Baltimore Junior Academy Students Give to Their Neighbors

Lilian Sydnor, a Baltimore City Commissioner and leader in the Park Heights neighborhood, was at her home the Friday before Thanksgiving when she spied students from the Baltimore Junior Academy crossing the street to visit her home. As coordinator for the annual food drive for her community, she was thrilled to see that the students did not come empty-handed. BJA’s 92 students collected almost 1,000 food items to help their less-fortunate neighbors. In addition to hand-delivering their items from the food drive, BJA students and staff sang songs and prayed as a part of the occasion.—Story by Carol Cantu
Chesapeake Church’s Healthy Holiday Workshop Makes Headlines

With the topic “Healthy Holiday Meals—the Power of a Plant-Based Diet,” Chesapeake Conference’s South Carroll church managed to grab the front page of their local Carroll County Times. The seminar drew some 50 members and guests to the Taylorsville, Md., church. Attendees listened keenly as Jane Kurtz, RD, MPH, shared how whole-food, plant-based cuisine decreases inflammation and even helps prevent depression and chronic disease. The evening included recipe demonstrations, door prizes and a holiday meal. “Seeing God work as we cooperate with Him is exciting. We look forward to discovering what He has in store next for South Carroll!” exclaimed Kim Goldstein, Health Ministries team leader. Pictured is Florence Silver holding up “Mr. Turkey.”—Story by Jane Kurtz

Six Columbia Union Members Honored For Ministry

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Last Thursday, for the second year in a row, the officers of the Columbia Union Conference recognized those who have made a significant contribution to ministry in the union. Six were honored with a special luncheon and the Notable Person of Honor Award.

The honorees (pictured left to right) were Samuel DeShay, PhD, MD, who served in Africa as a missionary; Carol Wright, undertreasurer for the Columbia Union; Henry Wright, pastor of the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va.; Raj Attiken, retiring president of the Ohio Conference; Sedley Johnson, pastor of Chesapeake Conference’s Northeast and Dundalk churches in Baltimore; and Judy Olson, director of the Friends-R-Fun Child Development Center in Summersville, W.Va. Johnson and Olson were not present to receive the award.

—Story by Taashi Rowe

READ MORE ABOUT THE HONOREES

Columbia Union Leaders Gather for Year-End Meetings
The presidents of the Columbia Union’s eight conferences, two healthcare networks and university met last week in Columbia, Md., for four days of executive-level board meetings. The week started with President's Council where each president shared praises and challenges from their field. On Tuesday each conference’s top-three officers met for Administrators Council where they handled the business of the union.

The Washington Adventist University Board of Trustees met Wednesday on the university’s Takoma Park, Md., campus. The meetings concluded on Thursday with the Columbia Union Conference’s Executive Committee meeting, where members voted to create a subcommittee to develop a unionwide school of evangelism for young adults. The week also included training for some 60 treasurers, their associates and assistants and business managers. The day-and-a-half meeting concluded with a special prayer of recognition for Zenobia Seward, who will retire in March after serving nearly 13 years as treasurer of the Allegheny West Conference.—Story by Taashi Rowe

READ MORE

Administrators Prepare for Crisis

“Truth be told, bad things happen in God’s organizations, and my role is to help our administrators think, talk and work through bad times and situations,” said Celeste Ryan Blyden, Columbia Union communication director, told administrators attending the Columbia Union’s Year-End Meetings. Blyden, who’s called to help with an average of 10 crises a year, says these crises range from fires, deaths and natural disasters to embezzlement, the aftermath of a pastor’s arrest or dismissal and incidents at schools that draw media attention. “How we handle each crisis and what we say impacts the larger church family, our brand and sometimes our bottom line, so our goal is to communicate quickly and effectively so as to minimize the impact and get the organization back on track and focus,” she explained to them. “I’m thankful that our administrators recognize that half the battle in handling a crisis is preparing for it now—before it happens.”
Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, who presides over the union’s year-end meetings, gave each conference and university officer a copy of Blyden’s newly released book, *Crisis Boot Camp: How to Handle Communication During Crises*, published last month by the North American Division Office of Communication and now available from AdventSource in ebook and print.

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**WAU Hosts Candidate Forum**

*Washington Adventist University*’s (WAU) Student Center in Takoma Park, Md., recently served as the setting of a public forum for nine candidates running to fill the District 20 seat in the Maryland House of Delegates. Some 200 community members and WAU administrators, faculty, staff and students attended the event. Jarrett Smith, a City of Takoma Park councilmember, moderated the forum, which was an opportunity for local community members to ask the candidates questions and for WAU to share upcoming initiatives and news with civic leaders and the community.

When asked why the university hosted the event, Weymouth Spence, president, referenced the school’s motto, Vision 2020 Growing With Excellence. “Vision 2020 calls for connecting with our local community,” Spence explained. “It is our desire to offer our facilities and services to the local community. It was also an opportunity for us to showcase the attractiveness of our campus and our vision as a university.”—*Story by WAU Staff*

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**New Jersey’s First Conference-Wide Leadership Summit Draws 300**
Some 300 New Jersey Conference members were recently treated to the conference's first Adventist Leadership Summit at the Robbinsville church. The program was designed to reach all types of leaders and attracted elders, deacons, deaconesses, department leaders and other local church leaders.

Robert Chandler, a Robbinsville church member who attended the summit, said, “Through each speaker I felt myself at the feet of Jesus, learning the truths of leadership and discipleship as they were coming from His mouth. I’m glad I was there and was fed with the fresh broken bread … I thank God for the insightful and unselfish leaders He used to put this event together.”

Click here to see a video of the day.

Shenandoah Valley Students Share Their Gift of Music

Members of Shenandoah Valley Academy’s (SVA) Shenandoans chorale group and string octet recently ministered through music in the Tappahannock region of the Potomac Conference. The groups performed at the Kilmarnock church as well as two other local Christian church. The students not only shared their gift of
music, they also shared what it means to attend SVA, and the ways they see God moving on the campus.

At the conclusion of the service at the Kilmarnock church, head elder Dave Carlson shared with the group, "I attended SVA, as did several others in this congregation. It's been many years since I last visited the campus, and we want you to know how much we appreciate your ministry this morning. You make us proud to be alumnus."—Story by Dan Jensen

Ohio Member Named Nurse of the Year

The Ohio chapter of the March of Dimes recently named their first nurse of the year and it is Pam Stout, a member of Ohio Conference's Kettering church and a maternity nurse at Kettering Adventist HealthCare's (KAHC) Soin Medical Center in Beaver Creek. Stout was chosen from among 160 nominations from 55 healthcare facilities. Colleagues noted that Stout was a strong advocate for moms and new babies and loves counseling moms.

Stout, who has worked for KAHC for 14 years and has been a nurse for more than 30 years, says the award is truly an honor. "I am passionate about perinatal education," she says. "This award has helped spread the word that great prenatal care, breastfeeding and postpartum care, including mom's emotional care, improves the health of moms and babies." Stout is pictured with Terry Burns, Soin president.

Adventist HealthCare Hospitals Recognized as National Top Performers

Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Md., and Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md., both part of the Adventist HealthCare (AHC) system, were recently named as Top Performers on Key Quality Measures® by
The Joint Commission. The hospitals are among 16 in Maryland to earn this national distinction for 2012 performance and two of nine state hospitals that demonstrated excellence in processes to improve care for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgery. AHC’s Hackettstown Regional Medical Center in Hackettstown, N.J., also received recognition as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® for 2012. To achieve designation, hospitals had to meet at least 95 percent compliance with certain measures for 2012.

“I want to thank everyone across Adventist HealthCare for their continuous efforts to achieve our vision of being a high performance integrator of wellness, disease management and healthcare services that delivers superior clinical outcomes to those we serve,” said William G. “Bill” Robertson, president and CEO of AHC, which is based in Gaithersburg, Md.— Story by Tom Grant

Can The Government Muzzle Pastors in the Pulpit?

Did you know that there is a law that regulates the free speech of clergy? This week on the Talking About Freedom podcast, Walter Carson, the Columbia Union Conference General Counsel, talks with Thomas Wetmore, in-house counsel at the General Conference about this topic. Wetmore is also a member of the commission on accountability and policy for religious organizations. Click here to listen to their conversation.

Columbia Union Members in the News

Uniontown church to share Thanksgiving meal with public
Review and Herald Publishing Association marks 30th anniversary ...
Experts Give Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

December 3: The Emmanuel-Brinklow church is hosting a townhall about the Affordable Care Act. The event begins at 6:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall.
The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services will present information on the Maryland Health Exchange, discuss enrollment protocol, deadlines and subsidies available for qualified individuals. For more information, call (301) 774-0400. The church is located at 18800 New Hampshire Ave in Ashton, Md.

December 7: The “Songs for My Sisters” benefit concert will take place at 6 p.m., at the Capital Brazilian Temple located at 12420 Scaggsville Road in Highland, Md. The classical Christmas program is sponsored by the General Conference Women’s Ministries department and features instrumental, choral and vocal music. Proceeds will be used by the GC Women’s Scholarship Program to help talented and needy Adventist women obtain a college education. This scholarship fund has helped 2,104 women in 121 countries. To support this endeavor and learn more, visit AdventistWomensMinistries.org, or call (301) 680-6636.

December 15: The Sligo Adventist School in Takoma Park hosts their third annual Christmas Craft fair and Small Business Showcase from 11-3 p.m. Admission is $1. Vendors are welcome at $35 a table. Inquire about early bird specials and applications online at sligoadventistschool.org under parent resources. For more information, call Heather Lunsford at (301) 434-1417.

**VIRGINIA**

December 7: The Courthouse Road church is hosting a musical/choir concert to benefit victims in the Philippines of Typhoon Haiyan. The concert begins at 7 p.m. The church is located at 30 Courthouse Road in Richmond, Va.
By Rachel Roubein Times Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, November 24, 2013 12:15 am

Plates filled to the brim with cranberry relish, gravy, green bean casserole and a smattering of other holiday goodies packed the table, as attendees at a Better Living for South Carroll event picked them up.

They meandered to a table inside a larger conference room and sat down to eat a holiday meal complete with dishes traditional in name only. That’s because these particular foods were free of both meat and dairy at the cooking demonstration and tasting by the South Carroll Seventh-day Adventist Church’s health ministry Nov. 10.

There was no cream in the green bean casserole and no chicken stock in the gravy. The main course wasn’t a turkey filled with stuffing but rather a holiday tofu loaf that had a similar consistency to its meatloaf counterpart. There was even a dessert — a holiday bar that tasted as sweet as a fattening cookie, though the ingredient list indicated otherwise.

The event provided healthy alternatives to the typical full-fat holiday meal, though a vegan Thanksgiving isn’t the only way to eat healthy. There’s a plethora of quick-hit tactics to avoid weight gain during the holiday season.

November and December are packed with events that incorporate eating, such as Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day, said Alison Manger-Weikel, Carroll Hospital Center food, environmental and patient transportation services director.

“Then starts the round of parties, the office gatherings. People start baking and bringing things in to work,” she said, “and there’s just food everywhere. It’s traditionally not low-fat, not healthy. It’s just yummy.”

Diets that are high in sugar and saturated fats can spark inflammation, which is a villain in the public health world, registered dietitian Jane Kurtz said at the Better Living for South Carroll event.

Inflammation is part of the body’s immune system’s response to injury from bacteria, trauma and toxins. Chemicals are released from the damaged cells, which cause blood vessels to leak fluid into the damaged area — hence, swollen tissues, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Stubbing a toe or falling on a knee can cause acute inflammation. The area swells up, and then the puffiness steadily decreases as the area is healed.

But chronic inflammation is different. It can last for months or years and might require major lifestyle changes to make it dissipate, according to Kurtz. It can be linked to unhealthy diets, and a recent study shows that it appears to play a key role in the development of cancer, heart disease and diabetes, according to an American Institute for Cancer Research Nov. 7 press release.

Alleviating this food-driven inflammation requires a commitment to healthy eating. There are tactics to help, Kurtz said, like eating powerhouse foods, such as colorful fruits and vegetables, legumes and nuts.
There’s exercising and sleeping and avoiding cigarettes.

So, staying healthy during the holiday season — a time of parties and food aplenty — requires balance and moderation, according to several local dietitians.

“It’s not necessarily the food that’s so bad for you,” said Elisabeth D’Alto, in-store nutritionist at Martin’s Food Markets in Eldersburg. “It’s how much of that one food that you have can make it unhealthy. So having one sugar cookie here or there is not bad for you.”

But eating three or four or five of those sugar cookies atop a plate full of other desserts is. Thus, avoiding weight gain is linked to portion control, D’Alto said.

Imagine a long buffet table filled with all the usual holiday goodies. Now, D’Alto said, there are some healthy choices that can be made at the very beginning of the line.

Grab a small plate, she said, as this holds less food. There is always the opportunity for seconds if hunger persists.

Next, scour the options. When it’s time to load the plate, think in terms of the healthy food guidelines. That’s half a plate piled with fruits and vegetables, more than a quarter containing whole grains, less than a quarter plate of protein and some dairy on the side, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s guidelines.

Start with smaller portions, and eat the food slowly. Savor it. Before piling more on a plate, it’s important to determine if hunger still actually persists, Darlene Flaherty, Carroll County Health Department nutritionist, said.

If the goal is to stay healthy and maintain one’s weight, it all comes down to planning. It’s OK to indulge — maybe just not at every holiday party, maybe not every time a baked good is brought in to work, maybe not at every meal, according to Flaherty.

“The first thing I would say is to not use the holidays as an excuse to overeat at every opportunity,” she said. “I think people have to plan. I don’t think people should deprive themselves, but I don’t think they should look at it like, ‘I only get this one time of year so I’m going to have more than I normally would have.’”

Additionally, incorporating physical activity in before or after the big meal helps, D’Alto said.

Coordinate a family football game, or take a stroll around the block.

“This way, when Jan. 1 comes around, you don’t feel like you’re starting from square one again,” D’Alto said. “A lot of people get caught up in the season — they’re shopping, they’re cooking, they don’t really have time to do anything.”

But making time for some physical activity, even if it’s less than the typical exercise regiment, is important, local nutritionists said. It’s setting small, achievable goals that get the blood pumping, like taking that walk during a lunch break.
There are portion control, balance and moderation. There’s exercise. But what if the dishes themselves were just plain healthier?

“There’s always those traditional things that I think are important for the memories and for family and for sharing,” Manger-Weikel said. “It’s those recipes you want to pass down. I think it’s really important to honor tradition, but it doesn’t mean you have to make the high-calorie, high-fat dishes.”

And according to local nutritionists, there are several easy ways to do this: incorporating whole grains when possible, such as in stuffing; using skim milk instead of cream or whole milk in mashed potatoes; buying fat-free evaporated milk instead of using the full-fat kind in pumpkin pie; sticking to low-sodium canned goods and broths and avoiding pre-packaged holiday goodies.

“Anytime you can make anything from scratch, the better you have control of the salt and the fat content of any recipe,” Manger-Weikel said.

Yet, the holiday season is more than rich, or healthy, dishes lining a packed buffet table.

“The holiday season doesn’t just have to be about the food,” D’Alto, Martin’s in-store nutritionist, said. “It’s about family. It’s about friends. It’s about family tradition.”
Six Columbia Union Members Honored For Their Ministry

Story by Taashi Rowe Published 11/26/2013

Samuel DeShay, Carol Wright, Henry Wright and Raj Attiken hold their Notable Persons of Honor awards.

Last Thursday, for the second year in a row, the officers of the Columbia Union Conference recognized those who have made a significant contribution to ministry in the union. Six were honored with a special luncheon and the Notable Person of Honor Award. The honorees included Raj Attiken, retiring president of the Ohio Conference. He ministered in Ohio for 40 years. Over the past 10 years, Attiken and his team have emphasized a Christ-focused orientation to theology, ministry and mission. His team bills the conference as “unapologetically Christocentric.” He is also known for creating a culture of love, trust and freedom in dealing with pastors, churches and schools. “Raj is the best example of a servant leader that I have ever known. He is always gracious and kind, and has a wonderful sense of humor,” said Rob Vandeman, the union’s executive secretary and master of ceremonies. When he accepted the award, Attiken called “leadership of God’s people a tremendous honor that I have been blessed by.” The next honoree Samuel DeShay, PhD, MD, is probably best known for serving as a General Conference missionary in East Africa. DeShay, who was credited with eradicating leprosy in Nigeria, said, “In Africa there was one doctor for every 22,000 people, so I went where there was a great need.” Today at 80 years old, he says, “Even though I’m old, I will continue to go where the Lord calls me. … The Lord still has work for us to do still in East Africa.” Calling the next honoree, Carol Wright, a modern-day Proverbs 31 woman, Vandeman noted that the Columbia Union undertreasurer, has supported her husband, Henry, in ministry; reared three sons; and passed her CPA exam at the age of 50.

Quoting from Proverbs 31, Vandeman noted that Wright, “is clothed with strength, dignity and laughs without fear of the future. When she speaks her words are wise and she gives instructions with kindness. Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise!” Wright’s husband, Henry, was also honored for his work as a church planter, adjunct professor and pastor of Potomac Conference’s Community Praise Center (CPC) in Alexandria, Va. He has ministered for nearly 50 years, the past 20 of which has been spent growing CPC from a membership of 37 to , today. After Vandeman and the officers thanked Pastor Wright for his ministry, Wright responded quietly, “It is only because of God and the gift of Carol that I stand before you. Today the honor goes not to Henry but to a very special female that the Lord assigned to a heard-headed country boy.” Sedley Johnson, pastor of Chesapeake Conference’s Dundalk and Northeast churches in Baltimore, was also recognized. Passionate about prayer ministries, evangelism, and church growth, he began a church planting initiative in 2008 that is now the Northeast church with 81 members. He has spent almost 30 years in ministry. He was not present to receive his award. Judy Olson, a registered nurse, who along with her husband Wesley Olson, MD, helped to plant Mountain View Conference’s Summersville (W.Va.) church. They started a daycare center in the church basement and today the Friends-R-Fun Child Development and Family Learning Center has seen several additions and has grown from two or three children to caring for more than 200 children plus adults. It now includes an adult learning center that helps young adults get their GEDs. In 2002, a $1.3 million health and education complex was built that houses an adult learning center, a medical clinic, a full junior high school and is used by the local Seventh-day Adventist K-8 school. Olson was not present to receive her award.

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.
Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Columbia Union Leaders Gather for Year-End Meetings

Story by Taashi Rowe Published 11/21/13

Rob Vandeman (left), union executive secretary; Dave Weigley (third), union president; and Seth Bardu (fourth), union treasurer, recognize Raj Attiken, retiring Ohio Conference president for his ministry.

This week presidents of the Columbia Union’s eight conferences, two healthcare networks and university met in Columbia, Md., for executive-level board meetings. The week started with Presidents’ Council where each president shared praises and challenges from their field. On Tuesday each conference’s top-three officers met for Administrator’s Council where they handled the business of the union. They also heard a presentation on crisis communication from Celeste Ryan Blyden, Visitor publisher and editor, and author of the new book, Crisis Boot Camp, published by the North American Division.

“Truth be told, bad things happen in God’s organizations, and my role is to help our administrators think, talk and work through bad times and bad situations,” says Blyden, who’s called to help with an average of 10 crises a year. “I’m thankful that our administrators recognize that half the battle in handling a crisis is preparing for it now—before it happens.”

The week also included training for some 60 treasurers, their associates, assistants and school business managers. “The meetings are informative [but they also] encourage unity in the area of our financial ministry,” said Karen Schneider, an associate treasurer for the Pennsylvania Conference. The day-and-a-half meeting concluded with a special prayer of recognition for Zenobia Seward, who will retire in March after serving nearly 13 years as treasurer of the Allegheny West Conference.

Committee Assigned to Explore Evangelism Initiative

Today at the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee’s last meeting of the year, members voted to create a subcommittee to develop a unionwide school of evangelism for young adults. They also established a separate young adult subcommittee specifically tasked with addressing one of the union’s six priorities for the 2011-16 quinquennium: engaging and partnering with youth and young adults to further the mission of the church.

“There is a crisis in Adventism,” said Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president. “We are getting grayer. The median age is 57—up from 52 when I came to the union just a few years ago. We need to figure out a better way to engage young adults because now when they leave, studies show that they are not coming back.”
Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministries Development, shared the results of a visit to SOULS WEST, Pacific Union’s school of evangelism based in Arizona. He and a study committee recommended that a Columbia Union equivalent be formed in the union for the following reasons: churches need more trained, experienced Bible workers; it could be a life-changing experience for young people; those trained would return to their churches and revitalize it; and this would be a low-cost, effective approach to filling gaps in the cycle of evangelism.

The hope is that after finding a director, the school could be launched in September 2014.

**Treasury, Healthcare Reports**
Committee members also heard several reports. In his president’s report, Weigley updated committee members on the results of the North American Division’s Theology of Ordination Study Committee. He also spoke about two women pastors who were ordained in Ohio just last Sabbath. The treasurer’s report for the third quarter showed a 2.16 percent increase in union tithe and a 3.97 percent slide in giving to the World Mission Fund.

Other reports included ones from Fred Manchur, president of Kettering Adventist Healthcare in Kettering, Ohio. For some time now, the healthcare system has been sharing a little booklet in their emergency departments called *Joining God in the Everyday: Tips for Living the Lord’s Prayer.* It includes an insert where people can mail in their requests for prayers or Bible studies. As of today, there are 257 people who are doing Bible studies, 193 were visited and prayed for, 12 requested Bible studies and five requested prayer. “They are waiting for us to invite them in,” Manchur said with excitement.

Bill Miller, Potomac Conference president, reported on his recent trip to India. He said that two ago, when he visited India to participate in a 50-village campaign, thousands were baptized. The conference helped raise funds to build seven churches. “We dedicated those churches just last week, and they are already full. We didn’t anticipate the growth. It was such a blessing to see how God is working there.”

Union officers also recognized two committee members who will no longer be serving. After 2.5 years on the committee, William Joseph, is no longer eligible to serve as he was recently named Ministerial Association secretary for the Allegheny West Conference. Raj Attiken, who served 15 years on the committee recently announced his retirement from the presidency of the Ohio Conference. Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., also recognized Attiken for his service on the university’s board.

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Uniontown church to share Thanksgiving meal with public

Working on homemade gravy are Lucille Colbert and her daughters, Patience Barnes and Karen Nelson, who have coordinated and managed the Thanksgiving meal at the Berean Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Uniontown since its inception.

By Marilyn Forbes

Published: Saturday, Nov. 23, 2013, 3:44 p.m.

Reaching out to their friends and neighbors who would like to share a wonderfully cooked homemade Thanksgiving dinner, members of the Berean Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Uniontown once again are having their holiday meal and inviting the public to join in.

The meal will mark its 23rd year as a community event, which was started when church member Patience Barnes decided she wanted to celebrate the holiday in a different manner.

“I got tired of eating Thanksgiving dinner and watching football,” Barnes said. “I felt that there was more to life and more to Thanksgiving then eating and watching football all day.”

And Operation Jesus Feed was started.
The church began offering meals to anyone in the area who is homeless, unemployed, lonely, a senior citizen, low income or simply hungry, and over the years, the event has grown to where the church and the volunteers feed about 200.

“When we get here that morning, there are already people that are waiting,” volunteer Lucille Colbert said. “When we start serving, they are lined up around the corner, because we can't feed everyone at the same time.”

The event not only features a full dinner — the main entrée, mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes, numerous side dishes and fresh homemade pies — but a large area of the church is set up with racks of clothing, household goods and even furniture that is free to those in attendance.

“We get a lot of donations, and people from the church bring things,” volunteer Karen Nelson said. “There are people who look at what is there while they are waiting to eat.”

In addition to the meal, boxes of donated food items are given to families to take home to prepare their own Thanksgiving dinner.

“Last year, we gave out 80 boxes,” Nelson said. “My goal this year is to have 100 and have a turkey in each one.”

Nelson said she works on creating a nice table setting for each person, covering tables with a lovely fall setting complete with centerpieces.

“A lot of these people don't ever have a formal setting, and we want it to be nice for them for the dinner,” Nelson said.

“We don't want people just coming in to a bare table,” Colbert added.

The dinner is made possible by donations that are gathered throughout the year and by community contributions.

“We send out letters to the community, and churches in the area also help us get the word out,” Barnes said, adding that those who attend the meal are asked to sign a guest book to receive an invitation reminder for the meal the following year. “We see some of the same people and families year after year, but we always see some new people who join us.”

The meal is prepared and served by members of the church and other volunteers, with about 50 who turn out every year to help with the festive meal.

“It's a lot of work, but it is very rewarding,” Colbert said.

The Thanksgiving meal will be served from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday in the church, 95 Searight Ave.

The meal is free, but free-will donations will be accepted.

Marilyn Forbes is a contributing writer for Trib Total Media.
carefully and consistently as we can. Because of the volume of reader comments, we cannot review individual moderation decisions with readers.

We value thoughtful comments representing a range of views that make their point quickly and politely. We make an effort to protect discussions from repeated comments either by the same reader or different readers.

We follow the same standards for taste as the daily newspaper. A few things we won't tolerate: personal attacks, obscenity, vulgarity, profanity (including expletives and letters followed by dashes), commercial promotion, impersonations, incoherence, proselytizing and SHOUTING. Don't include URLs to Web sites.

We do not edit comments. They are either approved or deleted. We reserve the right to edit a comment that is quoted or excerpted in an article. In this case, we may fix spelling and punctuation.

We welcome strong opinions and criticism of our work, but we don't want comments to become bogged down with discussions of our policies and we will moderate accordingly.

We appreciate it when readers and people quoted in articles or blog posts point out errors of fact or emphasis and will investigate all assertions. But these suggestions should be sent To avoid distracting other readers, we won't publish comments that suggest a correction. Instead, corrections will be made in a blog post or in an article.

Most-Read Fayette
For 30 years, the Review and Herald Publishing Association off West Oak Ridge Drive in Hagerstown has been a mainstay in the local economy, churning out millions of publications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

On Sunday, the publishing operation welcomed the public to the facility for an open house to celebrate its anniversary.

The Review and Herald Publishing Association is one of two large printing facilities publishing material for Seventh-day Adventist churches, and the local operation prints weekly, monthly and bimonthly publications and books, according to Steve Hanson, director of list services and special sales for the local facility.

One of the most recognizable products is “The Bible Story” series, a collection of 10 books geared toward children about the Bible. The books are a common sight in places like doctor’s office waiting rooms.

“ Millions have been sold, ” Hanson said.

The other large Seventh-day Adventist publishing facility is the Pacific Press near Boise, Idaho, said Theresa Broden, who does marketing work for the local operation.

There are other smaller publishing operations printing material for Seventh-day Adventist churches, Broden said.

The public was welcomed to the facility between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Sunday, and about 160 guests had visited by midafternoon, Hanson said.

Hanson led a reporter through parts of the building, including its sprawling pressroom, administrative areas and historical collections, which included the desk of Uriah Smith. Smith wrote “Daniel and the Revelation,” a book registered with the Library of Congress in 1897 that had an unrivaled influence on the understanding of prophecy, according to www.adventistbookcenter.com.

Hanson also showed the facility’s research library, which holds 40,000 volumes used to verify accuracy of materials being printed, Hanson said.

“We have our own copy editors and proofreaders here that read material before publication,” Hanson said.

Also at Sunday’s open house was Martin Doblmeier, who has completed two films about Seventh-day Adventists. The first film, “The Adventists,” explores the physical, mental and spiritual connections of Seventh-day Adventists, and how followers of the faith have enjoyed long life spans, among other benefits. Doblmeier’s second film, “Adventists 2,” tells the story of Seventh-day Adventists’ commitment to medical mission work and is being aired on public television.
Plates filled to the brim with cranberry relish, gravy, green bean casserole and a smattering of other holiday goodies packed the table, as attendees at a Better Living for South Carroll event picked them up.

They meandered to a table inside a larger conference room and sat down to eat a holiday meal complete with dishes traditional in name only. That’s because these particular foods were free of both meat and dairy at the cooking demonstration and tasting by the South Carroll Seventh-day Adventist Church’s health ministry Nov. 10.

There was no cream in the green bean casserole and no chicken stock in the gravy. The main course wasn’t a turkey filled with stuffing but rather a holiday tofu loaf that had a similar consistency to its meatloaf counterpart. There was even a dessert — a holiday bar that tasted as sweet as a fattening cookie, though the ingredient list indicated otherwise.

The event provided healthy alternatives to the typical full-fat holiday meal, though a vegan Thanksgiving isn’t the only way to eat healthy. There’s a plethora of quick-hit tactics to avoid weight gain during the holiday season.

November and December are packed with events that incorporate eating, such as Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day, said Alison Manger-Weikel, Carroll Hospital Center food, environmental and patient transportation services director.

“Then starts the round of parties, the office gatherings. People start baking and bringing things in to work,” she said, “and there’s just food everywhere. It’s traditionally not low-fat, not healthy. It’s just yummy.”

Diets that are high in sugar and saturated fats can spark inflammation, which is a villain in the public health world, registered dietitian Jane Kurtz said at the Better Living for South Carroll event.

Inflammation is part of the body’s immune system’s response to injury from bacteria, trauma and toxins. Chemicals are released from the damaged cells, which cause blood vessels to leak fluid into the damaged area — hence, swollen tissues, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Stubbing a toe or falling on a knee can cause acute inflammation. The area swells up, and then the puffiness steadily decreases as the area is healed.

But chronic inflammation is different. It can last for months or years and might require major lifestyle changes to make it dissipate, according to Kurtz. It can be linked to unhealthy diets, and a recent study shows that it appears to play a key role in the development of cancer, heart disease and diabetes, according to an American Institute for Cancer Research Nov. 7 press release.

Alleviating this food-driven inflammation requires a commitment to healthy eating. There are tactics to help, Kurtz said, like eating powerhouse foods, such as colorful fruits and vegetables, legumes and nuts.
There’s exercising and sleeping and avoiding cigarettes.

So, staying healthy during the holiday season — a time of parties and food aplenty — requires balance and moderation, according to several local dietitians.

“It’s not necessarily the food that’s so bad for you,” said Elisabeth D’Alto, in-store nutritionist at Martin’s Food Markets in Eldersburg. “It’s how much of that one food that you have can make it unhealthy. So having one sugar cookie here or there is not bad for you.”

But eating three or four or five of those sugar cookies atop a plate full of other desserts is. Thus, avoiding weight gain is linked to portion control, D’Alto said.

Imagine a long buffet table filled with all the usual holiday goodies. Now, D’Alto said, there are some healthy choices that can be made at the very beginning of the line.

Grab a small plate, she said, as this holds less food. There is always the opportunity for seconds if hunger persists.

Next, scour the options. When it’s time to load the plate, think in terms of the healthy food guidelines. That’s half a plate piled with fruits and vegetables, more than a quarter containing whole grains, less than a quarter plate of protein and some dairy on the side, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s guidelines.

Start with smaller portions, and eat the food slowly. Savor it. Before piling more on a plate, it’s important to determine if hunger still actually persists, Darlene Flaherty, Carroll County Health Department nutritionist, said.

If the goal is to stay healthy and maintain one’s weight, it all comes down to planning. It’s OK to indulge — maybe just not at every holiday party, maybe not every time a baked good is brought in to work, maybe not at every meal, according to Flaherty.

“The first thing I would say is to not use the holidays as an excuse to overeat at every opportunity,” she said. “I think people have to plan. I don’t think people should deprive themselves, but I don’t think they should look at it like, ‘I only get this one time of year so I’m going to have more than I normally would have.’”

Additionally, incorporating physical activity in before or after the big meal helps, D’Alto said. Coordinate a family football game, or take a stroll around the block.

“This way, when Jan. 1 comes around, you don’t feel like you’re starting from square one again,” D’Alto said. “A lot of people get caught up in the season — they’re shopping, they’re cooking, they don’t really have time to do anything.”

But making time for some physical activity, even if it’s less than the typical exercise regimen, is important, local nutritionists said. It’s setting small, achievable goals that get the blood pumping, like taking that walk during a lunch break.
There are portion control, balance and moderation. There’s exercise. But what if the dishes themselves were just plain healthier?

“There’s always those traditional things that I think are important for the memories and for family and for sharing,” Manger-Weikel said. “It’s those recipes you want to pass down. I think it’s really important to honor tradition, but it doesn’t mean you have to make the high-calorie, high-fat dishes.”

And according to local nutritionists, there are several easy ways to do this: incorporating whole grains when possible, such as in stuffing; using skim milk instead of cream or whole milk in mashed potatoes; buying fat-free evaporated milk instead of using the full-fat kind in pumpkin pie; sticking to low-sodium canned goods and broths and avoiding pre-packaged holiday goodies.

“Anytime you can make anything from scratch, the better you have control of the salt and the fat content of any recipe,” Manger-Weikel said.

Yet, the holiday season is more than rich, or healthy, dishes lining a packed buffet table.

“The holiday season doesn’t just have to be about the food,” D’Alto, Martin’s in-store nutritionist, said. “It’s about family. It’s about friends. It’s about family tradition.”