

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

HERALD

JULY/AUGUST 2025



UChicago Medicine



Advent Health



Extending Healing
Beyond the Hospital Door



During the recent Pathfinder Bible Experience event in Battle Creek, I wandered into history.

Not the kind stored in dusty archives, but the kind you can walk through, feel beneath your feet, and sense in the filtered sunlight through tall windows. The former Battle Creek Sanitarium still stands as a federal office building, an imposing tan and beige brick building, full of memories. I stood where fresh air once mingled with hope out on the patio beneath the colossal colonnade and where healthy meals were served with reverence on fine china in a majestic dining hall. It was more than a renowned health resort. It was a place where humans partnered with heaven.

What struck me most was how the mission of healing didn't stop there. In 1899, Drs. David and Mary Paulson left Battle Creek to serve the poor in Chicago. With 40 nursing students, they started what became the Life Boat Mission. One of their patients, Charles Ball Kimbell, a wounded Army private turned wealthy businessman, would later urge Dr. Paulson, "You ought to start a sanitarium in Hinsdale." The next day, they visited a plot of land with a brook, fruit trees and berry bushes. Kimbell bought the property and offered it to them—with 20 years to repay, no interest.

That generous act helped launch the Hinsdale Sanitarium. Today, the hospital continues to operate, now part of a thriving joint venture between The University of Chicago Medicine and AdventHealth. But it all began with a few selfless acts of courage.

So why revisit this history? Because it reminds us of something vital: God works through people. And, it's not just through those in high-profile roles or grand positions, but everyday believers willing to say yes.

As 1 Corinthians 12:18 (NKJV) says, "*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*" We're not here by accident. Each of us is placed with purpose.

And just a few verses earlier, Paul reminds us, "*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all*" (1 Corinthians 12:7, NKJV). The church, like a body, thrives when every part plays its role. Some lead. Others serve. Some support. Others comfort. But all are necessary.

Debbie



Lake Union HERALD

Official publication of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church/Lake Union Headquarters
lakeunionherald.org Vol. 117, No. 5

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Indexed in the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index
Member of Associated Church Press

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: ERIC HERZOG

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TELLING THE STORIES OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

The Lake Union Herald (ISSN 0194-908X) is published monthly (except January/February, May/June, July/August, November/December) by the Lake Union Conference, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287. Periodicals postage paid at Berrien Springs, Michigan, and additional mailing offices. Yearly subscription price is \$15. Vol. 115, No. 5. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to: Lake Union Herald, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287.

Note: If you are a member of a church in the Lake Union but are not receiving the Lake Union Herald, please request it through your church clerk or local conference secretary.

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Illinois: 630-716-3505, Indiana: 317-844-6201

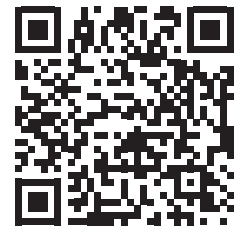
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How Community Drives our Focus

Health care is more than a service — it's a calling to stand with others in their most vulnerable moments. Grounded in compassion and guided by a deep sense of purpose, it offers healing hands and listening hearts. Inspired by Christ's example, it seeks to meet those who are sick and weary with boundless love and dignity.



Photo provided by JWC Media

▲ MONICA REED

But true care goes beyond treatment — it involves building relationships, fostering trust and creating a supportive environment where people can truly thrive. When health care is shaped by the voices of the community, informed by local leadership and committed to continuous improvement, it not only helps heal individuals but also strengthens the fabric of the community itself.

Each year, we conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment to better understand the challenges facing our communities and the disparities that demand action. This process helps us identify gaps in care, elevate underrepresented voices and take meaningful steps toward advancing health equity.

Our partnership with The University of Chicago Medicine gives us a unique opportunity to redefine health care access in the Chicago suburbs. This isn't just about expanding services; it's about removing the barriers to world-class care. By bringing academic-level medicine closer to home, we ensure patients no longer need to travel into the city to see top-tier specialists.

In the following pages, you'll learn more about our efforts to support health equity through initiatives focused on diabetes care, as well as drug and alcohol abuse prevention and education. This is just one way we ensure the needs of the community drive our focus and shape the way we deliver care — such as through our free

medical clinics held twice a year for the uninsured or underinsured.

At our most recent clinic, a paraplegic man with a complex medical history came to receive care. He had lost his job and health insurance and was struggling to make ends meet. Our volunteers and community partners worked tirelessly to ensure he received the care he needed. They arranged for him to receive health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, including a subsidy to help defray his monthly premiums. He received free medications from the Dispensary of Hope and was connected with the Family in Faith Food Pantry, which provided a program where he could order food in advance and have it delivered to his car.

This story is just one example of how our local Mission Clinics embody our mission to extend care to all people, regardless of their ability to pay. The clinic not only addressed immediate health care needs but also connected patients with resources for ongoing care — demonstrating a profound commitment to healing and community support.

As Christ responded to the suffering with grace, we are called to do the same — bringing comfort and dignity to those in need. Through every diagnosis, treatment and compassionate word, we reflect His care, offering hope, strength and healing where it's needed most. ■

Monica Reed, M.D., is president and CEO of UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



What Kind of Parent are You?



▲ ABRAHAM SWAMIDASS

Sociologist Reuben Hill conducted a study of thousands of teens and parents in Minnesota and found that different parenting styles produced different responses in children. His research identified four main categories: authoritarian, permissive, neglectful, and authoritative.

The Authoritarian Parent

Authoritarian parents act like dictators in the home. They are high on discipline but low on affection. These parents “give orders and expect immediate obedience—no questions asked.” Communication tends to involve arguing and resistance, especially as children grow older. Eventually, children raised this way often rebel after leaving home. When Paul told the Ephesians not to “exasperate your children,” he was warning against this kind of parenting that can lead children to reject faith altogether. While children of authoritarian parents usually behave well and follow rules, they may struggle with decision-making and develop a fear of punishment.

The Permissive Parent

Permissive parents focus on building close relationships but often lack the structure and discipline children need. A permissive mother might say, “I love my kids so much I can’t bring myself to discipline them.” These parents are emotionally engaged and let their children make their own decisions, such as what to eat or when to go to bed. They also tend to shield their kids from consequences. While these children may have high self-esteem and strong social skills, studies show they are more prone to problem behaviors and may perform poorly in school.

The Neglectful Parent

Neglectful parents provide neither love nor discipline. They communicate apathy—what the child

hears is, “I don’t care.” These parents range from being emotionally unavailable to outright negligent, sometimes due to their own unresolved trauma, addiction, or chaotic life circumstances. Children in these homes suffer deep emotional wounds. Their hope often lies in encountering Christ, being surrounded by godly role models, and receiving professional counseling.

The Authoritative Parent

Authoritative parents are considered the healthiest balance of love and discipline. These parents make expectations clear and explain both rules and consequences. While they listen to their child’s thoughts, the final decision rests with the parent. This style encourages independence and builds confidence, leading to higher self-esteem and academic success. Authoritative parenting isn’t about being perfect—it’s about providing a nurturing environment where children feel loved, heard, and guided.

No parenting style guarantees perfectly well-adjusted children. Every child will face hardship and failure at some point. But if we aim to relate to our children with both strength and compassion—exercising authority without tyranny—we must seek wisdom, insight, and love. Ultimately, our relationship with God will shape the way we parent and the legacy we leave behind. ■

Abraham Swamidass, DMin, is the Wisconsin family ministries director and pastor of the Janesville district.



What Will You Choose?

According to a 2022 Parkinson's Foundation study, nearly 90,000 people in the United States were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.



▲ YIN SCHAFF

This was a 50% increase from the previous rate of 60,000 diagnoses annually. The number of people with Parkinson's, a chronic neurological disease, is projected to continue to rise and is expected to reach 1.2 million by 2030.¹

Recent research suggests that a whole food, plant-based diet may help prevent Parkinson's disease and slow its progression because the diet is neuro-protective and lowers oxidative stress and inflammation. C-Reactive Protein (CRP) is a marker often used to measure inflammation in the body. It was found that CRP was consistently elevated in a meat-based diet and decreased in a whole food, plant-based diet.²

Inflammation is a protective response of the body to clear infection, repair tissues, and heal itself after injury. When inflammation sticks around too long, it becomes the root of many chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.³

Want to reduce inflammation? Start with your grocery list, advises Susan Block, a registered dietitian and diabetes educator at the Mayo Clinic.⁴ In other words, it is not pills from the pharmacy but nutrients from a whole food, plant-based diet that can reduce inflammation. Whole, plant-based foods are loaded with phytonutrients, low in fat, lower in toxins, and low in bacteria load. In contrast, animal products contain high amounts of fat and are a breeding ground for bacteria and pro-inflammatory toxins.

The apostle Paul counseled about life and richness in 1 Timothy 6:7-8: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (NKJV). The blessings in this life are not riches and possessions. Material gain is temporary. Contentment is letting go of worldly

instructions or desires or standards and letting God's instructions be part of our daily life whether growing in faith or in health.

Being healthy is truly a blessing. Not being healthy affects all aspects of life and causes lots of grief. Ellen White once wrote "...Religion tends directly to promote health to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-falling fountain of happiness. Would that all who have chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God."⁵

From the beginning, God prescribed a whole food, plant-based diet for His creation because He knows best. Friends, the time is now to take charge of your health if you have not done so. What small step can you take today to lower your inflammation process? What will you choose? ■

Yin Schaff is health ministries director for Wisconsin Conference.

- 1 "Prevalence & Incidence." Parkinson's Foundation. <http://www.parkinson.org>. Accessed March 10, 2025.
- 2 Barbaresko, Janet et al. (2013). Dietary pattern analysis and bio markers of low-grade inflammation: a systematic literature review. *Nutrition Reviews*. 71 (8), 511-527. Retrieved from <http://academic.oup.com>
- 3 Vivek, C.P. et al. (2024). Inflammation, The Cause of All Diseases. *Cells*, 13 (22): 1906. Retrieved from <http://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
- 4 Block, Susan RDN. (2025). Want to reduce chronic inflammation? Start with grocery list. *Speaking of Health*. Retrieve from <http://mayohealthsystem.org>
- 5 White, Ellen G. (1890) *Patriarchs and Prophets* (p. 600). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



Faithful Amid Challenges



▲ DENIS KAISER

James Sawyer may not be a household name among Adventist pioneers, but his story is one of quiet commitment, spiritual growth, and a desire to serve others—even across cultures and languages.¹

James hailed from Coopersville, Michigan. In the winter of 1858, he traveled six miles to the small town of Wright to attend a series of Adventist lectures by Joseph Birchard Frisbie. The messages stirred his heart, and by March of that year, his name appeared in the *Review and Herald* as a believer in “present truth.”

Not long afterward, in late 1859, James married 19-year-old Ansta Lester from Illinois. James worked as a schoolteacher and later as a surveyor, but his heart remained close to the church. In December 1861, he became a founding member of the Wright Seventh-day Adventist Church and served as its first clerk for nearly a decade.

James and Ansta’s journey was not without challenges. In the spring of 1863, Ellen G. White wrote a testimony addressed to both of them. She warned James against promoting speculative interpretations of Scripture that were out of harmony with the wider church. Ansta, though committed in some ways, was still growing spiritually. Ellen White gently but firmly counseled her to lay aside frivolous behavior and assume greater responsibility in her home and faith. “God help you both,” Ellen wrote, “to be united to serve and glorify God” (Lt 8, 1863).

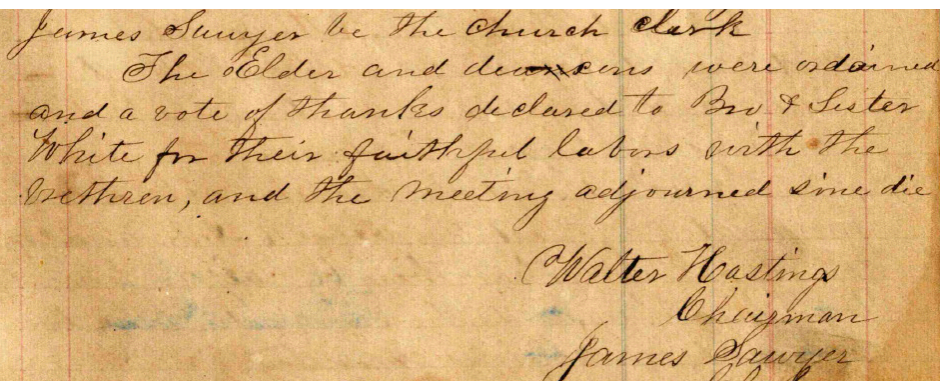
James responded with humility. In the June 9, 1863, *Review*, he publicly expressed a renewed desire to live wholly for God and rejoiced that Ansta had taken “a decided stand for the Lord.” Although church records do not mention when Ansta was baptized, James’s statement points to a hopeful transformation.

James’s vision extended beyond his local congregation. In 1873, he encouraged church leaders in Battle Creek to create a publication for Scandinavian immigrants. Motivated by his love for these communities, James even learned Swedish himself. His efforts helped launch *Svensk Advent Härold* in 1874—the first Swedish-language Adventist periodical in the United States. Later, he served as a city missionary in Chicago until his death in 1886.

Ansta also served the church in her own right, working for many years at the *Review and Herald* office. Her behind-the-scenes contributions, alongside James’s leadership and outreach, made them a team that—despite early struggles—left a meaningful imprint on Adventist history.

Their story reminds us that spiritual growth is often a journey, not a moment. James and Ansta experienced correction, change, and ultimately a deeper commitment to their calling. Their willingness to grow—and to serve beyond themselves—continues to inspire. ■

▼ A page in the Wright Church Record Book, 1861-1877, where the Wright Church was founded on Dec. 17, 1861. It shows James Sawyer’s name twice (voted as church clerk, and signed as clerk) and also a vote to thank “Bro. and Sister White for their faithful labors with the brethren.”



Denis Kaiser is an associate professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

¹ This article is based on [Denis Kaiser], “Sawyer, James (1829–1886) and Ansta Leonora (née Lester) (1840–1925),” in *The Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts with Annotations*, vol. 2, 1860–1863, ed. Timothy L. Poirier and Dwain N. Esmond (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2024), pp. 1084–1085.

¡Jesús Viene, Yo Iré!

La primera vez que asistí a un congreso mundial de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día fue en la ciudad de Atlantic City, estado de New Jersey, en el año 1970.



▲ Carmelo Mercado

Hacía solo dos años que había sido bautizado y todavía no tenía conocimiento de la estructura de la iglesia, y mucho menos que la Iglesia Adventista celebraba congresos mundiales cada cinco años. La amable pareja que nos había enseñado las doctrinas de la Iglesia Adventista nos llevó al evento que se realizaba a solo dos horas en auto desde Nueva York.

Lo que me impactó al llegar fue ver la diversidad de personas de distintos países que asistían. Jamás había visto tanta variedad de vestimentas tradicionales. Me impresionó también la amabilidad de cada persona con quien me encontraba. Pero lo que más me impactó fue el primer sábado del congreso al ver y escuchar a más de 30.000 personas cantar el himno “Los que aman al Señor” en inglés. Solo lo había escuchado en español.

El presidente de la Asociación General, el pastor Robert Pierson, presentó un sermón inspirador en el cual agradeció a Dios porque la Iglesia había alcanzado una membresía de dos millones; además, enfatizó la necesidad de un reavivamiento y reforma. Con el pasar del tiempo pude escuchar otros sermones del pastor Pierson, pero nunca se me había ocurrido pensar que trece años más tarde, en el año 1983, este siervo de Dios llegaría a predicar en mi ordenación al ministerio.

Desde aquella primera ocasión he tenido el privilegio de asistir a otros congresos mundiales. Este año me tocará servir por primera vez como delegado de la Unión del Lago y la División Norteamericana. La sesión quinquenal de la Asociación General es principalmente, una serie de reuniones espirituales y administrativas de la iglesia mundial. Durante esas reuniones, se eligen a los líderes mundiales de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día y se deciden temas globales como, por ejemplo, las creencias fundamentales de la iglesia así como asuntos

constitucionales y del Manual de iglesia.

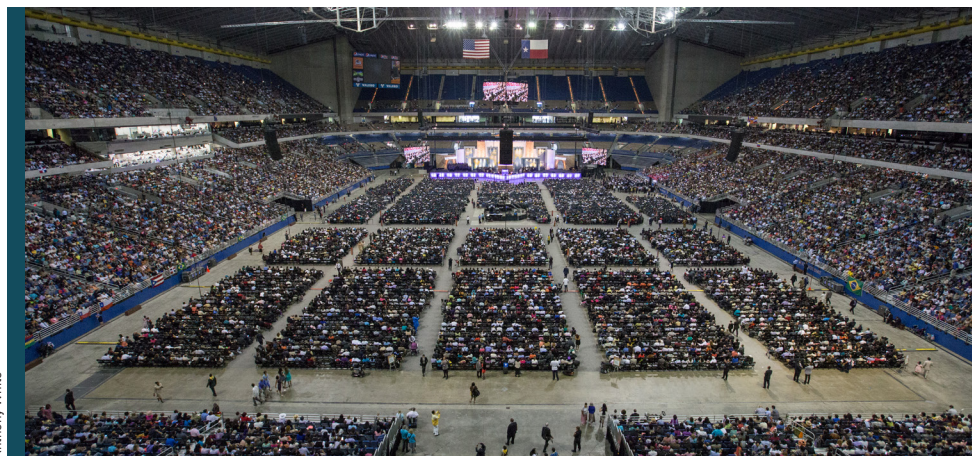
Para cada sesión se escoge un lema. El lema de la sesión del año 1970 fue *That the World May Know*, que traducido al español es “Que el mundo sepa”. El lema de la sesión que se realizará este año, 2025, en inglés es “*Jesus is Coming, I Will Go!*”, que en español significa “¡Jesús viene, yo iré!”

El pastor Ted Wilson, presidente de la Asociación General, nos invita a orar por las próximas reuniones y nos dice lo siguiente:

“Mientras esperamos que comience la sexagésima segunda sesión de la Asociación General, oremos para que Dios nos guíe en cada reunión y supliquemos por el derramamiento de la lluvia tardía del Espíritu Santo en anticipación a la pronta segunda venida de Jesucristo... Sigamos avanzando juntos, enfocándonos en la Santa Palabra de Dios, en la maravillosa obra del Espíritu Santo de reavivamiento y reforma personal y colectiva, y en la participación total de la membresía a nivel mundial, diciendo: “Sí, Señor, Iré, ayudando a alcanzar a millones de personas en todo el mundo con la esperanza del pronto regreso de Cristo”. ■

Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.

▼ 60.000 personas se reunieron para la sesión de la Asociación General en San Antonio, Texas en el año 2015.



Anthony White

Bringing Hope and Healing

UCHICAGO MEDICINE ADVENTHEALTH TEAM EMBARKS ON MISSION TO SERVE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



A group of volunteers from UChicago Medicine AdventHealth recently returned from a week-long mission trip to the Dominican Republic — with memories and experiences that will last a lifetime.

Partnering with AdventHealth Global Missions, AdventHealth University and local organizations, the team provided vital medical care, distributed wheelchairs and participated in a school construction project in the capital Santo Domingo.

At the medical clinic, the medical team treated more than 1,500 patients and dispensed nearly 5,000 prescriptions. In addition to clinical work, volunteers worked on a construction project, painting a newly built school in partnership with Maranatha Volunteers International. The school, soon to open its doors to local children, symbolized hope and opportunity, and the team's efforts helped bring that vision closer to reality.

The trip was not just about providing medical care or manual labor—it was about human connection. For many volunteers, the mission was as transformative for them as it was for the people they served.

"This mission trip felt like a reboot," said Claudia Cheboub, oncology assistant nurse manager at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale. "The experience was a beautiful reminder of what life is and what it can be with a little help of a higher power."

Genesis Berroa, consumer access lead specialist at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth La Grange, shared a touching experience from the clinic that left a lasting impression on her. "On my last day, I met a terrified 6-year-old boy," she said. "I happened to have a small dinosaur card in my pocket and gave it to him. Instantly, his tears vanished, replaced by the brightest smile. It reminded me that sometimes the smallest gestures can make the biggest difference."

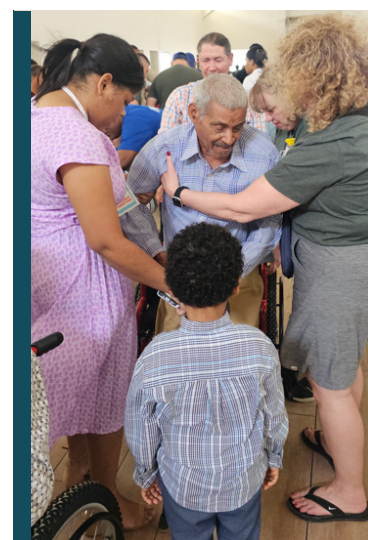
One of the most moving experiences of the trip came during the "Chair the Love" event, where

volunteers distributed wheelchairs to individuals who had been waiting for years. Katrina Anderson, inpatient pharmacy technician supervisor at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth La Grange, recalled meeting Jorge, a blind man who had been confined to his home due to mobility issues. "For him, this wheelchair meant freedom—the ability to go to the store, move around his home and sit outside. His gratitude was overwhelming," she said. "That moment brought tears to my eyes—it was I who felt blessed."

Cassandra Levitske, resident physician at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale, shared another powerful moment during the wheelchair distribution. "I met a man who had polio as a child and had lost the use of his legs. But his arms were incredibly strong, allowing him to care for his children," she shared. "We all flexed our arms in solidarity, celebrating his strength together. It was a beautiful moment of connection."

As the team returned home, they carried with them not just memories but a renewed commitment to extending the healing ministry of Christ. Their hearts were full—not only from the care they provided but from the kindness, resilience and gratitude they witnessed. "Our team's efforts in the Dominican Republic exemplified what it means to serve with compassion, faith and love," said Mark Bondarenko, executive director of mission and ministry at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth. "It reminds us all of the power of human connection and the impact of showing up for those in need." ■

Chris Zurales is manager of marketing and communications at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.





Retiree Volunteers to Pay Forward Compassionate Care Provided to His Late Wife

After Joanne Kowalczyk passed away from Alzheimer's disease last September at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale, her husband of 59 years, Jim Kowalczyk, felt a deep sense of gratitude for the compassionate care she received at the hospital during her final days.

"The care that Joanne received was just unbelievable," he said. "Everyone was very attentive, very methodical, very caring and very prayerful. They were truly concerned and, in some cases, got quite emotional. They also were concerned about me and my well-being. They often asked 'What do you need?' and always said 'God bless you' and 'We're praying for you.' I couldn't have asked for any better care."

Nurses, physicians and other staff members

lined a hospital hallway after Joanne died, praying and singing as Kowalczyk and the couple's three adult sons accompanied her body from her room. "I said some words, thanking everyone," he recalls with emotion. "It was special."

The suburban Chicago hospital had long been the Kowalczyks' preferred option for medical care. Hinsdale residents since 1978, the couple and their family, which also includes five grandchildren, "have been in and out of the hospital on many

different occasions,” Kowalczyk said. “All our doctors are there, and it always has been a very comfortable, caring place for us to go. We never have had a bad experience there.”

As he mourned Joanne’s death and reflected on the care they and their family had received at Hinsdale through the years, Kowalczyk decided he wanted to express his gratitude and to pay forward the kindness and compassion of the hospital’s staff in a personal and meaningful way.

He inquired about how he might give back to the hospital and volunteer in any way. “They quickly said, ‘We need help in our gift shop,’” he said.

Ministering to customers

Kowalczyk began volunteering in the shop last November. He works there Mondays and Fridays, helping customers with their purchases.

“It has been a wonderful experience,” said Kowalczyk, 82, who retired in 2022 after he and Joanne sold the national sales and marketing company they had operated together since 1986. “I see a lot of people. It’s a great place. The nurses, doctors and hospital visitors are all terrific.”

Drawing upon his many years of experience as a husband, father and grandfather, he enjoys helping new and repeat fathers who come into the shop to buy teddy bears for their newborns. “Some of the guys come in and say, ‘Just put it in a bag,’” he said. “I’ll tell them, ‘Congratulations, but let’s make this special.’ I’ll then get blue or pink tissue paper and wrap up the bear for them.”

He also cherishes opportunities to comfort customers struggling with difficulties in their lives. “There was one woman who had beaten cancer four times and now has stage four cancer,” he said. “She told me her story, and I listened and tried to be compassionate and understanding. Hopefully, the words you say in those situations help the person. You’re actually practicing your ministry in the gift shop.”

During such interactions, Kowalczyk always remembers the care Joanne and he received at the

hospital before she died. “A minister of care came in every day while we were there,” he said. “They sat. They talked. They wanted to know about Joanne. They were very understanding and compassionate folks. The chaplain also came in every day. He was another extraordinary person. He would recite a verse from the Bible, and we would pray.” The same chaplain later conducted the ceremony as Joanne’s body was wheeled from her room. “That made it even more special because I knew him and he knew me,” Kowalczyk said.

Experiencing God’s intervention

As Kowalczyk moves forward without Joanne, he reflects fondly on the life they built together – their children, their grandchildren, their travels and their adventures in business together. “I am really blessed,” he said.

He enthusiastically recounts how they first met at a wedding where she was a guest and he played in a band. He still remembers in detail what she wore on one of their first dates. And he readily recalls her reply when her mother asked why she liked him. “She said, ‘You know, I think he’s got a lot of potential,’” he said with a laugh.

He also speaks lovingly of the impact Joanne had on his life and the lives of others. “Joanne was a very Christian woman,” he said. “She was a great partner in life. She was a very giving, loving person. She helped me along with my spiritual journey. She cared a lot about people.”

Kowalczyk continues to feel Joanne’s presence in his life. He believes that volunteering is something she would have gladly wanted him to do. “I’m a believer, I practice my faith and I feel that God and Joanne have led me to this path,” he said. “I hope that I can comfort others the same way the hospital’s staff comforted Joanne and me.” ■

Julie Busch is associate vice president for marketing and communications at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



▲ Jim Kowalczyk and his late wife Joanne

“I hope that I can comfort others the same way the hospital’s staff comforted Joanne and me.”



Beyond the Hospital Doors

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM SEEKS TO FOSTER HEALTH EQUITY

When Esmeralda Castillo walked into the hospital room, the patient thought she was in for another lecture. What came next took her by surprise.

“I first met Esmeralda when I was going through alcohol detox,” says Susanna, 53, a patient at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale. “I was expecting the usual ‘You can go here; you can go there.’ Instead, she said, ‘What can I help you with?’”

It was that moment of servant leadership that Susanna remembered months later when she was trying to rebuild her life. She reached out to Castillo, a community health worker for UChicago Medicine AdventHealth. Ten months later, the two women are still working together as Susanna, who has maintained her sobriety, prepares to start a new job.

“I had a hard time going back to real life,” says Susanna, who asked that her last name not be used. “Esmeralda comes through with the things that are so difficult. Rides, nutrition; she’s been a post of strength for me.”

ADDRESSING OBSTACLES TO HEALTH

UChicago Medicine AdventHealth, a joint venture formed in 2023, is most readily identified by its four hospitals and more than 50 physician and outpatient clinics spread throughout Chicago's western suburbs. But the organization understands that health care does not end at a hospital's doors.

To help patients manage chronic health conditions when they return home, the health system started a health equity program 18 months ago. The program is designed to help give all community members equal opportunity to achieve optimal health.

The health equity team started with a focus on hospital inpatients. They analyzed patient records to find health conditions with outcomes that differed between groups of patients. Then they looked at factors that influenced those varying outcomes.

1 in 3
Americans
develop
diabetes¹

Diabetes is the most expensive chronic condition in the U.S., accounting for \$1 in every \$4.¹

▼ As the regional director of community health at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth, Fabiola Zavala works collaboratively with community partners to help patients address their needs.



Eric Herzog

FIND COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Whole Health Hub (wholehealthhub.com) is a free, online database that allows users to find local community organizations that provide a wide range of resources such as financial assistance, food, transportation, home goods and medical care. Users can search the database by zip code and area of interest.

“It could be health conditions, health behaviors or social determinants of health,” says Fabiola Zavala, regional director of community health. Social determinants of health (SDOH) are non-medical factors that influence a person’s health, such as a person’s race or gender, where they live or whether they have insurance.

“Then we thought about what the hospital could do to work collaboratively with community partners to address those needs and have an impact.”

They selected two health conditions that fit these criteria: diabetes and alcohol, and substance-use disorders. The traditional approach at this point would be to create educational materials telling patients how to improve their health.

Zavala’s team took a different course, focusing on tackling the obstacles that were preventing patients from becoming healthier.

“I’ve been around this circle long enough to know what I need to do,” Susanna says. “I needed someone to say, ‘How can I help you get there?’... If I had to go to a class, Esmeralda arranged it. When I have to go to the doctor, she has arranged it. She’s just been a great person to have around.”

Patients qualify for the program if they have diabetes or alcohol or substance-abuse disorder. They are then asked questions about factors such as whether they have access to healthy foods, transportation and places to exercise.

This program’s goals to improve health and decrease readmissions are integral to AdventHealth’s mission to Extend the Healing Ministry of Christ, Zavala says.

“Health equity work is so important because we want to make sure *everyone* has the opportunity to improve their health,” she says. “Identifying the needs that someone has and connecting them to the resources is a way of extending the healing ministry of Christ into our community.”

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

In 2024, 142 patients qualified for the organization’s Health Equity Initiative, and 106 accepted Castillo’s one-on-one support to help connect them with resources. Castillo first looks for programs offered by UChicago Medicine AdventHealth, such as FarmboxRx.

The health system, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, uses FarmboxRx to deliver a box of fresh produce and healthy grocery items weekly to patients who lack access to healthy foods.

“I love fresh food, but because of my past actions, I’m not able to drive so I can’t jump in the car and go to Jewel (the local grocery chain),” says Susanna, who participates in the program and is working on stabilizing her blood sugar levels. “When I get fresh food, it’s a blessing.”

Castillo also uses the Whole Health Hub (wholehealthhub.com), a website resource used by AdventHealth, to find local community organizations to help support patients.

“There’s almost always some sort of program out there, but the patient may not know about it or how to get connected,” Castillo says. “I enjoy my role of being the bridge between patients, health care providers and social service providers.”

Once she’s found a program, Castillo helps patients by scheduling appointments, arranging transportation or asking one of her many contacts at these organizations to reach out to the patient. She has found community organizations to help patients with food, transportation, health education, outpatient health care services, job training, employment and more.

“Her role as a community health worker is to make sure that the patient is actually connecting,” Zavala says. “If there are any barriers, whether it’s language or not being able to make that phone call, she’s able to make that warm hand-off with the community partner.”



▲ Esmeralda Castillo is a community health worker at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



Courtesy of Farmbox RX

Zavala and Castillo are also teaching hospital staff how to use Whole Health Hub. “We’re connectors,” Zavala says. “We’re making sure our staff knows about Whole Health Hub so that if they identify a patient with a need, they can easily look up a resource for them in their zip code.”

MEASURING SUCCESS

The health equity team is currently analyzing outcomes for the program’s first year, tracking measures such as the number and types of services that were provided, and self-reported measures such as increased consumption of fruits and vegetables or whether they still are food insecure. In the long term, the program hopes to see better glucose control for patients with diabetes, and improved rates of abstinence for patients with alcohol or substance dependency — both of which will reduce hospitalizations.

They also are tracking whole-person health measures, such as whether a patient’s

mental or emotional health has improved, whether they have reformed family connections or whether they feel more connected to a purpose.

“Our goal is not only to help everyone improve their health, but to improve lives,” Zavala says. ■

Michele Conklin is a writer for AdventHealth.

- 1 National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health promotion: <https://bit.ly/43B1BSN>
- 2 Boye KS, Lage MJ, Thieu VT. The Association Between HbA1c and 1-Year Diabetes-Related Medical Costs: A Retrospective Claims Database Analysis. *Diabetes Ther.* 2022 Feb;13(2):367-377. doi: 10.1007/s13300-022-01212-4. Epub 2022 Feb 7. PMID: 35129822; PMCID: PMC8873294. <https://bit.ly/4jttMZz>

Maintaining a healthy A1C (blood sugar) level can save nearly 17% annually in health care costs, according to a 2022 study in *Diabetes Therapy* journal.²



Recipe for Chickpea Chicken-Style Salad

A LIGHT, SAVORY SIDE OR SANDWICH SPREAD

This chickpea chicken-style salad is savory, slightly crunchy, and incredibly satisfying! Plus, it is full of healthy protein. Serve it in sandwiches, with crackers, or as a yummy side salad.

PREP INSTRUCTIONS

Yield: 8 (½ cup) servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: None

Total Time: 10 minutes

RECIPE INGREDIENTS

2 (15 oz.) cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 small onion, minced
1 stalk celery, minced
1 tablespoon Chicken-Style Seasoning
1 teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon celery salt

½ cup vegan mayonnaise or aioli

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add all ingredients except mayonnaise to a food processor.
2. Pulse until roughly chopped (you want it to still have lots of texture).
3. Spoon into a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add vegan mayo or aioli (a cold sauce consisting of an emulsion of garlic and olive oil) and stir well.
4. Place in the fridge to chill until ready to use.



5. Serve as a sandwich spread, with crackers, or as a filling in stuffed tomatoes for a fun summer salad.

Keeps one week in the refrigerator.

NOTE: If you don't have a food processor, you can easily mash this with a fork! ■

Recipe courtesy of Ariel Hinkle.

Nutritional Data

Calories: 242.95
Fat: 11.56 g
Saturated Fat: 0.72 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Sodium: 338.33 mg
Carbohydrates: 25.71 g
Fiber: 7.16 g
Sugars: 4.95 g
Protein: 8.11 g

School of Nursing Unveils State-of-the-Art Simulation Lab



The Andrews University School of Nursing has taken a significant leap forward in nursing education with the unveiling of its newly remodeled Skills and Simulation Lab. This upgraded facility, made possible through generous support from AdventHealth, aims to provide students with an immersive and technologically advanced training environment that mirrors real-world health care settings.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony held on March 3, 2025, in Marsh Hall on the Andrews campus, AdventHealth Endowed Chair of Nursing Barbara Harrison reflected on the transformative journey that led to the remodeled lab. She shared that the initiative began in September 2023 when the University identified a potential funding opportunity to enhance its nursing training facilities. Following thorough research, visits to other simulation labs and meticulous strategic planning, the proposal for the new lab received approval in March 2024. Construction began in July, marking a significant milestone in the University's dedication to advancing nursing education and providing students with cutting-edge learning experiences.

When students returned in August, they were welcomed into a completely reimagined learning space. "The look on their faces was priceless," said Harrison. The renovation introduced a spacious, state-of-the-art simulation lab, replacing what was previously three separate rooms. The upgraded facility now features a seven-patient bay area, a 30-seat classroom and a specialized simulation suite. The suite includes three patient rooms, a medication room and a dedicated debriefing area, fostering an immersive and dynamic learning environment.

University leadership, students and faculty were joined by representatives from

AdventHealth and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to celebrate the grand opening at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The facility features cutting-edge technology, including advanced audiovisual systems for faculty to conduct real-time simulations and debriefings. A newly installed Pyxis MedStation will provide students with hands-on experience in medication administration, while upgraded crash carts and EKG machines will enhance their clinical training. Among the additions are multiple next-generation simulation mannequins

equipped with artificial intelligence, lifelike movements and conversational speech capabilities. These mannequins enable students to practice responding to a range of medical scenarios, from routine patient care to emergency interventions.

Senior nursing student Tsitsi Pazvakawambwa, president of the Student Nurse Association, shared her enthusiasm for the new facility. "When I first started this program, our simulation lab was outdated, and we often had to improvise. Now, with this state-of-the-art facility, students have access to realistic, high-quality training tools that will significantly enhance their learning experience," she said. "I'm incredibly grateful for what they will offer future nursing cohorts." ■

Nicholas Gunn is a student writer with University Communication at Andrews University.



▲ Pictured from left to right: School of Nursing Chair Sara Kim, nursing student Tsitsi Pazvakawambwa, College of Health & Human Services Dean Emmanuel Rudatsikira, Andrews University President John Wesley Taylor V, Andrews University Board Chairman Artur Stele, Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Culture and Transformation Officer Olesea Azevedo, Multi-State Division CFO at AdventHealth Karsten Randolph, Andrews University Director of Facilities Management Steve Nash and AdventHealth Endowed Chair of Nursing Barbara Harrison participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the School of Nursing's new simulation lab.



▲ Nelson Khu (left), with his winning artwork, took home the first-place prize in the ninth-grade category, while Myrli Lozano earned an impressive second-place position.

Milwaukee Students Sketch their Way to the Top in State-wide Art Contest

In a remarkable achievement highlighting artistic talent and a commitment to fire safety education, ninth-graders Myrli Lozano and Nelson Khu from Milwaukee Seventh-day Adventist School have emerged as top winners in the 2024 Fire Safety Student Poster Contest. This annual statewide competition, open to K-12 students across Wisconsin, encourages young artists to use their creative skills to promote important fire safety messages.

Nelson Khu, with his winning artwork, took home the first-place prize in the ninth-grade category, while Myrli Lozano earned an impressive second-place position. Their eye-catching posters showcased their artistic ability and delivered powerful fire safety messages that resonated with the judges.

The contest, organized by the Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation (PFFWCF), received over 900 entries from students across the state, all of whom were tasked with creating artwork that conveyed fire safety in an engaging and impactful way.

The students were guided through the creative process by their dedicated teacher, Lula Allen. Allen, known for her passion for nurturing her students' talents, expressed immense pride in their accomplishment. "I am incredibly proud of Myrli and Nelson for their hard work and dedication," she said. "They poured their hearts into their artwork, and it's clear their message about fire safety is powerful and impactful. This recognition speaks not only to their talent but to their commitment to making a difference."

The contest submissions were judged based on the effectiveness of the fire safety message (50%), creativity (25%), and artistic ability (25%). Nelson's first-place poster and Myrli's second-place design stood out for their ability to blend compelling visual art with essential fire safety lessons. Through their work, they captured the judges' attention and conveyed the significance of fire safety in an educational and visually appealing way.

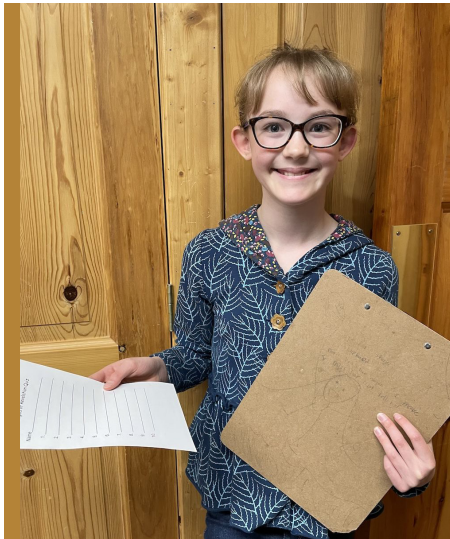
The Milwaukee School congratulates Lozano, Khu and Allen for their outstanding accomplishments, inspiring creativity and community involvement. ■

Bonn Banquirigo is vice principal/business manager at the Milwaukee Seventh-day Adventist School.



Grayling School Runs Evangelism Series for Pentecost 2025

On April 3, Grayling Seventh-day Adventist School launched a bi-weekly six-part evangelism series titled *“The Three Angels of Revelation 14”* in support of Pentecost 2025. The series, which focuses on the Three Angels’ Messages, was entirely student-led.



Photographs by Beth Wallace

The principal and teacher for Grayling School, Rachel Jameson, explained that the entire series was run by eight elementary school kids and two alumni. This number included Grayling students as well as four homeschool students. All aspects of the meeting—registration, song service, and the presentations—were led by the students. “The only thing I do,” she says, “is sit in the front. I’m there if they need me.”

Finn Tschetter, Cole Marsh, and Chandler Marsh each presented two meetings. Cole and Chandler Marsh are Grayling School alumni: Cole is 19 and a sophomore in college, and Chandler is 18 and a senior in high school. Tschetter, 14, who spoke for the first two evenings, shared that being a presenter for the series “has really opened my mind to the subject[s].” The eight grader believes the meetings were not only a blessing for the

community, but that they also “served a purpose as a revival in the local church.”

To advertise the meetings, emails were sent to over 5,000 individuals into the community, and the meetings were added as an event on the local news. Additionally, parents and students hung flyers at the library and grocery store, and Chandler Marsh posted flyers at his high school. Students also spent daily time in prayer, praying for the series and for those who would attend, reports Jameson.

Cole Marsh shared that speaking for the series was “a great experience,” but more importantly, it allowed him “to contribute to the spreading of God’s Word”, using his talents to impact others in a positive way.

Not only did the series make an impact on the 58 people, including church members and guests who have attended so far, but it has also made an impact on the students themselves. Jameson shares that at first, many were nervous, but after the first meeting, students were attached to their roles—with “one student so committed to registration that he doesn’t want any adult to take over his job!”

Chandler Marsh shared that presenting “helped me grow as a speaker and pay greater attention to the prophecy of Revelation. I’m glad I was able to grow so much personally.”

Before the meetings began, Jameson shared a quote from Ellen White with her students: “The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and loveable Christian.” She told her students that it didn’t really matter if they messed up—the only real way they could mess up was if they were unkind or rude. ■

Judy Ringstaff is the administrative assistant for communication in the Michigan Conference.



▲ The senior class of 2025

Student-Led Evangelistic Series Draws Community Interest in Battle Creek

The senior class at Battle Creek Academy (BCA) recently held a series of student-led revival meetings. Led by BCA's Bible teacher John Landis, the class members participated by greeting, leading song service, operating audio-visual equipment, and giving the evening sermons.

Landis was at the Michigan camp meeting in the summer of 2024 when he first learned of Pentecost 2025. Pentecost 2025 is a joint initiative by the North American Division (NAD) and the Foundation for Evangelism to encourage church leaders and members in North America to engage in evangelism projects, such as proclamation events, Bible studies and other evangelistic, with the goal of holding at least 3,000 proclamation initiatives division wide in 2025.

Landis knew this would be a wonderful

project for his students, so he applied for and received a grant from the NAD for his senior Bible class to conduct the meetings. The students were enthusiastic about the idea, and the planning began.

The first step was to choose a name for the meetings. The title "The Good News Is Better than You Think" was suggested to John by his father, and the students thought it was a perfect match for what they wanted to present. With the grant money, they were able to rent a large room at the Kool Family



▲ Aliyah Bateman gave a presentation on faith.

Community Center across the street from the Battle Creek Tabernacle and also provide nutritious snacks to attendees after each meeting. The five nightly meetings were held April 7 to 11.

The students chose the good news of the gospel as their central theme. Six speakers were asked by Landis to speak on five subjects, and they all eagerly accepted. Each student chose a topic that he or she was particularly interested in — General Good News, Trials, Faith, Forgiveness, and Trust God in All Circumstances.

The students wrote rough drafts of their presentations, and Landis worked with them to refine them. To add an individual touch, each student shared a personal testimony of how God had helped them through difficult times, increased their faith, and enabled them to forgive those who had hurt them.

Their many hours of practice paid off in a big way! The large meeting room was full every night; extra chairs had to be added a few of the evenings. The speakers were polished and excited as they shared their good news. On Friday evening after the last meeting, one of the students exclaimed, "I can't believe

the meetings are over already! We were just starting to really get into them!”

While most of the attendees at the meetings were Seventh-day Adventists, there were seven people from the community who also came. Two women who attended came to church at the Battle Creek Tabernacle the Sabbath after the last meeting. Landis invited them to the potluck after the service, and they proceeded to ask him questions about end-time events! As they ate their lunches, he gave them a Bible study on the prophecies of the Bible and how they are being fulfilled.

When asked what he hoped to accomplish by the meetings, Landis replied, “I wanted the kids to have the experience of witnessing for Jesus, to step out of their comfort zones and do something different than they had ever done before. And I also hoped that there would be some visitors from the community who would come and receive a blessing.” He added, “I have to admit that I was a little nervous the first night. But after the meeting started, it was obvious that the Holy Spirit was with the students. The Lord blessed in ways that were beyond my wildest dreams! I am so thankful that He rewarded their hard work.”

Senior presenter Aliyah Bateman stated how much the meetings meant to her, “The experience of speaking for the evangelistic meetings helped me to trust in God through my fear of speaking in front of people. It was also a blessing for me to share my story and bless others as well. God was and is working in my life. He gave me peace when I allowed myself to be used by Him.”

Landis is hoping that this series of meetings will be the beginning of many witnessing opportunities for the graduating seniors of Battle Creek Academy and for future BCA students. ■

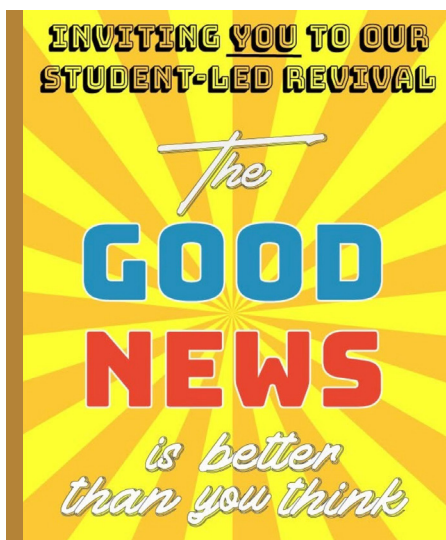
Charlotte Erickson is communication director for the Battle Creek Tabernacle Church.



▲ Attendees received warm greetings each night.



▲ The program opened with song service.



▲ Invitation to the meetings



▲ “We wanted our students to not only learn from textbooks but also from what Ellen White called ‘God’s great lesson book,’” said Yanina Jimenez, teaching principal at DGAS (pictured above).



▲ Armed with clipboards, students observe, measure, sketch and reflect.



Downers Grove Adventist School Turns Nature into a Living Classroom

At Downers Grove Adventist School (DGAS), the classroom doesn’t stop at the door—it stretches into the trees, trails and skies above. Through a thoughtfully crafted Outdoor Education program, students are stepping outside each week to experience learning in the natural world, guided by both academic standards and biblical inspiration.

“We wanted our students to not only learn from textbooks but also from what Ellen White called ‘God’s great lesson book,’” said Yanina Jimenez, teaching principal at DGAS. “Nature gives our students a chance to engage deeply—with each other, with their studies and with their Creator.”

Armed with clipboards and a mobile supply cart, DGAS teachers transform grassy schoolyards into interactive classrooms where students observe, measure, sketch and reflect. Each lesson is tied to the North American Division’s academic standards

and designed to be cross-curricular. During a recent session, students tackled topics from Genesis 1 alongside math concepts like symmetry and data collection, art through nature sketching, and poetry inspired by their surroundings.

This holistic approach fosters intellectual growth while encouraging students to see God in all they do. A list of learning objectives—from exploring and questioning to presenting and stewarding—helps frame each lesson. But perhaps the most cherished outcome is spiritual: Students are encouraged

to worship through what they discover in creation.

“Every walk outside becomes an opportunity to learn science, language, Bible, and character,” Jimenez explained. “But most importantly, it’s a chance to experience awe—and give thanks—for God’s creation.”

The program draws inspiration from Ellen G. White’s writings, which urge educators to view nature as a teacher. White once wrote, “The mighty trees of the forest... are living teachers,” and DGAS has embraced that vision wholeheartedly.

Parents and students have responded enthusiastically to the shift, noting the calming effect of outdoor learning and the excitement students bring home from their weekly explorations. In an age of screens and packed schedules, DGAS’s Outdoor Education program is offering something increasingly rare: space to reflect, connect, and worship in the natural world.

As Psalm 111:2 reminds them, “Great are the works of the Lord. They are studied by all who delight in them.”■

Yanina Jimenez, with Herald staff

Lake Union Hosts Groundbreaking Literacy Training for K–4 Educators

More than 100 educators gathered at the Howard Performing Arts Center on the campus of Andrews University on Tuesday, April 15, for an intensive training session focused on improving early literacy instruction across our schools in the Lake Union.

The event, sponsored by the Lake Union Conference and the North American Division Office of Education, featured training by presenters from the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI). They introduced participants to UFLI Foundations, a research-based early literacy program that has quickly become a top choice among educators.

Nicole Mattson, associate director of education for the Lake Union, emphasized the

urgency and purpose behind the event: “We want every student to be able to read confidently before he or she leaves third grade. That’s the goal. This training is a major step in preparing our teachers to use a proven, effective program that aligns with the latest research in literacy instruction.”

The training comes in response to both denominational curriculum updates and growing state requirements. Last summer, as part of the NAD’s curriculum review process, UFLI Foundations was selected, along with one other program, for recommendation due to its strong research base, affordability, and adaptability for multi-grade classrooms. UFLI quickly emerged as the preferred choice among conferences.

At the same time, several states within the Lake Union territory, including Indiana and Wisconsin, are requiring all schools to adopt reading programs based on the “Science of Reading” to address literacy deficiencies. The timing of the UFLI rollout aligned perfectly with a \$50,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment awarded to Marion County’s Seventh-day Adventist schools in Indiana. The grant provided funding to train teachers using the UFLI program and helped extend the training opportunity to a wider network.

Although the training was originally intended for K–4 teachers within the Lake Union, available space allowed for broader participation. In total, 114 individuals attended the session, including nearly 100 LUC teachers. Additional attendees included university professors, instructional coaches, principals, superintendents and educators from other unions. Throughout the presentations, the educators were excited and could be overheard saying: “We’ve needed this”, or “I can’t wait to do this in my classroom.”

Mattson said: “This is more than just professional development. This is about changing the trajectory of a child’s life by giving them the tools to become lifelong readers. We’re excited to support our teachers with what they need to make that happen.” ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.





▲ Golden Eagles

Pathfinders Explore Adventist Roots, Excel at Bible Experience in Battle Creek

On April 25 and 26, hundreds of Pathfinders from across the North American Division and beyond converged in Battle Creek, Michigan, for the North American Division-sponsored Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE).

Participants had the opportunity to tour the Adventist Historic Village and visit the former site of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, immersing themselves in the rich heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Sabbath worship program featured music by Andrews University students and a sermon by Rahel Wells, professor in the Department of Religion and Biblical Languages at Andrews University.

Of the 90 teams that participated in the event, seven were from the Lake Union Conference. These teams spent months committing the books of Romans and 1 Corinthians to memory, and their dedication showed—six of the seven teams earned first-place rankings.

HERE ARE THE FULL RESULTS FROM THE LAKE UNION:

Lake Region Conference

Shiloh Trailblazers – *First Place*

Michigan Conference

Ann Arbor Anchors, Conquerors in Christ –

First Place

Berrien Springs Spanish Golden Eagles,

Alabare We Will Praise – *Second Place*

Eau Claire Critters, The Aquarium – *First Place*

Holland Huskies, God's Homies – *First Place*

Kalamazoo Kampers, PBE and Jam – *First Place*

Stevensville Challengers, Bread – *First Place* ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.



▲ Stevensville Challengers



▲ Top to bottom: Eau Claire Critters, Ann Arbor Anchors, Holland Huskies. Kalamazoo Kampers, Shiloh Trailblazers



CARING HEART AWARD 2025

ACADEMY STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR CARING HEARTS

The Lake Union and North American Division's Office of Education believe that teaching young people to be actively involved in witnessing and service activities is central to the educational goals of the school and the mission of the church. For this reason, the Caring Heart Award for Christian Service has been established to give recognition to those secondary students who have demonstrated a personal commitment to active service and witnessing activities.

The Caring Heart Award is provided to each North American Division-accredited senior academy that has selected an eligible candidate. The award consists of a special scholarship award certificate with a value of \$600, paid by the Union, and is accompanied by a plaque and engraved Bible provided by the NAD Office of Education.

Below are the recipients for the 2024–2025 school year. The following comments are from nominations submitted for the Caring Heart Award:

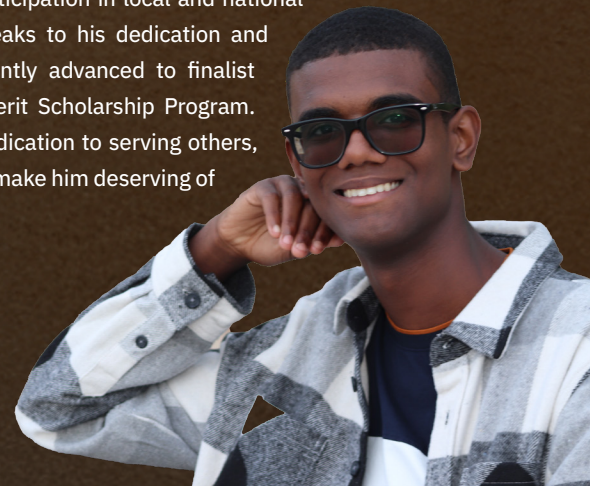
ANDREWS ACADEMY

Andre Henry has consistently distinguished himself as a leader among his peers, both in and out of the classroom. He has held various leadership roles within the student body, currently serving as the president of the student association. In each of them, Andre has led with integrity, empathy, and a clear vision. He has a remarkable ability to inspire others, foster collaboration, earning the respect and admiration of his peers and teachers alike.

Andre's sense of responsibility is evident in every endeavor he undertakes. Whether he is preparing for a rigorous national academic competition or organizing a service project, Andre commits himself fully, setting a high standard for his peers. His dedication to excellence is not driven solely by personal determination but by a genuine desire to serve and uplift those around him.

Andre has inspired his peers to take action, making a meaningful impact on the lives of many. His service efforts are always thoughtful and well-planned, demonstrating his deep empathy and genuine desire to create positive change. Andre does not merely fulfill service requirements; he leads by example, modeling a lifelong commitment to giving back.

Andre's academic record is nothing short of outstanding. He has a passion for learning that extends beyond the classroom; one of his latest projects and research has been writing his own music as part of seeking opportunities for enrichment. His participation in local and national academic competitions speaks to his dedication and perseverance. He has recently advanced to finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship Program. His passion for learning, dedication to serving others, and capacity for leadership make him deserving of the Caring Heart Award.



ASPIRE ACADEMY

Kadyn Fields is a remarkable young man whose Christ-like character and spiritual leadership have shone brightly throughout his time at ASPIRE Academy. When tragedy struck our community with the loss of one of our students, Kadyn sprang into action without hesitation. He designed and organized custom sweatshirts for grieving family and friends. These were small tokens that brought comfort and unity during an unimaginably difficult time. This compassionate initiative spoke volumes about his genuine concern for others and his willingness to serve.

Beyond that singular moment, Kadyn's everyday actions continually uplift those around him. He looks out for his classmates by offering a listening ear, stepping in to pray with someone in need, or helping a peer tackle difficult schoolwork. His support for teachers is equally steadfast; he offers encouragement, assists with classroom tasks, and models respect for their positions and ministry in education.

Kadyn's unwavering integrity and dedication to living out his faith have inspired his peers and teachers alike to pursue lives of purpose and compassion. His consistent demonstration of high moral standards, genuine empathy, and a heart devoted to service exemplify the very essence of Christian leadership.

Finally, Kadyn was honored this year with the Virtue in Action Award by ASPIRE Academy in recognition of his spiritual leadership. Through his compassionate service and humble heart, Kadyn reminds us that genuine greatness is measured by the grace-filled love we share and the lives we uplift for Jesus.



BATTLE CREEK ACADEMY

Aliyah Bateman has attended Battle Creek Academy for 13 years. She has been a member of the National Honor Society for three years and has been on the principal's list maintaining a grade point average of 3.75 or higher throughout her high school career.

Aliyah truly has a servant's heart, always seeking to be God's hands and feet, and serving with a smile on her face. In her church she has helped in many roles including a VBS helper, a TLT Pathfinder, a member of the audiovisual team, singing special music and with a praise team. She is currently the president of the NHS. She has faithfully worked at BCA in



CARING HEART AWARD 2025

various roles throughout the school year and summer months to help pay for her tuition. She has also been a mentee in the [Partnering For Eternity mentorship] program during her high school years.

After high school Aliyah will attend college with the possibility of pursuing a degree in education and mission work, if this is what God is calling her to do.

Always willing to be a cheerful helper, friend to all, with a kind and compassionate heart for everyone, Aliyah has all the characteristics that the Caring Heart Award represents.

GREAT LAKES ADVENTIST ACADEMY

Everyone on the campus of Great Lakes Adventist Academy would agree that the Lord has blessed **Naomi Uwineza** with a caring heart as evidenced by her deep and genuine care and love for others, a reflection of her abiding relationship with Jesus. One of the outlets that Naomi has been afforded to demonstrate her care for others is in her service as a residence hall assistant. She is so attentive, comforting, and supportive of "her girls", not only while she is actively on the clock, but at all times. She serves with a cheerful and willing spirit.

Like Jesus, Naomi has a way of being honest and direct, yet never harsh nor condescending. Others know that she has a deep concern for their wellbeing, especially with her gentle and loving approach. Despite her family having to overcome much adversity as a first-generation immigrant family, with the Lord's help, Naomi and her siblings are determined to be overcomers through education, dedication, and hard work. She remains strong and positive even when she is tired, and she will often put others' needs ahead of her own. Anyone who knows Naomi knows that she has a profound commitment to her Adventist faith, a connection to Jesus through meaningful Bible study and prayer, and is a living example to those around her of a selfless Christian servant leader.





HINSDALE ADVENTIST ACADEMY

Gabrielle Velasquez is an example of what it means to live out our school's core values: Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, and Integrity. She is always willing to lend a helping hand, demonstrates unwavering reliability, and volunteers her time selflessly. Gabrielle's courage to speak the truth and stand up for what is right reflects her strong character.

In addition to her kindness and leadership, Gabrielle is actively involved in our varsity ladies' volleyball and basketball teams, where she pours her heart into supporting her teammates. You will also see her leading out in our school musicals, choirs, band and talent shows. Whether she's front and center or working behind the scenes, Gabrielle is constantly contributing her talents for the greater good.

Her consistent kindness, warm smile, and servant-hearted spirit have helped foster a positive culture here at HAA. She goes out of her way to encourage and support those around her, especially younger students, serving as a positive role model.

INDIANA ACADEMY

Cing Lam Mang truly demonstrates a "caring heart" with her kindness and her smile. Over the four years she has been at Indiana Academy she has shown accountability, leadership, and a Christ-like heart. Cing loves music and has been willing to share her talent with others. She has been engaged with music from an early age at church and she has been very involved here at Indiana Academy. Her talent for singing has made her well-known around the world in her Zomi church community.

During Cing's junior year she was the girls captain in gymnastics. She is a quiet leader, but the girls loved her, and she was able to foster cohesiveness and

create a strong girls' routine. As a resident assistant her senior year she has taken the job very seriously and worked hard to help the girls on her hall grow academically and spiritually.

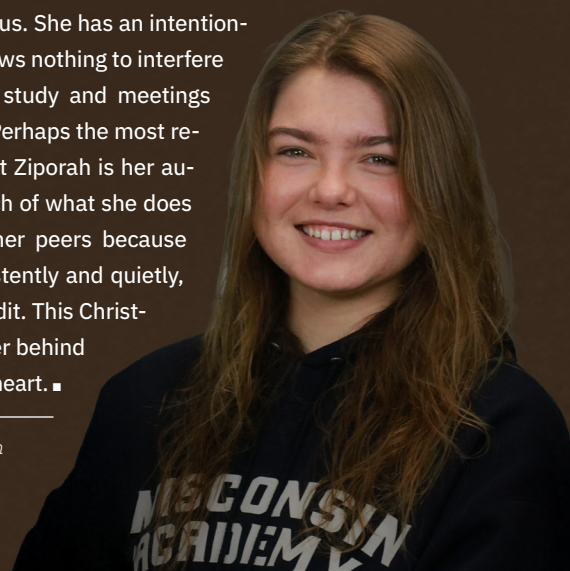
Cing never complains and is always willing to help. She has an exceptional dedication to supporting others and a deep concern for the well-being and salvation of those around her. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that others feel cared for, valued, and supported in every possible way.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY

Wisconsin Academy senior **Ziporah Rittenhouse** has a quiet, but unmistakably powerful positive influence for Jesus on our campus. She is known for being approachable, kind, and for making herself available, especially for those adjusting to boarding school life. Instead of always sitting with the same group of friends at meals, she goes out of her way to sit at different tables, making sure that no student eats alone. She is a core member of the praise team and is always willing to help with student-led church, dorm worship, or wherever else she might be needed. Her consistently cheerful and positive attitude is infectious. As someone who knows her well said, "She's literal sunshine."

Ziporah's attitude is rooted in her faith and solid relationship with Jesus. She has an intentional prayer life and allows nothing to interfere with personal Bible study and meetings with the Bible club. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Ziporah is her authentic humility. Much of what she does goes unnoticed by her peers because she does it so consistently and quietly, never looking for credit. This Christ-like spirit is the power behind her incredible caring heart. ■

*Compiled by the Lake Union
Education department.*





▲ Pictured left to right: Matteo Rago, Jennifer Gray Woods, Gwendolyn Powell Braswell, Paula Dronen, Amy Ratsara, Heather Bergmann, Todd McFarland, Mark Ingersoll, Gianluca Bacchiocchi, Abygayle Jacques (prelaw student), Timothy Newbold (not pictured: Michael Nixon).

Adventist Attorneys Connect for First Lake Union Fellowship in Over 20 Years

For the first time in more than two decades, Adventist attorneys from across the Lake Union gathered for a day of fellowship and connection at the union headquarters in Berrien Springs, Michigan. The event, held on Sabbath afternoon May 17, brought together legal professionals who share not only a calling to judicial fairness but a commitment to faith.

The keynote speaker was Todd McFarland, deputy general counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. McFarland emphasized that what distinguishes an Adventist attorney is not just the

work they do, but the purpose behind it. “It’s not so much what we do, but why we do it—and who we do it for,” he said, highlighting the role of Christian lawyers in building a better society.

In addition to reflecting on the spiritual dimensions of legal work, McFarland reported on recent religious liberty cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and discussed their potential implications for the church.

The gathering was more than a professional networking event—it was an opportunity for the lawyers to build relationships and support each other in their unique vocations. “It is such a blessing to be able to make connections with other Adventist attorneys in our union who are engaged in so many different areas of law,” said Union attorney Jennifer Woods, who helped organize the event. “I hope this is just the beginning of many more Lake Union attorney fellowships to come.”

Following the keynote presentation and discussion, attendees shared a meal together and further deepened their purpose.

“Having an opportunity to meet other Adventist attorneys was essential,” said Amy Ratsara, an assistant prosecutor in Kalamazoo County. “While Adventist lawyers joke ours was not among the traditional career paths celebrated by our church, Ellen White promised that as Daniel, there would be those who stand as God’s witnesses in their work in halls of justice. Encouraging one another in our profession and faith will help us fulfill that call.”

If you are an Adventist attorney interested in joining future events, contact Jennifer Woods at jennifer.woods@lakeunion.org. It should also be noted that the group welcomes pre-law and law students to the gatherings. ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the *Lake Union Herald*.

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	July 4	July 11	July 18	July 25	Aug. 1	Aug. 8	Aug. 15	Aug. 22	Aug. 29
Berrien Springs, Mich.	9:23	9:21	9:16	9:10	9:03	8:54	8:45	8:34	8:23
Chicago	8:28	8:26	8:21	8:15	8:08	7:59	7:50	7:39	7:28
Detroit	9:11	9:09	9:04	8:58	8:51	8:42	8:32	8:21	8:10
Indianapolis	9:16	9:13	9:09	9:04	8:57	8:49	8:40	8:30	8:19
La Crosse, Wis.	8:49	8:46	8:42	8:35	8:27	8:18	8:08	7:57	7:45
Lansing, Mich.	9:19	9:16	9:12	9:05	8:58	8:49	8:39	8:28	8:17
Madison, Wis.	8:39	8:37	8:32	8:26	8:18	8:09	7:59	7:48	7:36
Springfield, Ill.	8:30	8:27	8:23	8:18	8:11	8:03	7:54	7:44	7:33

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

1. How often do you typically read the *Herald* magazine?

- ☐ Every issue ☐ Most issues
☐ Occasional issues ☐ Never read an issue

2. How much of each magazine do you read?

- ☐ All of it ☐ Most of it ☐ Some of it
☐ None of it

Using either the list below, the Table of Contents (on page 3) or by flipping through the magazine, please answer the questions that follow:

- Feature articles which focus on a particular theme or topic for that issue
- Perspectives (editorial, Lest We Forget, Conversations with God, Conexiones, One Voice)
- Evangelism (Sharing Our Hope, Telling God's Stories, Partnership with God, On the Edge)
- Lifestyle (Family Focus, Alive & Well)
- Current Matters (AdventHealth, Andrews University, other News stories, Calendar of Events, Mileposts, Classifieds)

3. What type of articles would you like more of?

4. What article(s) do you always read?

5. What article(s) do you never read?

In general, the articles should be (check one):

- ☐ Shorter ☐ Longer ☐ Remain same

Welcome to the *Lake Union Herald* readership survey. We are asking for a few moments of your time to make sure we hear your opinions and suggestions so the *Herald* magazine can best serve your interests. Your participation is entirely voluntary. By answering these questions, you're helping us gain a clear understanding of what you expect to see in these pages, as well as how best to engage with you on social media, which helps us produce content that is a true reflection of interests and concerns to our Lake Union members.

6. On a scale of 1–10, how valuable is the content to you?

7. What article topic would you consider to be the most memorable in the last year?

8. What do you like most about the *Herald* magazine?

9. What is it that you like least about the *Herald* magazine?

10. Are there any changes or improvements you would like to suggest?

11. If there were additional content from the *Herald* magazine available online only, how likely are you to go to the website and read it?

- ☐ Not at all likely ☐ A little
☐ Moderately ☐ Very likely

12. Which social media platforms do you use most to engage with faith-based content?

- ☐ Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ X (Twitter)
☐ TikTok ☐ Snapchat ☐ other

13. What type of digital content do you find most engaging? (Select up to two)

- ☐ Short devotional videos ☐ Sermon clips
☐ Testimonies and personal faith stories
☐ Bible study resources ☐ Podcasts
☐ Infographics/Bible verses
☐ Live Q&As or discussions

How can The *Herald* improve its digital and social media presence?

Please rate the quality of the current *Herald* magazine on the following:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	No opinion
Content						
Cover						
Ease of read						
Layout & Design						
Photography						
Writing						

Of what conference are you a member?

- ☐ Indiana ☐ Illinois ☐ Michigan
☐ Lake Region ☐ Wisconsin ☐ None ☐ Other

What is your age? ☐ under 25 ☐ 25–34

☐ 35–49 ☐ 50–64 ☐ 65–79 ☐ 80+

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

Please cut out the page and mail complete survey by August 31, 2025, to: *Lake Union Herald*, PO Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Or, go online to fill out the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z98ZTHY>

Do you subscribe to the weekly e-newsletter?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please sign me up (provide info. below)

Email address

Name



Fill out TODAY for a chance to win a \$100 gift card!

MILEPOSTS

HAMLIN, Barbara N. (Medford), age 88; born July 1, 1936, in Six Lakes, Mich.; died Jan. 28, 2025, in Midland, Mich. She was a member of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. She is survived by her son, Richard Hamlin; daughters, Connie (Jay) Hickman, Carol (Keith) Parris; 11 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. A funeral service was conducted by Pastor John Glass on Feb. 6, 2025, at Rose Hill Cemetery in Berrien Springs, Mich. In memoriam, donations may be made to Your Story Hour or 3ABN.

KELLEY, Linette S. (Sutton), age 81; born June 25, 1943, in Yale, Mich.; died April 3, 2025, in Worcester, Mass. She was a

member of the College Church of Seventh-day Adventists in South Lancaster, Mass. She is survived by her husband, Michael C. Kelley; sons, Sean M. Kelley, Ryan C. Kelley; brothers, John (Jack) Sutton, Glenn Sutton; sisters, Dorothy (Sutton) Knecht, Ardith (Sutton) Trubey, Christina (Sutton) Peterson; six grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. A memorial inurnment was held in Massachusetts.

KNEPEL, Donald, age 94; born Dec. 11, 1930, in Milwaukee, Wisc.; died March 25, 2025, in Oshkosh, Wisc. He was a member of the Fox Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Neenah, Wisc. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis (Beaumont) Knepel;

sons, Keith (Sheri Klevgard) Knepel, Richard Knepel; daughter, Lois (Gary) Salzieder; and six grandchildren. A private inurnment was held April 13, 2025, in Wisconsin. Cards of sympathy or a gift in memoriam can be sent to 1345 Candlelight Court, Oshkosh, WI 54904.

MIRANDA, Julia “Julie” C. (Cáceres Thomann), age 81; born June 18, 1943, in El Espejo, Chile; died March 22, 2025, in Berrien Springs, Mich. She was a member of the Eau Claire Spanish Church in Eau Claire, Mich. She is survived by her husband, Alcides “Al” Miranda; sons, Alcides Miranda Jr. and Allan Miranda; daughter, Jessica

Miranda-Bevier; brothers, Carlos, Victor; sisters, Norma, Iris, Nora, Graciella; nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. The family has chosen not to hold a memorial service at this time. To remember Julie, they are establishing the Julie Miranda Memorial Fund. Donations will be used to refurbish the windows of the Eau Claire Spanish Church, in accordance with Julie’s wishes. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Julia Miranda Memorial Fund. Please make checks or money orders payable to the Julia Miranda Memorial Fund at Berrien County Spanish Church. Address: 6706 E Main St., Eau Claire, MI 49111

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at www.lakeunionherald.org. Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside front cover.

CLASSIFIEDS

SERVICES

Shop for New/Used Adventist Books: TEACH Services offers used Adventist books at www.LNFBOOKS.com or new book releases at www.TEACHServices.com or your local ABC. Authors let us help you publish your book with editing, design, marketing and worldwide distribution. Call 706-504-9192 for a free evaluation.

Move with an award-winning agency—Apex Moving

+ Storage partners with the General Conference to provide quality moves for you. Call us for all your relocation needs. Contact Marcy Danté at 800-766-1902 or visit our website: apexmoving.com/adventist.

Facing a challenge? Have a concern? At LifeTalk Radio we believe in prayer and want to pray for you. Whatever your problem, God is bigger. Share your prayer needs at: LifeTalk.net/prayer. Live with hope! Listen at LifeTalk.net

Join Streams of Light International for life-changing mission trips! Share hope, spread truth, and experience the joy of service. Connect with people, pray with those in need, and make an eternal impact. Whether you’re a seasoned volunteer or new to missions, there’s a place for you. Learn more at StreamsOfLight.net.

Considering Rural Living? Explore Greeneville, TN! Located near the Smoky Mountains, Greeneville Adventist Academy has an accredited SDA K-12 day school program, supported by two constituent churches,

prioritizing the Bible, evangelism, mission trips, academics, and a high-quality music program (voice, band, bells and strings). MyGAA.org / 423 639-2011.

Desire Cumberland, TN, country living? Starry nights? Collegedale closeness?

Rent my beautiful upstairs! Furnished, private entrance, porches, tile bathroom, kitchen, located on campus of Laurelbrook Academy in Dayton, TN, with 2000+ acres, trees and trails, lakes, organic greenhouses, farm, nursing home, and several churches. \$650/mo., Please call 423-504-6143.

EMPLOYMENT

Andrews University seeks qualified applicants: Andrews University is seeking qualified Seventh-day Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling our mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. If this is of interest to you, please check out our current openings at: andrews.edu/jobs

Union Adventist University is seeking applicants for a full-time nursing faculty. This individual will function as a lead course instructor for a medical-surgical or critical care course, including performing didactic and clinical instruction as well as recruiting and supervising clinical instructors. Doctoral degree preferred, master's degree with desire to continue at the doctoral level required. Full benefits package including health care, tuition assistance, retirement plan, and many other benefits. See job description and instructions for application at uau.edu/employment.

Union Adventist University is seeking applicants for a history professor to teach various courses in global non-western history, cultural history, political science, and/or ancient/classical history in the Politics, History, and International Relations program. Ph.D. in History preferred, master's degree required. This is a full-time, exempt position. Please see the job description and apply at uau.edu/employment

Union Adventist University is seeking applicants for Director of

Records/Registrar. This is a full-time, exempt position. The registrar ensures the integrity, accuracy, and security of all academic and educational records and helps to ensure compliance with federal, state, and other regulatory agencies. Excellent benefit package including tuition assistance. See job description and apply at <http://uau.edu/employment>

Pacific Union College seeks qualified candidates to fill open positions in fulfilling our mission to Learn with Purpose, Rise in Faith, and Serve in Love. Beautiful mountain campus, minutes to shopping, an hour+ drive to ocean and skiing. If interested, please check out our current openings at: puc.edu/campus-services/human-resources/current-job-postings.

We are seeking certified teachers to join us at **Sycamore Academy**, an online school serving Grades K-12. Work part-time from home, providing live teaching and tutoring sessions in a Zoom environment. For more information, call 817-645-0895.

ASAP Ministries is seeking a mission-minded senior accountant to work closely with the finance director in overseeing financial operations at our Berrien Springs, Michigan, office. This position requires attention to detail and a solid understanding of accounting principles. For more information, see our listing at www.asapministries.org/employment or email HR@asapministries.org.

Fifty words maximum. No limit of insertions. Rates: \$36 per insertion for Lake Union church members; \$46 per insertion for all others. A form is available at www.lakeunionherald.org/advertising/classifieds to either print and fill in your ad or submit and pay through our online portal. Ads must be prepaid. Make money order or check payable to the Lake Union Conference. There will be no refunds for cancellations. The Lake Union Herald cannot be responsible for advertisements appearing in its columns, and reserves the right to edit ads in accordance with editorial policies. The Lake Union Herald does not accept responsibility for typographical errors. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

JULY

- 5 Local Church Budget
- 12 GC Session Offering: Digital Strategy for Mission (GC)
- 19 Local Church Budget
- 26 Local Conference Advance

AUGUST

- 2 Local Church Budget
- 9 Christian Record Services* (NAD)
- 16 Local Church Budget
- 23 Local Conference Advance
- 30 Local Church Budget

We know God's beauty is all around us—and we'd love to see how you enjoy it! Whether it's a peaceful hike, a backyard gardening moment, cuddles with your furry companions, or a joyful picnic with loved ones, we want to celebrate those snapshots of God's handiwork in your everyday life.

SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE PHOTO WITH A QUICK CAPTION OF YOU ENJOYING NATURE WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

— big smiles, muddy paws, sunrises, laughter and all — and help us showcase the joy of living in His creation for a special feature in our October issue!

Deadline: July 15, 2025
Submit to: creation@lakeunion.org



JULY & AUGUST

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

GENERAL EVENTS

June 9–Aug. 14: *The Crayon Box Children's Learning Center: Camp Kindness and Camp Cardinal*

July 21–23: *Leadership Conference, Virtual*

July 27–Aug. 15: *2025 Early College Experience*

Aug. 1–3: *Summer Graduation Weekend*

Aug. 18: *First day of school for Ruth Murdoch Elementary and Andrews Academy*

Aug. 18–24: *"First Stop" and New Student Orientation*

Aug. 24: *Registration for University-level students*

Aug. 25: *Fall semester begins for University-level schools*

ILLINOIS

July 30 – Aug. 2: *Family Camp Meeting, Camp Akita*

Aug. 29 – Sept. 1: *Hispanic Camp Meeting, Camp Akita*

INDIANA

Aug. 1–3: *Club Leadership Training, Timber Ridge Camp*

Aug. 25–28: *Hispanic Evangelistic Caravan, Indiana*

Aug. 29 – Sept. 1: *Hispanic Camp Meeting, Timber Ridge Camp*

LAKE REGION

July 1–7: *Youth & Young Adult Legacy Devotion*

July 19: *Men's Ministries Rally (Illiana)*

July 24–27: *Pathfinder Camporee, Camp Wagner*

Aug. 1–7: *Youth & Young Adult Legacy Devotion*

Aug. 29 – Sept. 1: *Hispanic Camp Meeting, Camp Wagner*

MICHIGAN

Aug. 8–9: *iShare Conference, Great Lakes Adventist Academy*

Aug. 10: *Evangelism Training, Conference Office*

Aug. 15–17: *Adventurer Leadership, Camp Au Sable*

Aug. 17–19: *CAMPUS Leadership, Camp Au Sable Cedar Lodge/Village*

Aug. 22–24: *Pathfinder Leadership, Camp Au Sable*

Aug. 24–30: *Emmanuel Institute, Conference Office*

WISCONSIN

July 6: *JAHWI Sports Day, Milwaukee*

July 13: *Hispanic Children Sports Day, Milwaukee*

July 30 – Aug. 3: *Hispanic Camp Meeting*

LAKE UNION

July 18–20: *Conéctate Youth Congress, Andrews University*

Events listed were scheduled to proceed at press time. Please call ahead or check event websites before making plans to attend.

Enter into the Joy

In the latest update to an ongoing, 80-plus year study on human wellbeing, the researchers summarized their latest findings with this simple reminder: “Positive relationships are essential to human well-being.” (The Good Life, p. 28 Kindle)



▲ JOHN GRYS

As followers of Jesus, I feel that no other relationship generates such positive experiences as the one with our Savior and Lord. Conversations with Him are essential to our own well-being. Who else can hold all our anxieties and pain? Who else has all the data points to provide the rich texture of guidance? Who else rejoices when we experience the blessings of His grace? Well-being and positive relationships are crucial to our eternal well-being. This is why Ellen White referred to our “joy of service.”

Conversing with such a reliable Person as Jesus brings joy...regardless of external circumstances. In the study, subjects faced the full range of human experience and yet, they discovered that the consistency of positive relationships carried them through the day. And carried them through the day in ways that went beyond surviving to thriving. The testimony of Scripture reveals a similar dynamic. The apostle Paul, writing from prison, can assert, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)

To consider “extending the healing ministry of Christ” within the framework of well-being and conversing with God, “healing” includes the richer integration of a fuller and wider conversation with God that awakens the dead bones and invigorates the soul. Conversing with God is a consistent practice of a healing soul. And as the Psalms demonstrate, the conversing takes on different types of emotions, different forms of expression, and a full-hearted engagement with God. There is no holding back. And this can be the kind of conversations had within the context of “positive relationships.” And this kind of healing relationship over the years contributes to the well-being of those who follow.

And just as a medical community comes together to bring healing to a patient, it takes a healing community where each person carries forth those ongoing conversations with God as a groundwork for the community. Healing does not occur in isolation. Conversing does not occur in isolation. Well-being does not occur in isolation. “It is not good for man to be alone.” If this is true for a pre-broken world, it remains doubly true for a broken world filled with messy people. Healing communities converse. At the center of this conversation remains the life, ministry, and full story of Jesus both now and for eternity. And it is this kind of integrated experience that gives us the courage to face hopelessness with courage, to defy the gravity of discouragement, and enter into whatever situation we face with a defiant hope. ■

John Gryns is the Illinois Conference president.



What is Asylum?



▲ JENNIFER GRAY WOODS

What types of rights and protections are there for individuals who come to the United States because of persecution in their home countries?

Every year thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers enter the United States. Since 1975 the U.S. has resettled more than 3 million refugees and asylum seekers. An asylum seeker is someone who has entered the U.S. seeking asylum status, but their claim for status has not yet been determined; whereas a refugee is someone whose claim for protection has already been officially recognized before they entered the U.S. These individuals have fled their home due to war, violence or fear of persecution based on their religion, race, nationality, political opinion, or because a particular social group they may be a part of. Many of the most vulnerable populations fleeing their homes are women and children.

Seeking either refugee or asylum status can be a lengthy, complex process with individuals having to go through a number of background, health and security checks. This process is managed by a number of government agencies-- primarily through

the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. However, those who have been granted asylum and refugee status have protections and rights under both international and U.S. law (including protections in the International 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocols and the U.S. Immigration and Nationalities Act and its amendments). For example, they are protected from being returned to the home country from where they fled. They also have the right to work, the right to certain assistance programs and the right to eventually apply for permanent residency.

The United Nations annually recognizes June 20 as World Refugee Day. This day is designated to honor the resilience courage of refugees and to recognize the struggle of so many fleeing wars, violence and persecution seeking safety.

The Seventh-day Adventist church also recognizes refugees each year with a special refugee sabbath. This year our church designated June 21 as Adventist Church World Refugee Sabbath. During this time the church remembers the more than 120 million forcibly displaced individuals, including over 43 million refugees, and over 6 million asylees around the world. The North America Division of Seventh-day Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries calls churches and members to remember the millions of forcibly displaced people worldwide and consider ways that we can support this often overlooked but vulnerable group in line with our Biblical mandate to welcome the stranger and care for the foreigner residing among us. ■

Jennifer Gray Woods is the Lake Union legal counsel, as well as its Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director.

For more information visit:

Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries at
<https://www.refugeeministries.org>



Called to Faithful Stewardship

“She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy... Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.” (Proverbs 31:20, 25, NKJV)

What if God is positioning women to fund the final proclamation of the Gospel? Across America, a quiet revolution is unfolding, not in politics or culture but in stewardship. A profound shift is taking place in the stewardship of wealth in the United States. By 2030, women are expected to oversee nearly two-thirds of private wealth in the U.S. This transition is fueled by longer lifespans and generational inheritance. But this isn't merely a financial trend; it's a divine opportunity.

Imagine a widow who inherits her husband's estate after years of faithful tithing. Instead of fear, she sees opportunity, funding Adventist education, supporting missionaries, and leaving a legacy that outlives her. This is stewardship in action.

Ellen G. White reminds us, “The Lord designs that the means entrusted to us shall be used in building up His kingdom. His goods are entrusted to His stewards that they may be carefully traded upon and bring back a revenue to Him in the saving of souls” (Counsels on Stewardship, p. 35). As women step into greater financial leadership, the question isn't just how wealth will be managed, but why, and for whose glory?

A Call to Intentional Stewardship

This moment invites deep reflection:

For women inheriting wealth: How can your resources reflect God's priorities—faith, family, and faithful giving? “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

For church leaders: Are we equipping women with biblical wisdom, and not just financial

strategies? Faithful stewardship begins with a heart surrendered to God's mission.

For all believers: How can we encourage and uplift women as they redefine wealth's purpose for eternity?

A Legacy of Eternal Impact

This isn't just about wealth, it's about worship. It isn't just for women, it's for men too, and it isn't just a trend, it's a heavenly appointment. Every dollar entrusted to us is a sacred gift meant to further God's kingdom. As Peter exhorts, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

Ellen White beautifully captures this calling: “Money has great value because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children, it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked.” (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 351).

Let us pray for wisdom, courage, and generosity as women—and all believers—step into this sacred trust. The future of stewardship isn't just women-led; it can be faith-driven, shaping lives for eternity.

Let's start the conversation if you're a man or woman who needs help navigating wealth, a financial advisor seeking to empower clients, or a church leader ready to equip stewards. Contact your conference stewardship department to learn more about how you can be part of God's financial movement. “Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3, NKJV) ■

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▲ HENOC PAULICIN



Trusting God's Plan

Throughout my life, I have ended up in places that I never thought would be part of my life journey. My story began when I was born in a small town in the countryside outside Moscow, Russia. I spent the first 17 years of my life in the same town, where everyone knew one another, and I became very comfortable with the life I had. I didn't anticipate the drastic change God had in store for me.

At the age of 17, my life took a very unexpected turn. That was when I arrived in an even smaller town—this time, thousands of miles away in Oregon—where I started a new chapter of my life. This decision came after realizing there were no opportunities for me to study business in a Christian setting back home in Russia. So, my family and I sought opportunities in the U.S., hoping to maintain the many benefits of Christian education. Since I didn't speak the language and was unfamiliar with the culture, I first enrolled in a program to better prepare myself for the challenges ahead.

It was incredibly hard to leave my family, friends and everything I knew and loved, and to get used to a new life. Just as I started to learn life in its new form, I graduated high school and moved to Michigan to study business at Andrews University. This was the second time in one year that I had to leave people I loved behind and continue life, trusting in God. During that period of my life, I truly learned what it meant to entrust my life to His hands. These changes resulted in many hardships, but during my most difficult moments, I felt His presence the most. God showed Himself through people who recognized my needs and helped me get through seemingly impossible situations.

As I began searching for my purpose in life, I knew I wanted to align with His purpose for me. I really wanted to reflect the character of God, just as I had experienced through others when I needed it most. As I thought of the past

and realized how wonderful God had been to me through my family, friends, coworkers and even strangers, I knew I wanted to be that beam which represents God's eternal light to as many people as I can.

That is how I decided to pursue a career in health care. While at Andrews University, I learned that AdventHealth was hiring interns. After spending some time at AdventHealth, I knew this was the place for me. An organization that places its foundation on the mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ and focuses on whole-person care seemed like the perfect environment to reflect God's character and live out my purpose.

Throughout all of the unexpected turns my life took, I learned to give up control and trust in His promises. However, there are still principles I stand by and things I believe I need to do on my part to fulfill the purpose God has for me.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans" (Proverbs 16:3, NIV). Finally, I believe in fully trusting God with the fulfillment of the goals I set in faith. Nobody knows how to steer my life better than the Creator of the universe.

Trust God in everything you do, and stay proactive with your goals, aspirations and understanding of His ways. ■

Nikita Voroniuk is a finance leadership resident at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



Photo courtesy of Nikita Voroniuk

Living Out Her Purpose

At an early age, Paulette Velazquez Vega developed a passion for health care, spending much of her childhood, adolescence and young adulthood at the hospital as her brother received treatment for his cerebral palsy. At 8 years old, she and her family relocated from Mexico to the United States.

It was during her senior year of high school that Velazquez Vega's family moved back to Mexico due to unforeseen circumstances. But Velazquez Vega felt called to be in the U.S. and attend Andrews University. With the support of her family, she made the difficult decision to be far away from family to pursue the purpose she felt God had for her.

During her time there, Velazquez Vega learned of the AdventHealth Internship Program from a friend and former intern. As a double major in business administration and arts, Velazquez Vega eagerly attended an information session hosted by the organization's Leadership Institute during her junior year of college. The AdventHealth Leadership Internship is an 11-week program designed to introduce interns to the diverse and exciting careers in health care, allowing them to collaborate with various departments and teams. After attending the session and applying for the program, she was accepted as a business management intern and was assigned to spend her summer at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.

"That summer I realized that I want to make people's experiences better. Most people want to avoid the hospital, right?" she said. "So how do we make it special? How do we make it easy for them when they're here?"

Being away from her family, Velazquez Vega found a sense of belonging as an intern in the Great Lakes Region. "I was able to find a great group of people to work with, and going to work was enjoyable. I was constantly being pushed every day not just to show up, but to have the courage to learn new concepts and adapt to a changing world while away from my family."

When she found herself struggling or questioning her decision to remain in the U.S., she remained rooted in her faith and trusted that God had a plan for her life. Velazquez Vega believed it was important not to question or doubt herself, as she felt that if God opened a door for her, He would also provide a way. This promise came to fruition during her time as a resident while in her rotation at AdventHealth Palm Coast, where she had the opportunity to jumpstart a program called Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH is designed for adolescents with learning and developmental disabilities. Through Project SEARCH, they are offered various job rotations to help acquire the skills needed to enter the workforce.

"It was very fulfilling because I not only got to help with something that I was very passionate about and connected to my story with my brother, but it was also very rewarding to see those students' lives change," said Velazquez Vega.

"The way the leaders embraced the students and accepted them with compassion was a perfect example of AdventHealth not only extending the healing ministry of Christ to patients, but to our team members and our community." ■

Gracie D'Alessandro is a writer for AdventHealth.



Courtesy of Paulette Velazquez Vega



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