250 Mountain View Members Prepare for Historic Outreach

Nearly 250 of the 1,000 active members of Columbia Union’s smallest conference—Mountain View—recently attended Bible school training in Huttonsville, W.Va., led by Voice of Prophecy (VOP) staff. The May 17-19 training prepared attendees to participate in the “Reach Appalachia” project, an historic outreach, which involves sending Discover Bible School invitations to the nearly 2 million people living in and around the Mountain View Conference.

“I am humbled by the dedication and work of the fine team helping us with this huge endeavor,” Larry Boggess, conference president, said during his opening remarks. He shared that for many years, he and several others have dreamed of spreading the gospel to every home in the Mountain View Conference. He was pleased to see that with help from the Voice of Prophecy they now have that chance.

Even before the training got started, the attendees had some good news. VOP team members had already sent out 300,000 invitations for Bible study, and 1,600 people accepted those invitations.—Story by Angelina Dickson

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Chesapeake’s Aberdeen Members Welcome Sisters

When Marita Fernander (left) stepped into Chesapeake Conference’s Aberdeen (Md.) church on Sabbath morning a few months ago, it had been decades since she had regularly attended a worship service. Stirred by a phone call from a friend, she felt an urgency to find a nearby Seventh-day Adventist church to visit.

Andre Hastick, associate district pastor, says Fernander grew up in the Baltimore area and attended church as a teen, but was never baptized and left the church before adulthood. Since her first visit in January, she has been attending the Aberdeen church each week and is studying the Bible with Pastor Hastick in preparation for baptism.

Fernander’s sister, Brenda Garlington, lives in Aberdeen but is disabled and hasn’t been able to attend church in years. Cesar Lopez, head deacon, learned of her plight and recently brought her to church, where she worshipped alongside her sister for the first time in more than five years.—Story by Samantha Young; Photo by Andre Hastick

Potomac’s Sligo Women Drink Tea for Scholarships

An evening of enjoying tea and scones with friends from church may seem like just another fun activity to some, but to a woman in Cambodia, it means a year of tuition to university. At a Monday evening tea, women at Potomac Conference’s Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., raised more than $800 for college scholarships.

The tea served as a pleasant backdrop for the church’s chapter of the Scholarshipping Our Sisters (SOS) program fundraiser. Calling the event their Spring Tea and Silent Auction, organizers explained that SOS is a program started by the General Conference Women Ministries Department to give
women scholarships to Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. While the women sipped tea and nibbled treats; listened to “I'm a Little Teapot” played on the piano in various genres; and browsed gift baskets, china, floral centerpieces and other auction items, foremost in their minds was the real purpose of the evening. “We wanted the ladies to think about the people whose lives they are impacting,” shared Carolyn Kujawa, a Sligo church member and the SOS chapter leader.—Story and photo by Taashi Rowe

New Jersey Plant Pledges to Reach Hindus

With lots of colors and enthusiasm the New Jersey Conference’s Mission Caleb 18 group was born May 18. More than 70 people sang praises in their native tongue and celebrated the beginning of the first mission group geared toward reaching South Asians in Edison. José H. Cortés, conference president, preached the group’s inaugural service and officially established this new group.

Around 30 people committed themselves to establish this group with the objective of becoming a company and soon becoming the first Adventist church for the Hindu population in New Jersey. Jason Jeyaprakash and Villas Urtekar will lead the group. “We believe that this [plant] will be a true blessing in reaching the Hindu community of Edison,” said Jorge Aguero, the conference’s Personal Ministries director.

Adventist Community Services Wants You to “Do More 24”

Tomorrow, June 6, the Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington (ACSGW) is joining with hundreds of other organizations in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area and asking their supporters to “Do More 24.” The 24-hour online fundraiser, powered by the United Way, will raise funds to help the more than 800 participating
nonprofit organizations continue doing good work in their communities.

Band together with these other nonprofits is a first for ACSGW as the organization gets most of its funding through donations from eight area Adventist churches, renting a room to an Ethiopian church and managing a community pool. Asked why Columbia Union members should participate in this fundraiser, Sheila Schlisner (pictured), the organization's director, explains, “It is vital for the growth of ACSGW that we cultivate individual donors.”

ACSGW helps some 750 families a month with clothing and food; English language, GED and computer training classes; and job search programs. “Currently we have many financial needs,” Schlisner said. “We have wonderful programs and we need paid staff to assist [us], and we want to increase the amount of food that we give to our clients.”

Interested in supporting ACSGW? Visit domore24.org on June 6, search for "Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington" and make a gift of $12, $24 or $48.

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**Highland View Senior Gets a “True Grit” Award**

Justin Orsoro, a senior at Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md., was recently recognized by his Hagerstown, Md.-community with the True Grit award. Sponsored by the Hagerstown YMCA, The Herald-Mail Company, the Washington County Convention and Visitors' Bureau and Washington County Public Schools—the award recognizes two local students annually who demonstrate the ability to overcome hardship to become or
remain a member of an athletic team. These students, who usually are not the stars of their teams, most often have been the ones who have “helped the stars to shine.”

Each True Grit award recipient receives a $500 post-secondary scholarship, a plaque to commemorate this recognition and a one-year membership to the Hagerstown YMCA. Congratulations Justin! Osoro is pictured with Mark Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.—Story by Lauren Marsh

Allegheny West Young Adult Earns OU Alumni Honor

During Oakwood University’s (Ala.) annual Alumni Homecoming Weekend, the university’s alumni association and its chapters present awards to former students. Included in the annual awards are Certificate of Merit honorees chosen by each association chapter. This year the Greater Cincinnati Chapter named Raquel Henry, an Oakwood alumna who attends Allegheny West Conference’s Shiloh church in Cincinnati, Ohio, as their 2013 honoree. All awardees were featured at the alumni weekend divine service and during a subsequent banquet.

This year Henry and other Certificate of Merit honorees raised between $20,000 and $30,000 to benefit current, worthy Oakwood University (OU) students.

“Oakwood prepares you for life, and I was honored to catch the OU experience and raise funds for OU students,” Henry said.—Story by Allegheny West Conference staff; Photo by Truly Blessed Photography
Spencerville Students Go Barefoot for a Good Cause

It's 8 on a Tuesday morning in Spencerville, Md. The first Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) students have trickled in to the high school commons area, and something is discernibly different about the way they look today—they aren't wearing shoes. Junior Kacey Banks, co-community service director for Campus Ministries, stands sentinel at the front door, collecting $5 participation donations and distributing participation stickers to each barefooted pupil. As students continue to stream in, it becomes clear that being without shoes is the norm for the day.

Why did they shun their shoes? To participate in One Day Without Shoes, a global awareness campaign started by the TOMS shoe company that raises awareness for children's health and education issues. The idea is that shoes provide comfort, health, self-esteem and allow participation at school and in other public activities. Last year there were more than 3,000 One Day Without Shoes events in over 50 countries around the world. Inspired by the message and the community experience of these events, Banks decided to organize one at SAA to encourage students to practice an active form of the compassion and care they often discuss. — Story by Heidi Wetmore

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End Quote: The Dead Zone

“My 10th-floor office in Crystal City, Va., overlooks the George Washington Parkway, Reagan National Airport and the Potomac River, providing vistas varied and splendiferous as the seasons come and go. Hugging the parkway is the Mount Vernon trail, a paved bike/walkway that I love to frequent.
After a quick lunch on a recent, wonderful, spring day, I was eager to visit one of my favorite spots on the trail. But, once I got there, my heart sank. It was now a dead zone. The creek water had been polluted—oily muck in evidence everywhere. The trees were dying or dead. There was no shade, no bird songs and no beauty. How could they let this happen?

As I walked back to my office, I kept thinking about my encounter with the dead zone that once was an Eden. Somehow, pollution had entered and had gone unchecked, resulting in a wasteland. I remembered quotations I’d read about ‘guarding the avenues to the soul’ and wondered how much pollution I allow to seep in, day by day.”—Myron S. Ottley is a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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

**MARYLAND**

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.

June 9: Gladwin Mathews, a member of the Southern Asian church, will be signing copies of his book, The 21st Century Nehemiah, 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 9: Derrick and Sonya McCollum, members of Restoration Praise Center, will be signing copies of their new book, Unlocking the Mysteries of Marriage: A Married Couple’s Truth About This Thing Called Marriage, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Potomac Adventist Book Store. The store is located at 12004 Cherry Hill Road in Silver Spring, Md. Later that same day, they will also be appearing at the Busboys & Poets restaurant from 6 to 8 p.m. located at 4251 South Campbell Avenue in Arlington, Va.

June 11: The Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., is launching two community-focused programs—English as a Second Language (ESL) and adult reading and literacy. Both classes will run for 8 weeks, on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7-9 p.m. The Adult Reading and Literacy class provides help for adults who need assistance developing their reading skills. The class is free; there is a registration fee of $20. The ESL class helps students whose first language is not English improve their English-speaking skills. The eight-week session costs $40, and there is a $45 registration fee. Participants can register online at metrosda.org/learn or call (240) 528-8040. Please share this information with friends and neighbors.

June 14-17: Looking for a practical, tangible, and meaningful way to expand your understanding of today’s religious liberty challenges? The North American Religious Liberty Association invites you to attend its Religious Liberty Summit in Silver Spring, Md. Come for an inspiring weekend filled with religious liberty training and information sessions,
250 Mountain View Members Prepare for Historic Outreach

Taashi Rowe, Visitor News Bulletin Editor
5427 Twin Knolls Road, Columbia, MD 21045
Email: visitor@columbiaunion.net Website: www.columbiaunion.org

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250 Mountain View Members Prepare for Historic Outreach
250 Mountain View Members Prepare for Historic Outreach

Story by Angelina Dickson Published 6/5/2013

Jordana Ashburn (right), Discover Bible School one-on-one field trainer, engages two Mountain View members in role playing for their upcoming participation in the conference’s mega outreach efforts.

Nearly 250 of the 1,000 active members of the Columbia Union’s smallest conference—Mountain View—recently attended Bible school training in Huttonsville, W.Va., led by Voice of Prophecy staff. The May 17–19 training was to prepare attendees to participate in the “Reach Appalachia” project, an historic outreach, which involves sending Discover Bible School invitations to the nearly 2 million people living in and around the Mountain View Conference.

“I am humbled by the dedication and work of the fine team helping us with this huge endeavor,” Larry Boggess, conference president, said during his opening remarks. He shared that for many years, he and several others have dreamed of spreading the gospel to every home in the Mountain View Conference. He was pleased to see that with help from the Voice of Prophecy they now have that chance. He added it was nice to see so many young people involved in the training from Mountain View and from Voice of Prophecy.
He also shared how God has been involved in this project from its inception. He knew that not everyone church members visited would want Bible studies, but he still wanted to leave them with a small gift. As he was pondering what that gift would be, he got a call from Rubén Ramos, assistant to the Columbia Union president. Pastor Ramos had nearly half a million copies of *Steps to Christ* and wanted to know if they needed any.

Boggess happily accepted and had three boxes for each of the conference's 35 churches. Boggess also shared how he talked with Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division, who suggested that he give the Voice of Prophecy a call to get this project off the ground. Leaders of the Voice of Prophecy happily partnered with the small conference, and over the next year and a half, are investing $1 million, including manpower into the project.

During the training weekend, Kurt Johnson, director of the Discover Bible School for the Voice of Prophecy, brought in his team of trained professionals to prepare attendees for this project.

Johnson explained that during the Reach Appalachia project, they would send out three bulk mailings of 300,000 cards to West Virginia and parts of Maryland. The first mailing, he said, went out a week before they came to Huttonsville, and there had already been a response. He said within the first week, there were nearly 1,300 responses (with nearly 300 more the following week)! “I have been doing this as long as 16 years and the number of cards we’ve gotten back is the biggest response ever,” said Johnson. “God is already moving.” The next two mailings are set to go out in October and January and will conclude with a graduation ceremony at the close of 2014. Mountain View members will play a critical part in reaching their neighbors. Over the weekend, they learned the ins and outs of online Bible school, setting up a correspondence Bible school and personal studies. “We are co-laborers with God” Johnson told Mountain View members referencing p. 146 of church co-founder Ellen G. White’s Christ Object Lessons. Instead of having confidence in self, Johnson encouraged students to let God lead in this project. “God can still have victory even in our weakness,” he said. At the close of the training, members from each church received their enrollment cards, and each congregation prayed over the cards before heading back to their home churches to put what they learned into practice. Boggess is still looking to raise $200,000 so he can put task workers in each district. “There is a great work ahead of us,” he says. “We need to be good stewards with what God has given us.”

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approval but will not be edited. Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.
Mary MacFarlane and Megan Conway enjoy the tea and silent auction fundraiser at Sligo church that benefits a women’s scholarship fund.

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In their midst that very evening was one of the women impacted by SOS—their very own Debbie Eisele, the church’s associate pastor, who received a scholarship from the group when she was studying religion in Australia in the 1990s.

From the program’s inception in 1991, Women’s Ministries has bestowed a total of 1,980 scholarships to women in over 118 countries amounting to $876,908. This year alone, they have given scholarships to women in Madagascar, Mongolia, the Philippines and Israel. Sligo’s contribution will add to the program goal of raising $85,000 for scholarships this year.

The idea for the tea came about when a Sligo member donated china to the group, which also holds yard sales as fundraisers. Instead of selling the various pieces of ornate china, Eisele suggested hosting the tea. Kujawa took the idea, ran with it and recruited other Sligo women to help prepare for the evening. One of the ladies, Karen Banner, even brought tea and several boxes of china! She said she likes to follow her mother-in-law’s example of using the best china—not hiding it away for a future use that never comes around! Another participant, Carla Conway, and her mother, Charlotte, made themed baskets to present for auction. Francia Bissereth, a public university student, doesn’t benefit from the scholarships, but says, “I’m glad to give. It doesn’t matter that I don’t receive. I remember receiving a book scholarship once and how much of a difference it made to my education.”

Heather Dawn Small, General Conference Women’s Ministries director, said she is thrilled to learn of the efforts of the women at Sligo church. “These scholarships are absolutely vital for so many women globally,” she said. “Without help, many women would not be able to attend any school at all, let alone a Christian school. It’s also vital to our church as many of these women, in turn, give back to the church in many ways.” The Sligo chapter is a first for SOS, and they are hoping other churches will launch a chapter as well. Click here to learn more about the program.

*As of June 6, 2013, Sligo church's Scholarshipping Our Sisters Tea and Silent Auction raised $1,200.

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those without shoes in a more tangible way. They decided to give the funds they raised from the event to Restore A Child, a Seventh–day Adventist nonprofit dedicated to helping impoverished children. The organization is in a position to enable students in Haiti to receive shoes in order to participate at school (as they are not allowed to attend classes without them). In total, more than 100 Spencerville high school students participated in the day, raising $555 toward their objective. “[We are] excited to embrace opportunities to provide students an understanding of why even sometimes the smallest things make a huge difference, and to know what it is like to be blessed with enough resources to share,” states Somer Knight, campus chaplain.

The No Shoes fundraiser was another avenue for SAA students to demonstrate their commitment to service.

Kacey Banks, co–community service director for Campus Ministries, put compassion into action by organizing the No Shoes fundraiser.
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