently served on the Spencerville Adventist Academy building committee. “Jacqueline Messenger comes to us with a deep commitment to openness and engagement and is eager to work collaboratively to advance Adventist education,” said Rick Remmers, conference president. “Her experience and enthusiasm will be an asset to our schools as they build Christ-centered programs of excellence.” Messenger holds an MA degree in Education Administration from Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and a BS in Elementary Education from Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Maryland. Messenger began her teaching career in the Potomac Conferencebefore coming to Chesapeake in 1990. She served as principal of Spencerville Adventist Academy from 1998–2005 where she implemented a growth plan that doubled enrollment and established senior academy status. She is married to Tom Messenger, an information technology director at Suburban Hospital. The couple has four adult children and one grandson. The Chesapeake Conference operates 14 schools including two senior academies and two junior academies. ####

For more information contact Samantha Young, office (410) 995–1910; mobile (443) 896–3939.
Jim Minty of Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary Receives National Award

Thursday, 16 May 2013 18:22

Jim Minty, teacher at Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary School, was presented with a national award on Tuesday, May 14. Minty is among 10 teachers selected this spring by the Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF) to receive a 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award. The award ceremony was held at 6 pm at 115 Bindery Road, New Market, Va. The award includes a medallion and $2,000 gift sponsored by Andrews University.

Excellence in Teaching Award recipient, Jim Minty, receives his medallion, certificate of excellence and $2,000 cash gift from Joyce White, AAF representative.

Minty teaches valuable skills to his students in 5th and 8th grade. He takes extra time with struggling students to guarantee success by adapting assignments for slower learners and helping sick students stay caught up. He also arrives at school early and stays late to help students. His 5th and 8th grade classes had a combined average in the 95th percentile on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

“Without a doubt, Jim is a true professional educator that’s dedicated to his students learning,” says Keith Hallam, vice president of education of the Potomac Conference.

Minty addresses social issues such as bullying and establishes his classroom a safe environment. His goal is for all students to not just be accepted, but where every student feels celebrated for whom they are. “I believe as strongly today as
when I started that our young people need good teachers, good role models, and good friends as they are growing up," Minty says. "That is what I strive to be each day with God's help."

Jim Minty is awarded the Alumni Awards Foundations 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award. Back Row (left to right): George Jetter, school Board Chairman; Dan Jensen, Potomac Conference Director of Communications; Shane Anderson, New Market Church pastor

Front Row (left to right): Joyce White, AAF Representative; Joe Fralick, principal; Jim Minty, award recipient; Linda Minty, recipient's wife

Minty is intentional and effective at incorporating spiritual lessons into his daily classes and exhibits a true spirit of service. "He consistently works with humility to bless others," says Principal Joe Fralick. Minty offers baptismal classes for his students and takes his classes to visit shut-ins and nursing homes.

"The rewards on this earth are great, but the rewards in heaven will be even greater as I see students I have taught and get to spend eternity with them and Jesus," Minty says.

AAF annually selects 10 teachers from the Seventh-day Adventist school systems across North America. The 10 finalists will be celebrated in upcoming weeks.

Each year AAF partners with Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities to honor 10 excellent teachers. Minty's award was made possible through the generous support of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich. Minty is an alumni of Andrews University.

AAF is a nonprofit organization that has awarded grants to Seventh-day Adventist schools and teachers totaling more than $2 million. Since its establishment in 1995, the organization has recognized 115 exceptional teachers with an Excellence in Teaching Award. In 2011, AAF refocused and created the Renaissance Network, an initiative that improves the level of excellence in Adventist schools by providing leadership expertise, vision, resources and training. AAF aims to awaken the Adventist community to the full potential in Adventist education. Learn more at AlumniAwards.org.
–Kayce Foote

Photographer: Jeffry Vergara
Sharon Bowen, Ephesus' Disabilities Ministries leader, and Pastor Donald Burden were pleased to have Anil Lewis (center), from the National Federation of the Blind, to help members better understand how to treat others with disabilities.

Ephesus church leaders Donald L. Burden, senior pastor, and Sharon L. Bowen, director of Disabilities Ministries, decided to blaze a trail in the Alleghany West Conference as advocates for persons with disabilities. In fact, the Columbus, Ohio, congregation is striving to become a state-of-the-art house of worship that will accommodate and include persons with disabilities. Ephesus recently got their mission underway by hosting the church's first Disabilities Awareness Sabbath, inviting Anil Lewis, director of strategic communications for the National Federation of the Blind, as their featured speaker. Bowen reports that Lewis captivated the congregation with his words of inspiration and enlightenment and admonished people not to feel sorry for persons with disabilities. He instructed listeners to include the disabled, to give parity versus pity and not to discriminate against them because of a disability. "Recognize the ability, not the disability," he said. Church members were prepared with programs in Braille, persons to sign the service, reserved seating, as well as audio-visual special effects. "April is Disability Awareness Month, so what a perfect time to launch our program," explained Pastor Burden. "This is just the beginning." "The Ephesus church highlighted Disabilities Ministries Day to raise awareness and emphasis on family matters and the importance of inclusion," said Bowen. During the service, she presented Lewis with a proclamation from the Ohio Civil Rights Commission for his outstanding leadership in the area of civil rights and advocacy for persons with disabilities. And, Pastor Burden presented him an Outstanding Leadership Award from the Allegheny West Conference. Pastor Burden commented that this special Sabbath was a first for Ephesus, adding, "It truly was a wakeup call that we all should be doing more and better in the area of disability and inclusion. We here at Ephesus will certainly do our best to make sure that any member or guest at Ephesus will be accommodated and made to feel a part of our church family."
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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.
2012 Calendar of Offerings

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