Allegheny East’s Longest Serving Community Service Members Honored

Harriet Langley (pictured second left), a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Pisgah church in Bryans Road, Md., could never forget the Jefferson family. As a long-serving member of the church’s Adventist Community Services (ACS) team, she had helped many people, but this family was different. “The father had gotten hurt on the job and couldn’t work,” she recalls. “When they couldn’t pay the bills, he and his family were put out of the trailer they were living in.”

She went on to help them find a hotel, but the manager claimed they were too much trouble and kicked them out in the middle of winter. It was then that Langley did something that she wasn’t supposed to do. She moved them into her
Would you take in a homeless family? This Allegheny East member did.

Langley was also one of 31 people who received the conference’s lifetime service award on Sunday for serving 20 or more years in Adventist Community Services.—Story by Taashi Rowe

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Heroes Recognized at Pennsylvania Church Fair

Most heroes may not walk in front of cheering crowds, but their good deeds quietly in the shadows. However, Sunday, October 20, Pennsylvania Conference’s Bucks County church honored Deborah Hoffman, a dedicated leader in her community and a life member of the Warminster Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and Robert Davis, outreach coordinator of the Valley Youth House. The honors took place during the church’s fourth annual Harvest Festival Real People Real Heroes awards Ceremony. Both were recognized for their many years of serving and protecting people in the community. During the ceremony, a moment of silence was held in remembrance of the many men and women who lost their lives in the line of duty.

More than 500 attended the event, including local government officials from the Warminster Township and Ivyland and Feasterville Fire companies. The festival included a bonfire, hayride, a children’s craft table and music. Attendees also donated food to Baskets of Love, for the ongoing mission project. Carol Lewis (in green T-shirt), the event’s coordinator, is pictured with the honorees.—Story by Carol Lewis; Photo by Terri Rice

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Annual Conference Inspires Men to Love and Serve
The eighth annual Maryland Men of Faith (MMOF) Conference drew some 175 men and 25 youth who spent a day enjoying spiritual refreshment at the Mount Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md.

Shane Anderson, keynote speaker and senior pastor of Potomac Conference’s New Market (Va.) church, focused his messages on three covenants he says every man should make—a covenant with God, a covenant to serve in a mission outside the home and a covenant to love and serve his wife and family. An array of seminars covered topics such as health, family life, current issues and developing a personal relationship with Jesus.

The offering collected benefits the Bread of Life Ministry. “We raised about $2,300 this year,” says Anthony Williams (pictured with his son Ben), event coordinator and a member of Chesapeake Conference’s Baltimore First church in Ellicott City, Md. The center, based at the Allegheny East Conference’s Fourth Street church in Washington, D.C, provides homeless persons with meals, spiritual support and job skills training.—Story by Samantha Young; Photos by Marlon Ming

Ohio’s Hispanic Akron Group Achieves Mission Church Status
This fall the Ohio Conference Executive Committee voted to grant the Hispanic group meeting at the Akron First church “mission church” status. For years the Akron church’s Hispanic members held a separate Sabbath School class in Spanish then joined the English congregation for worship.

In fall 2007 at a regional Hispanic rally in Youngstown, Akron First Hispanic leaders discovered a self-planted Hispanic group in the North Hills area of Akron that met in the basement of an area home under the leadership of Neri Aguilar. Until that moment, the groups didn’t know about each other.

After much prayer and reflection, the two groups decided to converge for an experimental, combined Hispanic Sabbath School and worship service. Both parties enjoyed the collaboration and, therefore, decided to explore forming a combined Hispanic group. In spring 2008, conference leadership unanimously voted to form a single Hispanic group within Akron First.—Story by Heidi Shoemaker; Photos By Sue Kirschbaum

READ MORE

El grupo Akron consigue la categoría de Iglesia misionera
En otoño pasado, el Comité Ejecutivo de Ohio Conference votó conceder al grupo hispano de la iglesia Akron First el estado de “iglesia misionera”. Durante varios años, los miembros hispanos de la iglesia de Akron tenían una clase de escuela sabática en español por separado y luego se unían a la congregación en inglés para el sermón.

En las reuniones regionales hispanas en otoño de 2007 en Youngstown, los líderes hispanos de Akron First descubrieron un grupo de hispanos autocongregados en el área de North Hills, en Akron, que se reunía en el subsuelo de una casa de la zona, bajo el liderazgo de Neri Aguilar. Hasta ese momento, los dos grupos no se conocían.

Luego de mucha oración y reflexión, los dos grupos decidieron intentar unirse y llevar a cabo la escuela sabática y el sermón de manera combinada. Ambos grupos disfrutaron el trabajo conjunto; por lo tanto, decidieron explorar la posibilidad de formar un grupo hispano combinado.—Historia por Heidi Shoemaker; Fotografía de Sue Kirschbaum.

Takoma Academy Boys Soccer Team Wins First Championship Title
The Takoma Academy boys soccer team made history last week when they became the school’s first team to win the Maryland Independent Schools Athletic League title. TA, who was ranked a number-three seed, defeated the Avalons school, the season’s number-one seed, with a score of 2-0.

The sizable group of TA attendees—alumni, parents and current students—report there was excitement and drama throughout the game, and that the TA boys put on an impressive display of athletic prowess. Successful goals by sophomore Renee Rodriguez and freshman David Miongo, coupled with junior Mecca Parker effectively blocking all attempted goals by Avalon, sealed the victory.

“They exemplified model Christian athletes by quoting Scriptures to keep the team motivated, never giving up. And, during games where one member lacked, the other would compensate, further building a team atmosphere that has ultimately led them to this historic victory,” said Keith Beckett, TA’s athletic director.—Story by Ron Mills

Mountain View’s Newest Bible Workers Reunite for Ministry

Larry and Annabel Murphy, newlyweds and Bible workers, are leading the Voice of
Prophecy initiative for the Charleston (W.Va.) church. The story of how they came to the Mountain View Conference began in fall 2011 when they met and fell in love at the Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism.

They got married in May 2012 in Hong Kong and honeymooned in China where some of Annabel’s family lives. Annabel, who is a Belgian citizen, had a visitor’s visa for the United States. When they tried to re-enter the country after their honeymoon, she encountered a major problem—her visa was refused and she was sent back to China.

Needless to say, this was not what the couple had planned for their married life. Larry Boggess, conference president, had spoken with and hired them as Bible workers for the Charleston church. Realizing there was nothing he could do except watch as Annabel was taken into government custody, Larry Murphy made his way to the Mountain View Conference and his new job without his new bride.—Story by Kathy Pepper

READ MORE

Has God Been Expelled From Public Schools?

In this week’sTalking About Freedom podcast, Walter Carson, the Columbia Union’s general counsel discusses this very topic with guest Charles Haynes (pictured). Haynes, an author six times over, director of the Religious Freedom Education Project at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., and the senior scholar of its First Amendment Center, holds a master’s from the Harvard Divinity Center and a doctorate from Emory University. Click here to listen in as he attempts to dispel this persistent myth.

Southeastern California Elects First Woman President
On Sunday, October 27, some 72 percent of the delegates to the Southeastern California Conference voted to elect Sandra Roberts as their next conference president. Roberts, who served as the conference’s executive secretary since 2004, becomes the first woman elected in recent history to lead a Seventh-day Adventist conference. She previously worked as a teacher, chaplain, youth director and pastor. She holds a master’s degree from Andrews University (Mich.) and a Doctor of Ministry from the Claremont School of Theology in California.

Ricardo Graham, president of the Pacific Union, reminded delegates that the General Conference currently only recognizes ordained male pastors. Nevertheless, Roberts is now making her way to Silver Spring, Md., for the North American Division Year-End Meetings slated to begin tomorrow.—Story by Enno Müller

Read more on the Southeastern California Conference website.

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End Quote: Potomac Members Pray in India
“After much prayer, fasting, assistance and preparation from our church family, our team of six from [Potomac Conference’s] Seabrook church in Lanham, Md., left for India to share in an evangelistic series with our sister church in Chennai.

When we arrived at [our sister] church, [the pastor] introduced us to the seven Bible workers who tirelessly walked the community praying with and inviting the families to attend the church for the upcoming evangelistic meetings. As we were leaving the church, several ladies from the neighborhood asked if we would come into their houses to pray for their families. Laying hands on the heads of these women and their children and praying was a humbling and blessed experience. And, it would happen dozens more times during our stay in Chennai.

Overall, this mission trip was a wonderful experience. This was Seabrook’s fifth time visiting India. Our team members were thrilled to be a blessing and make a difference, no matter how small, to those who may never have heard of Jesus’ name.”—Story by Gail Banner

Daylight Savings Time Ends This Weekend

Remember to reset your clocks before going to bed Saturday, November 2.
Daylight Savings time ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 3.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

November 1-3: Get a “Total Body Tune Up” at Mount the Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. Garner practical information for healthier living in workshops presented by John Kelly, MD, and Pastor Inskip Allsop. For details, email mtaetnacamp@myactv.net or call (301) 824-6045.

November 2: Modern day addictions and how they impact children will be the focus of a series of presentations led by Kiti Freier Randall, PhD, director of psychological services in the Department of Pediatrics for Loma Linda University Health Care in California. She will present the 11 a.m. sermon at the Spencerville church on November 2 and hold a seminar at 3 p.m. that day in the church sanctuary. Everyone is invited to her Sabbath presentations at the church, which is located at 16325 New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, Md.

November 10: Join members of the South Carroll church for the Happy Healthy Holidays cooking demonstration and food tasting at 4 p.m. The program is sponsored by Better Living for South Carroll, a health ministry of the South Carroll church. Jane Kurtz, RD, MPH, will share information on diet and inflammation. Space is limited! For more information or to reserve your spot, email betterliving4sc@gmail.com or call (410) 861-0460. The program will be held at 2020 W. Liberty Road in Taylorsville, Md.

November 16-17: The Reisterstown church is hosting the Love and Respect video conference on love, relationships and marriage presented by Christian best-selling author Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. According to Eggerichs, women need love, men need respect. It’s as simple and complicated as that! The two-day
conference takes place Sabbath, November 16, 2-6 p.m. and Sunday, November 17, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Pre-registration is FREE (a $15 value) but required and seating is limited, so reserve your spot today! Visit ReisterstownSDA.org or call (410) 833-4634 for more info or to register.

PENNSYLVANIA

November 1-3: “Intimate Moments With God” is the theme of Chesapeake Conference’s women’s retreat, which will take place at Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pa. Over the weekend, attendees will learn valuable strategies for developing a deep, authentic relationship with the Creator. Gwen Foster, former Philadelphia health czar, and “Binding the Wounds” facilitator Sharyn Joseph will present. There will also be seminars for young women (age 15-21) on topics such as dating/relationships and beauty. For more information and to register, visit ccosda.org, or contact Jennifer Stefan by email at jstefan@ccosda.org, or by phone at (410) 995-1910.

OHIO

November 1: The Bowling Green State University a capella choir will present a free community concert at the Kettering church starting at 7:30 p.m. The choir will perform a program of sacred choral music, featuring a variety of styles ranging from a 16th-century English anthem to a Brahms motet sung in German. The evening also will feature African-American spirituals and gospel songs. The choir also will perform at Kettering College’s monthly Spiritual Emphasis session on that same Friday at 9:30 a.m. at Kettering church. The church is located at 3939 Stonebridge Road. Everyone is welcome, and a freewill offering will be collected.

November 16: The Wooster church marks their 50th anniversary at their current location of 445 North Bever Street in Wooster. “Circle Up Around the Throne” is the theme for the anniversary celebration. A special worship and reflection service will be held at 11 a.m. A fellowship meal will follow the church service. The Echoliers and Bell Choir from Mount Vernon Academy will hold a concert at 2 p.m.

VIRGINIA

November 8-9: “iThurst,” Potomac Conference’s Young Adult Retreat will be held at Camp Blue Ridge in Montebello, Va. For more information, inquire at youth@pcsda.org or online at www.pcsda.org

Click here for a full calendar of upcoming events around the Columbia Union.
Would you take in a homeless family? This Allegheny East member did.
Callie Brown, Harriet Langley, Clifford Mae Fields, William Johnson, Jay Johnson and Gloria Simmons

Harriet Langley, a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Pisgah church in Bryans Road, Md., could never forget the Jefferson family. As a long-serving member of the church’s Adventist Community Services (ACS) team, she had helped many, many people, but this family was different. “The father had gotten hurt on the job and couldn’t work,” she recalls. “When they couldn’t pay the bills, he and his family were put out of the trailer they were living in.” She went on to help them find a hotel, but the manager claimed they were too much trouble and kicked them out in the middle of winter. It was then that Langley did something that she wasn’t supposed to do. She moved them into her apartment and she and her fellow ACS team members worked to help the family find a home. Five months later, she found them a place to live. She continued working with the family for a year and a half. “Even when everybody else gave up on the family, she wouldn’t give up on them,” confirmed Jay Williams, a member of the Pisgah ACS team. “Why did she do this? The daughters had babies,” Langley said. “I have children myself and it could have been me.” At 82 Langley remains just as committed to helping people in the community as she was when she first became involved in the ministry in 1979. She was also one of 31 people who received the conference’s lifetime service award for serving 20 or more years in Adventist Community Service. The awards were presented Sunday, October 27 at the conference’s Washington Metropolitan ACS federation meeting. Federation leaders also recognized those who served for 10 years and five years. Members belonging to ACS teams from the Breath of Life church in Fort Washington, Md.; the New Joy Fellowship in Hagerstown, Md.; Dupont Park church in Washington, D.C.; First church in Washington, D.C.; and the Columbia Community church in Columbia, Md., were also recognized.

The Pisgah team, which includes several members who have served in ACS for more than 20 years, proudly serve the community through a food pantry, nursing home visits and youth outreach.

While the other areas of their ministry has grown over the years, the nursing home ministry is their largest outreach. Pisgah’s ACS members don’t just stop by for brief devotionals. Team members remember birthdays, check to make sure residents’ needs are being met and give each resident lots of hugs.

“This is an excellent way to show people Jesus cares. Even though they can’t see Him, they can see who He sends,” shares Williams.

In speaking to attendees Sunday, Larnell B. Exum, director of Change Leadership Academy for Reach One Ministries, summed up what
makes the ministry attractive. "Jesus had no problem dealing with people who had pre-existing conditions. This ministry is what this ministry does and this is why it is so important," he said.

An Opportunity for Unity In addition to recognizing those with longtime commitments to the ministry, the daylong meeting served as an opportunity to unify the 24 AEC churches in the Washington, D.C.-area. Geraldine Bailey, the federation’s vice president, says she hopes individual team members leave the meeting understanding what a mighty impact they can all have if they work together. “I think we can definitely better impact the community—our neighbors, members and friends—if we move as a group rather than as individual churches.” Cece Lester, MD, who became the new federation leader in March, agrees. “The world is hurting,” she said and she has big dreams of how these 24 churches can comfort their neighbors. “We plan to have a disaster response van that goes out weekly to feed people and we are working on putting together a warehouse on one of our campuses so we can immediately reach people in crisis,” she said. At the end of the day, Minnie McNeil, the conference’s ACS director, beamed proudly as she looked around the packed room. “I’m so proud of the progress this group has made in God’s name and where they are going next,” she said.

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.
Ohio’s Akron Group Achieves Mission Church Status

Story by Heidi Shoemaker; Photos By Sue Kirschbaum Published 10/29/13

This fall the Ohio Conference Executive Committee voted to grant the Hispanic group meeting at the Akron First church “mission church” status. “This is an important step for our Hispanic brothers and sisters who are following a dream of bringing the three angels’ messages to the Hispanic community in Akron,” said Jerry Chase, pastor of Akron First. For years the Akron church’s Hispanic members held a separate Sabbath School class in Spanish then joined the English congregation for worship. For a time, the church experimented with providing Spanish translation of the English service over wireless headphones, which proved quite challenging. In fall 2007 at a regional Hispanic rally in Youngstown, Akron First Hispanic leaders discovered a self-planted Hispanic group in the North Hills area of Akron that met in the basement of an area home under the leadership of Neri Aguilar. Until that moment, the groups didn’t know about each other. Cheryl Calderon, Akron First Hispanic Ministries leader at the time, began meeting with and assisting them as needed. Soon area leaders wondered how to best encourage the new group and re-energize and grow Ohio’s Hispanic membership. After much prayer and reflection, the two groups decided to converge for an experimental, combined Hispanic Sabbath School and worship service. Both parties enjoyed the collaboration and, therefore, decided to explore forming a combined Hispanic group. In spring 2008, conference leadership unanimously voted to form a single Hispanic group within Akron First. They began conducting regular Sabbath School and worship services in Spanish at the Akron First facility, and began tracking their group’s attendance and tithes and offerings. At the close of 2011, the Akron Hispanic group expressed their readiness at becoming a mission church. In January 2012, after examining conference guidelines for mission church status, the group developed a mission statement and soon finished required paperwork. Recently Oswaldo Magaña, the conference’s director of Hispanic Ministries as well as Clergy Care and Leadership Development, met with the Hispanic group to conduct a final assessment of the group prior to bringing his recommendation to the executive committee. The group is now known as the Akron Hispanic Mission church, and has nearly 40 regular members. Click here to read this article in Spanish.

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Bienvenido a la presencia de la Unión de Columbia de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día en el internet. Desde nuestra sede en Columbia, Md., trabajamos para avanzar y ejecutar la misión de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día en el centro de los Estados Unidos--preparar a un pueblo para el pronto regreso de Cristo.

En esta página compartimos historias emocionantes de cómo Dios está obrando en las iglesias hispano hablantes. ¡Necesitamos su ayuda en mantener actualizada esta página! Le invitamos a enviarnos sus historias y noticias en inglés y español a Visitor@columbiaunion.net.

El grupo Akron consigue la categoría de Iglesia misionera

Historia por Heidi Shoemaker; Fotografía de Sue Kirschbaum Publicado 10/29/13

Juan Carlos Garay, uno de los diáconos, ayuda en el culto divino.

En otoño pasado, el Comité Ejecutivo de Ohio Conference votó conceder al grupo hispano de la iglesia Akron First el estado de “iglesia misionera”. Durante varios años, los miembros hispanos de la iglesia de Akron tenían una clase de escuela sabática en español por separado y luego se unían a la congregación en inglés para el sermón. En las reuniones regionales hispanas en otoño de 2007 en Youngstown, los líderes hispanos de Akron First descubrieron un grupo de hispanos autocongregados en el área de North Hills, en Akron, que se reunía en el subsuelo de una casa de la zona, bajo el liderazgo de Neri Aguilar. Hasta ese momento, los dos grupos no se conocían. Luego de mucha oración y reflexión, los dos grupos decidieron intentar unirse y llevar a cabo la escuela sabática y el sermón de manera combinada. Ambos grupos disfrutaron el trabajo conjunto; por lo tanto, decidieron explorar la posibilidad de formar un grupo hispano combinado. En la primavera de 2008, los líderes de la asociación votaron de manera unánime formar un grupo hispano dentro de la iglesia Akron First. Comenzaron a tener servicios de escuela sabática y sermón en español en las instalaciones de Akron First y a llevar registros de la asistencia y las ofrendas y diezmos del grupo. A este grupo se lo conoce en la actualidad como la Iglesia Misionera Hispana de Akron y tiene alrededor de 40 miembros habituales.

NORMAS Y PÓLITICA PARA LOS COMENTARIOS: Columbia Union Visitor fomenta la conversación de calidad e invita sus comentarios. Todos los comentarios están sujetos a aprobación. Por favor limite sus comentarios a quinientas palabras o menos.

Únase al diálogo:
Larry and Annabel Murphy visit a neighbor to offer Bible studies.

Larry and Annabel Murphy, newlyweds and Bible workers, are leading the Voice of Prophecy initiative for the Charleston (W.Va.) church. The story of how they came to the Mountain View Conference began in fall 2011 when they met and fell in love at the Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism. They got married in May 2012 in Hong Kong and honeymooned in China where some of Annabel’s family lives. Annabel, who is a Belgian citizen, had a visitor’s visa for the United States. But when they tried to re-enter the United States after their honeymoon, she encountered a major problem—her visa was refused and she was sent back to China. They later discovered that this was because she was not a U.S. citizen who married a U.S. citizen outside of the country. Needless to say, this was not what the couple had planned for their married life. Larry Boggess, conference president, had spoken with and hired them as Bible workers for the Charleston church. Realizing there was nothing he could do except watch as Annabel was taken into government custody, Larry Murphy made his way to the Mountain View Conference and his new job without his new bride. Murphy found an apartment near Charleston and began his Bible work. Annabel went to China and stayed in an apartment that her brother owned. During their 10-month separation, the couple used Skype to communicate. Prayers began and continued while the couple got all the proper paperwork in order. Finally in April, nearly a year after their wedding, the two were reunited on U.S. soil. And just in time.

One of the people the Murphys followed up with was Kim Leonard, a young woman living in Charleston. Leonard is almost completely deaf, but reads lips quite well. Leonard is a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and recently moved to Charleston from Florida. Because of her deafness, she had no way of figuring out how to find the local Adventist church, therefore did not attend. One day in early May, she received a little card in the mail, asking her to sign up for a free Bible study course and decided to sign up. Since Larry and Annabel had so many response cards, they began mailing her the studies. By the time the couple came to her door, the lessons started explaining the Sabbath. She asked them if they were Seventh-day Adventists. They said, “yes” and she excitedly told them that she was also. The very next Sabbath, she attended the Charleston church and was re-baptized in November.

Larry was recently ordained as an elder and Annabel is an assistant Sabbath School secretary. “Both of them take their jobs seriously and are assets to this church,” says Stewart Pepper, who pastors the Charleston church. And only God knows how many people they have worked with and/or influenced as they introduce God to the people of Charleston.

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Southeastern California Conference - News: News Release

secc.adventistfaith.org/news_entries/7151

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News Release

PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
Southeastern California Conference
October 27, 2013

For more information contact:
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Sandra Roberts Elected President of Southeastern California Conference

On Sunday, October 27, 2013, delegates voted (72%-28%) to elect Sandra Roberts as president of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Roberts had served since 2004 as executive secretary of SECC. Previously, she worked as a teacher, chaplain, youth director, and pastor. She received her masters degree from Andrews University in 1984, and received a Doctor of Ministry degree in 2006 from Claremont School of Theology.

In her new role, Roberts took the opportunity to recognize the new conference officers and to thank the delegates for their involvement in the constituency session. In her address, she expressed her desire and challenged the audience to follow Jesus in the work that needs to be done throughout the territory of SECC.

Referring to the dusty feet that Jesus had during His time on earth, she said, “Following Him means that we are going to get our feet dirty with the dust of Southern California…We must do this without fear that differences will pull us apart. Christ will always be our anchor point.”

Delegates also elected five other key administrators. These included Jonathan Park, executive secretary; Verlon Strauss, treasurer; Elizer Sacay, vice president for Asian/Pacific Ministries; George King, vice president for Black Ministries; and Alberto Ingleton, vice president for Hispanic Ministries.

Prior to the election of Roberts, delegates had the opportunity to speak to the motion on the floor. Many delegates lined up to share their views. There were some opposing opinions, but most people expressed their support for Roberts as president.

Ricardo Graham, president of the Pacific Union Conference, reminded delegates that the General Conference does not endorse women’s ordination, and he passed on a message from Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the world church, clarifying that the election of a woman as president would not be recognized by the General Conference.

But Graham continued by stating that because delegates to the Pacific Union Special Session voted in 2012 to authorize the ordination of women, that the recommendation of the SECC nominating committee is in harmony with conference and union bylaws and policies.

Before dedicating the new officers, former President Gerald Penick was thanked for his years of service and received a standing ovation from delegates. Penick spoke to the delegates and gave farewell thoughts.
“May God bless us under this new leadership,” he said.

The Constituency Session began with worship. After music, prayer, and scripture, John Brunt, senior pastor of Azure Hills church, delivered a homily.

“God doesn’t play favorites,” he said. He challenged the attendees to trust God to lead the way.

Fifteen new churches and companies were voted into fellowship, members of the executive and bylaws committee were affirmed, and changes to the bylaws were brought into effect.

For one of the session reports, Rudy Carrillo, youth ministries director introduced Carmen Ibanez, director of Pine Springs Ranch. They presented the Pines Springs Ranch report with images of the damage caused by fire earlier this year, as well as a plan to rebuild the camp. Delegates approved a spending request to begin the rebuilding process.

After the officers affirmed that they would listen to their constituency, the session was closed with a benediction.

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Photo 1: Sandra Roberts, president of Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Photo 2: Sandra Roberts speaks to delegates after being elected president of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Behind her are the other elected administrators (l-r): George King, VP Black Ministries; Alberto Ingleton, VP Hispanic Ministries; Elizer Sacay, VP Asian/Pacific Ministries; Verlon Strauss, treasurer; and Jonathan Park, executive secretary.

Credit: Gerry Chudleigh
Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists


Potomac Member Shares India Mission Trip Memories

Story by Gail Banner Published 10/30/13

Author Gail Banner, second from the right, and five other members of the Seabrook church, pose in native Indian garb.

After much prayer, fasting, assistance and preparation from our church family, our team of six from Potomac Conference’s Seabrook church in Lanham, Md., left for India to share in an evangelistic series with our sister church in Chennai.

After a 13-hour flight, Swamidass Johnson, director of Hope Channel India met us at the Chennai International Airport. He led us through the very crowded airport and parking lot to a bus. After a prayer of thanksgiving, we were on our way to a house, which would be our home for the next 15 days. I had never seen streets so crowded with motorbikes, rickshaws, cars, people and cows!

At the house Raj and his brother Joshua greeted us. They would be our cooks and escorts during our stay. Raj has his own online preaching ministry and he also works with the blind. Joshua is a caterer and cooks for conventions and weddings. They were both wonderful hosts and treated us to lots of delicious vegetarian curries and rice, fruits and thirst-quenching coconut water.

The next morning, our driver arrived to take us to meet Pastor Suresh at Seabrook’s sister church in the village of Arakkonam, 60 miles into the country. We picked up Pastor Suresh at the bus station. It took three and a half hours of driving on winding, potholed roads and pass tiny shops, men drinking chai, women selling fruits and vegetables spread out on colorful clothes on the ground, rice fields and herds of cows and goats.

Pastor Suresh took us to one of his church member’s house for lunch. There we met Helen, her father and her adopted son. Helen would help us with Vacation Bible School during the week and Kumar, who is a musician, assisted with the audio and the music during the church services.

When we arrived at the church, Pastor Suresh introduced us to the seven Bible workers who tirelessly walked the community praying with and inviting the families to attend the church for the upcoming evangelistic meetings. These ladies shyly but graciously greeted us … and at the church we sat in a circle, had prayer and introduced ourselves.

As we were leaving the church, several ladies from the neighborhood asked if we would come into their houses to pray for their families. Laying hands on the heads of these women and their children and praying was a humbling and blessed experience. And it would happen dozens more times during our stay in Chennai.

The next morning, our driver took us to meet with Pastor Suresh and Pastor Ludisami and the latter’s two church members. He invited us to visit his church in the hills. We climbed a steep, rocky path, greeting curious onlookers as we climbed. At each humble home, we were greeted with requests for prayer, for health, for wayward husbands, for finances, for education for their children. One mother cried and asked for prayer for an adult daughter, who had been missing for two days.

We continued to climb until we came to a long rectangular building that Pastor Ludisami unlocked. It was dark inside with a few plastic chairs, a small wooden podium and a ceiling fan. This was his church. He explained to us that they had been meeting rent-free at the property for five years. But now the son of the owner wanted to sell because it was close to the railroad tracks and he could get a good price. He asked that we would pray for God’s will to be done in this circumstance. We joined hands in a circle and prayed and cried out to God, “Thy will be done!”

As we descended the hill, we were invited into the home of one of the church members and we prayed for her son to find a job. We were offered water and a crisp, savory treat. At every home, we were always offered water and a biscuit. No matter how little they had, the people always shared. They reminded me of the early church in the Bible.
On Friday, Pastor Johnson took us to the English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist Matriculation High School in Kodambakkam, where we would conduct a week of prayer. There were 1,300 students from pre-kindergarten to 10th grade. (After the 10th grade, students are required to take a government test to enter high school).

That afternoon Pastor Johnson showed us the studios for the Hope Channel India. He proudly introduced us to the young adults—students of engineering and information technology—who ran the studio so professionally!

The first Sabbath, we visited Pastor Johnson’s church in Kodambakkam where Wayne Bristol preached in the Tamil speaking church (Johnson interpreted) and I spoke to the English-speaking congregation upstairs. Overall this mission trip was a wonderful experience. This was Seabrook’s fifth time visiting India. Our team members were thrilled to be a blessing and make a difference, no matter how small, to those who may never have heard of Jesus’ name.

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.
Upcoming Events Around the Columbia Union

MARYLAND
October 25-26: “Christ our Rock” is the theme for Highland View Academy’s (HVA) Academy Days. Students in grades 7-11 who have an interest in learning more about HVA should contact Renee Williams by email at rwilliams@highlandviewacademy.com or call (301) 739-7480. Registration is required. The campus is located at 10100 Academy Drive in Hagerstown, Md.

October 26: The Heritage Singers will be in concert at the Southern Asian church in Silver Spring, Md., at 6 p.m. Known and loved all over the world, these singers will thrill your hearts with their powerful testimony and unique vocal sound. The church is located at 2001 East Randolph Road.

November 1-3: Get a “Total Body Tune Up” at Mount the Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. Garner practical information for healthier living in workshops presented by John Kelly, MD, and Pastor Inskip Allsop. For details, email mtaetnacamp@myactv.net or call (301) 824-6045.

November 2: Modern day addictions and how they impact children will be the focus of a series of presentations led by Kiti Freier Randall, PhD, director of psychological services in the Department of Pediatrics for Loma Linda University Health Care in California. She will present the 11 a.m. sermon at the Spencerville church on November 2 and hold a seminar at 3 p.m. that day in the church sanctuary. Everyone is invited to her Sabbath presentations at the church, which is located at 16325 New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, Md.

November 16-17: The Reisterstown church is hosting the Love and Respect video conference on love, relationships and marriage presented by Christian best-selling author Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. According to Eggerichs, women need love, men need respect. It’s as simple and complicated as that! The two-day conference takes place Sabbath, November 16, 2-6 p.m. and Sunday, November 17, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Pre-registration is FREE (a $15 value) but required and seating is limited, so reserve your spot today! Visit ReisterstownSDA.org or call (410) 833-4634 for more info or to register.

OHIO
October 25: The King’s Heralds will performing at The Majestic Theater in Chillicothe, Ohio, starting at 7 p.m. There will be a suggested donation of two cans of food or $3. For more information, call (740) 637-9010.

October 26: Lonnie Melashenko will be speaking at the Chillicothe (Ohio) church at 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. A potluck lunch and supper will be provided. The church is located at 510 Metzger Avenue. For more information, call (740) 637-9010.

October 27: Lonnie Melashenko will present “Missing the Message: Six Words to Take Us To Glory” at 10 a.m. at the Jackson (Ohio) church. The church is located at 11184 State Route 93. For more information, call (740) 637-9010.

November 1: The Bowling Green State University a capella choir will present a free community concert at the Kettering church starting at 7:30 p.m. The choir will perform a program of sacred choral music, featuring a variety of styles ranging from a 16th-century English anthem to a Brahms motet sung in German. The evening also will feature African-American spirituals and gospel songs. The choir also will perform at Kettering College’s monthly Spiritual Emphasis session on that same Friday at 9:30 a.m. at Kettering church. The church is located at 3939 Stonebridge Road. Everyone is welcome, and a freewill offering will be collected.

November 16: The Wooster church marks their 50th anniversary at their current location of 445 North Bever Street in Wooster. “Circle Up Around the Throne” is the theme for the anniversary celebration. A special worship and reflection service will be held at 11 a.m. A fellowship meal will follow the church service. The Echoliers and Bell Choir from Mount Vernon Academy will hold a concert at 2 p.m.
November 1-3: “Intimate Moments With God” is the theme of Chesapeake Conference’s women’s retreat, which will take place at Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pa. Over the weekend, attendees will learn valuable strategies for developing a deep, authentic relationship with the Creator. Gwen Foster, former Philadelphia health czar, and “Binding the Wounds” facilitator Sharyn Joseph will present. There will also be seminars for young women (age 15-21) on topics such as dating/relationships and beauty. For more information and to register, visit ccosda.org, or contact Jennifer Stefan by email at jstefan@ccosda.org, or by phone at (410) 995-1910.

VIRGINIA

November 8-9: “iThurst,” Potomac Conference’s Young Adult Retreat will be held at Camp Blue Ridge in Montebello, Va. For more information, inquire at youth@pcsda.org or online at www.pcsda.org