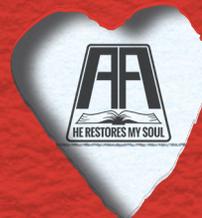


SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

HERALD

MARCH 2026

REASONS TO LOVE OUR ACADEMIES



Good. Teacher.

I imagine a young man with bright eyes, perhaps two thousand twenty-six years ago, robed in Jerusalem finery, releasing those words into the air like two birds taking flight.

Good and Teacher.

I'm also convinced that this same rich young ruler had little idea how precisely the intersection of those two words perfectly applied to the Nazarene Master who, in tattered cloth, stood before the youth longing for him to notice, to study, to learn and to come to know this Rabbi named Jesus. Christ yearned for the intersection of their two worlds; teacher and student, just as He does for you and me. It was by no means at this moment, when the young man described the Carpenter as the Good Teacher, that Jesus suddenly became a teacher, or for that matter, became good (for no one is good but God). And Jesus is eternally good and eternally God.

The concept of good teaching finds its root in teaching goodness, which, in truth, can only be rooted in Christ the Good Teacher. Teaching is God speaking aloud His love language with a glowing sense of purpose for good, towards you and me. He has shaped our universe into a brilliant funnel and poured the molten system of knowing into it. He has then called some to be teachers and yet,

somehow, all to teach; and all to learn. It is by the design of the Word that we are given words. It

is by the One who counts countless souls and multiplies blessings that it may be said that correct education is the King's highway, and that teaching and learning are, at their best, the glorious pulsing of our salvation and a hallelujah to the way of knowing established by the Good Teacher.

It is to this miracle of teaching and learning that we dedicate the pages of this month's Lake Union Herald featuring our faithful academy educators. Read, celebrate and enjoy. May you join your hallelujah with ours!

Debbie



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

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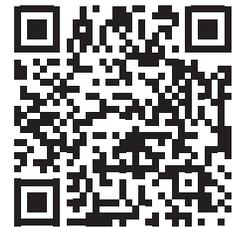
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Learning, Leading and Leaning on Jesus

On any given morning in any Lake Union Conference Adventist academy, the day often begins the same way: a small group of students bowing their heads in prayer, a teacher opening Scripture, a moment of quiet before the rhythm of classes begins.

It is an ordinary scene—and yet, within it lies something extraordinary. These daily moments are shaping young men and women who are learning how to think deeply, live faithfully and stand courageously for what is right.

Secondary education in the Lake Union has never been solely about grades, transcripts or test scores. While academic excellence is valued and pursued, the deeper story unfolding in our academies is one of character formation. It is the story of students learning who they are in Christ and how they are called to live in a complex and often challenging world.

Ellen G. White captured this vision powerfully when she wrote, “The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold... men who do not fear to call sin by its right name.” That statement feels particularly relevant today. Our young people are growing up in a culture that often blurs moral lines and discourages conviction. Within our Adventist academies, students are invited to wrestle honestly with questions of faith, truth and purpose—while being guided toward biblical principles that anchor their lives.

In classrooms across the union, learning is intentionally connected to meaning. Science points to a Creator. History becomes a study of human choice and consequences. Literature opens conversations about empathy, justice and redemption. Teachers

know their students by name, pray with them in moments of struggle, and celebrate with them in moments of growth. Education becomes personal, relational, and transformational. If you have ever attended an Adventist academy, I am sure that you can relate. I know that the one and only year that I was able to attend the former Cedar Lake Academy, now Great Lakes Adventist Academy, changed the trajectory of my life and many others that I know.

One student’s journey might include discovering confidence through music, another through athletics, another through service or leadership. Each story is different, but the goal is the same: to help students grow into young adults who are not afraid to live their faith in open pursuit of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ellen G. White reminds us that “true education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is.” In Lake Union academies, education is viewed as preparation for life—now and for eternity.

That preparation is especially evident in the way students are invited into lives of service. Whether serving meals in local communities, participating in mission trips, or mentoring younger students, service is woven into the fabric of academy life. These experiences move faith from theory to practice. Students begin to understand that following Jesus means showing up for others—especially when it



▲ NICOLE MATTSON



Jodan Boldt

requires sacrifice or courage. These are the young men and women that Jesus is calling into His service, and the reason why we stand convicted about the great, life-changing work happening in our Adventist academies.

One can see it in the student who chooses kindness when ridicule would be easier, in the young leader who speaks up for what is right, or in the graduate who dedicates a career to serving others. Ellen G. White wrote, “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.” Lake Union secondary education embraces this calling, helping students recognize that their influence matters and that their lives can be used for God’s purposes wherever they go.

In a world filled with noise and distraction, Lake Union academies provide space for reflection and

growth. Students are encouraged to slow down, listen for God’s voice, and build a faith that is resilient rather than reactive. They learn that courage is not the absence of fear, but the decision to trust God and act with integrity anyway.

The story of secondary education in the Lake Union Conference is still being written—one student, one classroom, one act of service at a time. Guided by the belief that “character is power,” our schools remain committed to graduating young men and women who are academically prepared, spiritually grounded, and ready to dedicate their lives to service. In doing so, they are being equipped not just to succeed in the world, but to help transform it for Christ. ■

Nicole Mattson is the interim education director for the Lake Union Conference.

The Stranger Among Us



▲ AMIE HUBBARD

Have you ever been “the stranger”? You know, the new one. Maybe it’s a new job, a new town, or you were the new student. Sometimes you see others in the room with heads leaning in toward each other quietly asking who YOU are?

Not necessarily unkind words or facial expressions, just curious how it is that YOU showed up in their midst. “Oh,” someone may say, “that’s the new girl or guy, I think they just moved here.” No one really approaches you, maybe a coworker or teacher will introduce you to a few people or even make a broad announcement of introduction to everyone. How do you feel? Anxious? A bit jittery? Uncomfortable and embarrassed to be the focus of everyone’s attention? Others in the room may shake your hand and offer quick words of welcome and then move on to friends and those they are comfortable with.

Then a genuine, kind smiling face excuses themselves from a laughing group and moves in your direction, smiling directly at you. They introduce themselves, ask your name, and your story—where you came from, what brought you here. They invite you to join their friends, sharing little glimpses of each person’s interests and best attributes, intentionally connecting you to themselves and others.

They don’t stop there. They invite you to a meal, a Bible study, a gathering. Suddenly, the anxiety in your chest loosens. Hope flickers. You feel seen, valued, wanted, like you belong.

Now imagine being *the stranger* in a far more desperate sense—a refugee, forced to flee from everything familiar... from home. Your town destroyed, your family scattered, your language foreign in this new land. You’ve slept in temporary shelters, endured hunger and cold, clung to faith when fear tried to take over. And when you finally arrive in a safe place, weary and broken, wouldn’t your heart rejoice to meet a kind face—one radiant with compassion, one that says without words, *you are not forgotten?*

Jesus shared it this way in Matthew 25: 37-40: “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

Let’s open our eyes to those standing on the outside looking in: the newcomer, the grieving, the lonely, and the displaced. Let’s ask Jesus to help us see *Him* in every face we meet.

Don’t you want to offer that warm smile, that extended hand, or that genuine heart that makes a stranger feel at home? Because when we love the stranger, we are loving Christ Himself—and there is no greater gift we could offer. ■

Amie Hubbard is family ministries director for Michigan Conference.



Unexpected Joy from Trials

“Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” (James 1:2-3, NIV)



▲ RACHEL KEELE

“Are you OK?” a colleague asked. He had just walked into the office to find me lying on the floor next to the copy machine.

“I’m fine,” I assured him, as I stared up at the ceiling. “The room started to spin for some reason, so I’m going to lay here until it stops.”

When he returned minutes later, the room was still spinning, but now I was nauseous. I’ll spare you the gross details and skip to my husband arriving and helping me home to rest from this bout of “food poisoning.”

Minutes after cozying into bed, I realized the left side of my body wasn’t working properly. I struggled to sit up, and my arm floated around like it was detached from my body. My husband rushed me to the hospital, where a day later, I would receive an official diagnosis: a stroke.

I was 29 at the time and assumed only “older people” suffered from strokes. I wasn’t familiar with the American Stroke Association’s FAST acronym for spotting and responding to the symptoms: Face drooping/twisting, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time to call 911. And I wasn’t aware it’s critical to receive treatment within the first three hours of those symptoms.

Despite all I didn’t know, I was fortunate enough to quickly get to a hospital that provided proper assessment and care and was discharged just two nights later. While the challenges of recovery, like regaining the ability to walk, were just beginning, so were the frequent reminders from God that He was right there with me.

When I was told that it would be three months before I could meet with a therapist, the Andrews University Physical Therapy department graciously

provided services at no charge. Before attending class on Zoom was normal, my instructor allowed me to complete the very last course of my master’s degree from the comfort of my recovery bed at home, enabling me to graduate on schedule. And throughout that time, friends and family supported us with visits, meals, gifts and errands. While those days were often uncertain, frustrating and scary, God consistently provided bright spots to remind me of His presence.

Ten years and a full recovery have separated me from my stroke. Though I’ve been left with some physical markers of my experience, I’ve also been blessed with a desire to educate others, and a spirit of perseverance that reminds me how the words of James have been true in my life. So, the next time you’re facing a trial, remember: God is right there with you, ready to give you joy as He sees you through. ■

Rachel Keele is director of University Wellness at Andrews University and manager of Andreasen Center for Wellness.



Proper Education



▲ DENIS KAISER

Education is a central piece to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet translating inspired principles into lived practice has often been challenging. A look at the church’s first educational efforts in the late 19th century reveals both sincere progress and significant growing pains.

In the summer of 1868, Goodloe Harper Bell began his “select school,” which, as James White later noted, proved “a success.”¹ Students appreciated Bell’s creative and varied teaching methods, and the school continued for several years. In June 1872, the Seventh-day Adventist Church adopted the school as an official institution, beginning with 12 students.²

That same year, at Christmas, James White announced that *Testimony for the Church*, no. 22 (now *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 131–160) was ready for publication. He described its opening section, “Proper Education,” as guidance for preparing young men and women to become efficient workers in proclaiming the third angel’s message.³ While this goal was certainly present, the section focused far more broadly on the principles of educating children and youth.

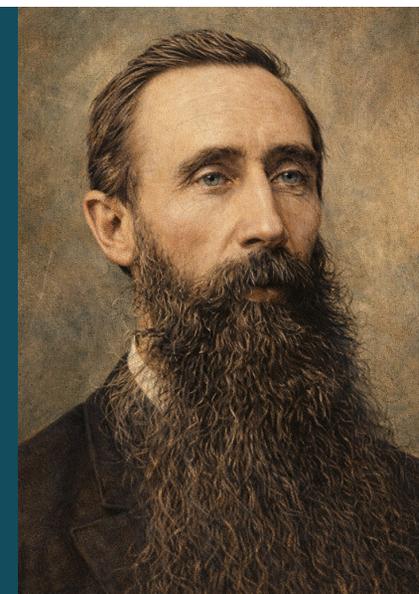
In this testimony, Ellen White emphasized that “self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness, and love” were essential qualities for anyone involved in education. True education, she argued, involved more than academic learning; it was a balanced development of physical, mental, moral, and spiritual powers. Children were to be taught how to think and choose for themselves, guided by moral principle.

She warned against two extremes. On one hand were children strictly controlled by parents and teachers, who faltered when that control was removed. On the other were children left so independent that they never learned to value wise counsel. Ellen White also stressed the importance of physical activity, cautioning against confining young children in small, poorly ventilated rooms for long periods.

In April 1873, the church expanded the Select School to prepare workers for the global mission, though George I. Butler’s descriptions of its curriculum remained vague.⁴ In February 1874, Uriah Smith announced that the school would be called Battle Creek College, largely for convenience and distinction.⁵ Its charter allowed instruction “from primary to the highest,” yet for decades Adventists lacked well-developed schools for children and youth. Moreover, the college curriculum leaned heavily toward classical studies, with Greek and Latin emphasized and no required courses in Bible or doctrine.⁶

In hindsight, Ellen White’s counsel on “proper education” was only partially understood and unevenly applied. Principles are often easier to affirm than to implement. The early Adventist educational story reminds us that faithful growth takes time—and calls each generation to reflect anew on what true, holistic Christian education should look like. ■

▼ Illustration of Goodloe Harper Bell



- 1 James White, “Bro. G. H. Bell . . .,” *Review and Herald*, Aug. 18, 1868, 144.
- 2 “The S. D. A. School,” *Review and Herald*, June 11, 1872, 204.
- 3 James White, “Testimony to [sic] the Church,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 24, 1872, 16.
- 4 J. N. Andrews, “Our Proposed School,” *Review and Herald*, Apr. 1, 1873, 124; G. I. Butler, “The Next Term of School,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 2, 1873, 200.
- 5 Uriah Smith, “Battle Creek College,” *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1874, 56.
- 6 *School Bells & Gospel Trumpets: A Documentary History of Seventh-day Adventist Education in North America* (Loma Linda, CA: Adventist Heritage Publications, 1978), 17–20.

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

Tras las Huellas de la Reforma

La Gira de la Reforma 2026 que se realizará del 12 al 22 de mayo del próximo año ofrece a los adventistas del séptimo día una oportunidad singular para familiarizarse con la historia de la Reforma y extraer lecciones valiosas para la iglesia en el mundo actual.



▲ Carmelo Mercado

Durante estos diez días visitaremos sitios de gran significado para el cristiano: Roma, el Valle de los Valdenses (Waldensian Valley), Annecy (Francia), Ginebra y Zürich (Suiza), el Castillo de Wartburg, Weimar, Wittenberg (Alemania) y finalmente Praga (República Checa).

En Roma podremos aprender acerca de los orígenes del cristianismo institucional y valorar la importancia de regresar a la Escritura como autoridad última. En el Valle de los Valdenses, recordaremos a los seguidores de Pedro Valdo, quienes desde el siglo XII mantuvieron el testimonio del evangelio frente a la oposición. Su historia es un ejemplo de fidelidad silenciosa y perseverante en la Palabra de Dios.

En Annecy y Ginebra conoceremos el corazón del protestantismo francés y su expansión a toda Europa, y en Zürich meditemos sobre las reformas de Huldrych Zwingli, quien promovió una fe práctica y socialmente responsable. Viajar al Castillo de Wartburg nos conectará con el tiempo en que Martín Lutero, escondido por su seguridad, tradujo la Biblia al alemán, dando acceso a las Escrituras al pueblo. En Wittenberg, donde clavó sus 95 tesis, recordaremos el inicio visible de la Reforma Protestante. Weimar nos permitirá explorar el contexto cultural y teológico alemán, y en Praga honraremos la memoria de Juan Hus, precursor de Lutero y símbolo de valentía espiritual.

¿Qué lecciones puede extraer hoy un adventista del séptimo día de esta experiencia?

Primero: la centralidad de la Palabra de Dios. Lutero insistió en que “la Palabra de Dios es lo más grande, lo más necesario, lo más importante en la

cristiandad”. En un tiempo donde muchas voces compiten por autoridad, este recordatorio nos invita a regresar a la Escritura como guía y fundamento de la fe.

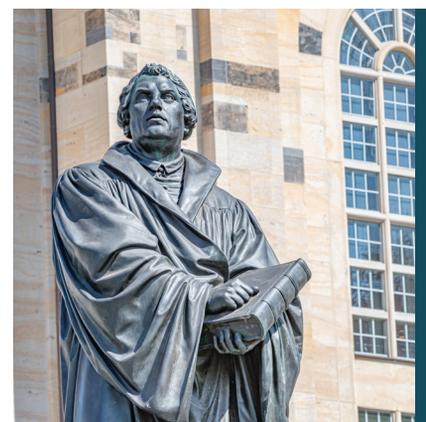
Segundo: el valor necesario para defender la verdad. Los reformadores no buscaban popularidad, sino fidelidad a las convicciones bíblicas. Esa valentía es urgente hoy, cuando la fe es desafiada por la indiferencia espiritual y las ideologías cambiantes.

Tercero: la perseverancia en la adversidad. Los valdenses fueron perseguidos durante siglos, pero su testimonio no se apagó. Su ejemplo nos enseña que el compromiso con el evangelio requiere constancia, humildad y esperanza.

Para los adventistas, estas lecciones tienen una aplicación concreta: la Reforma no ha terminado. La misión de proclamar las verdades bíblicas con amor, justicia y compasión continúa. Cada lugar que visitaremos —desde Roma hasta Praga— nos recordará que Dios obra a través de hombres y mujeres fieles que, con fe inquebrantable, transforman el mundo.

Los invitamos cordialmente a unirse a la Gira de la Reforma 2026 y a vivir esta experiencia de crecimiento espiritual y renovación personal. El cupo es limitado así que los animamos a que no demoren en hacer su decisión pero que se inscriban ya. Para inscribirse vayan al siguiente sitio web: <https://travel.ppvida.com/tours/reformation-tour-with-lake-union/>.

Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.



At Any Age and Life Stage

A HEART THAT LOVES IS ALWAYS YOUNG.

Two residents of Concord Place Retirement Community in Northlake, Illinois, recently had that Greek proverb printed on their wedding invitation. Mariellyn Hill, 88, and Ralph DeSchaff, 79, pledged to live out those words when they were married on Nov. 23, 2025. Pastor Ira Bartolome officiated the ceremony at Downers Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Mariellyn and Ralph wholeheartedly agree that their relationship at this stage in their lives was guided by divine providence. Ralph had lived at Concord Place for eight years when Mariellyn arrived. As a Welcome Ambassador, he often greets new residents and looks for shared interests that help people connect. Music quickly became one of those bridges.

“When I found out that Mariellyn liked to sing, I asked if we could have lunch together,” Ralph said. “Right away I was impressed by her outgoing nature and happy spirit.”

Mariellyn, for her part, had already noticed Ralph through another avenue of community life. She had heard him preach during services at Concord Place and was struck by his sincerity. “I immediately saw his love for God,” she said. “That was one of the things that drew me to him.”

As their conversations continued, the couple discovered they shared similar upbringings. Both had been raised in homes where the Bible and regular church attendance played a central role. Ralph’s life had taken him through active military service and a 35-year career with United Airlines. Along the way, he attended a Bible institute in Saskatchewan, Canada, where he earned ministerial credentials.

As their relationship deepened, Mariellyn introduced Ralph to her faith tradition, Seventh-day

Adventism, and invited him to attend church with her. The welcome he received left a lasting impression.

“I’ve been in many churches in my day,” Ralph said, “but I’ve never met kinder and more welcoming individuals than I found at Downers Grove. I feel right at home there.”

Beyond worship services, Ralph especially appreciated the Sabbath School experience. “We dig deeply into Scripture together,” he said. When Pastor Bartolome offered to study the Bible with him personally, Ralph readily accepted. He completed all 26 lessons.

Through those studies and ongoing conversations, Ralph began to recognize strong parallels between Adventism and his previous denomination. He also came to appreciate the distinctives.

“Two of the main differences were the day of worship and not eating pork,” he explained. “I came to see Saturday as a day of rest and renewal. The Sabbath became a time to focus on worship, fellowship, and time with our Creator. Instead of typical weekday activities, I now spend that time reading and reflecting.”

When Ralph completed his studies, he felt ready to formally join the church that had welcomed him so warmly. He admitted feeling nervous about the process.



▲ A love of music brought Mariellyn Hill and Ralph DeSchaff together. They were married on Nov. 23, 2025, at the Downers Grove Church before a group of family, friends and staff from the Concord Place Retirement Community in Northlake, Illinois.

Photography by Andrzej Mucka

“At first I thought I would have to take a test,” Ralph admitted. “But the pastor explained that a test wasn’t required. I was accepted on profession of faith, there was a vote, and I was in.”

When the couple decided to marry, they knew they wanted a church wedding. They chose the congregation where Mariellyn had long felt at home and where Ralph had found such encouragement. Pastor Bartolome was happy to officiate.

One of the most meaningful aspects of the day was the presence of their adult children. “Our family has been very accepting and supportive,” the couple acknowledges. “It means a great deal to see them genuinely happy for us.”

Music, a shared passion, was woven throughout the celebration. Mariellyn’s son, Benjamin Hill, sang a hymn at the service, offering a medley centered on “The Lord’s Prayer.” Ralph’s son, Brian DeSchaff, served as best man and later sang several songs at the reception, including the love song “Unchained Melody.”

The bride and groom also added their own musical testimony. Near the end of the service, they sang a verse of “Blessed Assurance” as a duet. The congregation joined them in the chorus, led by their sons.

“We chose that hymn because it is our story,” Mariellyn said. “It’s our testimony. We know that Jesus is ours, and that certainty is a foretaste of glory divine. We want to live our days together filled with His goodness, lost in His love.”

As newlyweds, Mariellyn and Ralph continue to share their faith and love of music through an outreach ministry that brings comfort to others. They

are part of a singing group of 15 to 20 volunteers who visit nursing homes and other facilities. “We don’t just sing and leave,” Mariellyn explained. Drawing from her years as a nursing home administrator, she understands how easily loneliness can take hold. Group members bring small gifts and prayer cards, but more importantly, they take time to connect. “We sit with people. We talk, and we listen. So often, someone’s face lights up when they realize they are being seen and heard.” Prayer is central to those visits. “As we share the love of Jesus, we are blessed too,” she said. “Having a ministry together is a wonderful thing, and this is ours.”

Ralph brings an additional layer of connection through his military background. “When we visit, I try to spot the veterans,” he said. “As a Navy veteran and former Chaplain’s Yeoman, I understand some of what they’ve experienced. Often, they’ll share things they might not tell others. It’s a privilege to pray together and to share songs and Scripture.”

Looking back, the couple sees God’s hand not only in their meeting, but in the purpose that continues to unfold. “We are living proof that God can bring two people together at any age and life stage,” Mariellyn said. “We are grateful that He brought us together and continues to give us ways to serve Him and those around us.” ■

Beverly Matiko, a retired associate professor of English and communication, lives in Niles, Michigan.

Indiana Church Keeps Its Neighbors Warm

Erica Hernandez grew up knowing what it meant to go without. As a child, she experienced hardship firsthand, and those early years shaped how she views the needs around her today. “I know what it’s like to not have much,” she said.

Her grandmother—who never owned a coat—remains a lasting influence on her heart for service. “Now that my husband Daniel and I have been so blessed, we want to be able to help those that are less fortunate. We also want to instill this value in our children, Lexia and Ryan.”

A MINISTRY BEGINS

In 2024, Erica turned that conviction into action by launching the first Keep Our Neighbors Warm event at the Shelbyville Seventh-day Adventist Church. With a small group of volunteers, she set out coats, scarves, gloves, boots and other winter clothing so anyone in need could take items free of charge.

The need in Shelbyville, Indiana is significant. The city’s 17.3% poverty rate is notably higher than the state’s average of 12.3%. The outreach quickly made a difference, serving more than 78 individuals that first year.

GROWING SUPPORT, GROWING IMPACT

In 2025, the effort expanded. “We received over \$800 in monetary donations and many more coat donations than in 2024,” she said.

The event began in the Shelbyville church parking lot, where tables, tents and organized bins of winter clothing were set out for anyone who stopped by. Later in the day, volunteers packed everything up and moved the entire setup to Franklin, a neighboring town, to continue serving.

Across both locations, over 178 individuals and

families received coats, shoes, scarves, blankets and hygiene items.

One volunteer shared how meaningful the day can be. “Seeing someone receive a coat and the look on their face when you tell them that it’s free, it fills your heart with such joy,” they said.

Another expressed appreciation for how the event opens doors for connection. “This helps people get to know us and our church better,” the volunteer said. “They can see that we are regular people just trying to spread God’s love and bless them with something they need. We aren’t trying to force our beliefs on them, but we do have literature out if they are curious or have questions.”

CARE THAT CONTINUES

The outreach extends beyond the event day. Individuals who contact the church afterward can still receive coats from the remaining supply. Erica has also established a blessing box outside the church entrance to make food available for anyone who needs it. “Food is an ongoing need,” she said. “We need to be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

What began with Erica’s memories of childhood has grown into a ministry that now touches two communities. Through coats, food and genuine care, the Shelbyville Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to reach neighbors with practical help and the love of Christ. ■

Susan Jergovich has been a member of the Shelbyville Church since 2013 and is involved in communication and Sabbath School ministries.



THROUGH COATS, FOOD AND GENUINE CARE, THE SHELBYVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH CONTINUES TO REACH NEIGHBORS WITH PRACTICAL HELP AND THE LOVE OF CHRIST.





**LETTER
FROM THE
HEAR**

S HE RT

Think back to your time in school. Who were your favorite teachers? What did they do to earn your trust? Do you remember teachers who taught strictly from the book? What about those who taught from the heart? There's a difference, no? Sometimes, the most impactful lessons learned in school have nothing to do with textbooks, formulas or history dates. Instead, they are taught in moments of a reassuring smile, a patient explanation after class, or even a gentle push to believe in yourself when your confidence is waning.

With this in mind, we asked our senior academy students to tell us about those educators (teachers, deans, coaches, support staff) they cherished. Their heartfelt responses blew us away. What emerged was a picture of amazing educators who show up day after day, with a willingness to go the extra mile in bringing our children to the feet of Jesus.

These next few pages feature a few of those letters, and we dedicate them to all the mentors—past and present—who believed in us when we needed it most.

**THIS ANDREWS
ACADEMY
ENGLISH
TEACHER**



Mr. VanDenburgh



Bupe Walubita

**HELPED THIS
SENIOR FIND
DIRECTION**

Dear Mr. VanDenburgh,

I guarantee you still remember our senior trip. You took all of us boys as a group to talk and asked us a question that I should have been asked earlier in my life. The question was, "What type of man do I want to be when I grow older?" That question made me think about the type of man I wanted to become as I grew older, and it also made me question whether the path I was taking would actually lead me to the type of man that I wanted to be.

After you asked, everyone began answering the question. I heard answers like: kind, compassionate, and hard-working. As I listened to all the answers, I wondered where I needed to make changes in my life, and also whether I was already on the right path, but that's when I realized I was unknowingly trying to do everything by myself. I rarely praised God for my victories and rarely asked Him for help for anything.

I understood that becoming the man I wanted to be was impossible without walking and talking with God. After this realization, we all prayed as a group and then went to our rooms. The idea that I was keeping God out of the equation kept playing in my mind.

After that day, I began to pray more consistently. I started praying before tests, which was something I never really used to do. I had always prayed before bed, but it was during family worship, I realized that I needed one-on-one time with God.

I don't think I would have improved spiritually if you had not asked the question, "What type of man do I want to be when I grow older?" Mr. VanDenburgh, I would like to thank you for asking that life-changing question.

Sincerely,

Bupe Walubita

THIS GREAT LAKES ADVENTIST ACADEMY PRINCIPAL



Mr. Garcia



Ethan Marsh

HELPED THIS JUNIOR UNDERSTAND HIS WORTH

Dear Mr. Garcia,

I'll never forget the day that you asked if you could talk to me for a minute, just to present me with a brand-new belt because you felt that my brown one "didn't go well" with my black pants. This really impacted me in a positive way because while it's something I didn't personally care much about, you still took it upon yourself to correct it because of the value you placed on me.

This connects really well to the recent Week of Prayer. Pastor Garhett Morgan explained how a church member did something similar for him just because, in the member's words, "his pastor lost his shoe." While Pastor Morgan did not personally care much about his replaceable shoe, a church member still went searching for it because he valued the pastor.

Just today, you signed me out so that you could take me to get a haircut at a barber shop and did all of this out of your own selfless and kind character.

All of these examples are representative of the character that a Seventh-day Adventist can attain when truly allowing themselves to take time to read God's Word and accept those promises he made to His children, which in turn allows you to build faith in Him.

As the Bible says, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17, NKJV). When one builds faith in Him, one will desire to supplicate that faith with good works or actions. Not because they are saved by their works, for they are already saved by their faith, but because that faith they have acquired creates a desire within them to serve others, as the Word has directed them.

These examples and reasonings are some of the main reasons I have come to develop faith of my own with God, because I was shown His goodness through you, Mr. Garcia. Since you have placed value in serving others because of your faith through the goodness of God, I have come to learn of the goodness of God, as well.

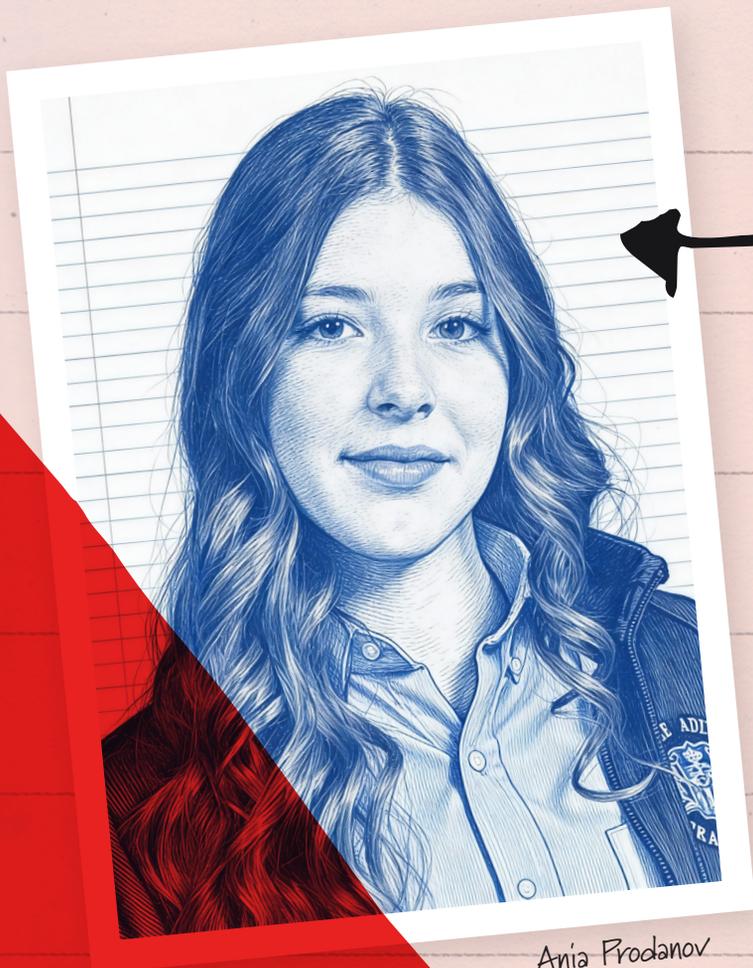
Thank you,

Ethan Marsh

**THIS HINSDALE
ADVENTIST
ACADEMY MATH
AND SCIENCE
TEACHER**



Mr. Carlos



Ania Prodanov

**HELPED
THIS JUNIOR
BELIEVE
IN HER
POTENTIAL**

Dear Mr. Carlos,

You are an incredible teacher, mentor, supporter and listener. You have been an important part of my life at Hinsdale Adventist Academy since fifth grade, when you first began teaching me.

Since then, you have helped me understand math, science and history, given me countless pieces of advice that have stayed with me for years, made me laugh and brought me closer to God. Now that I'm in high school and you remain a middle school teacher, your classroom has become a place I visit often—whether to help you grade, to take a quick rest on your classroom couch or to vent about a hard day. No matter why I'm there, you always make me feel welcome and lift my mood.

You have always made me feel empowered. You've helped me believe that I can do anything I set my mind to, while also reminding me that hard work matters. You don't sugarcoat things, and you don't allow students to believe that anything less than their best is acceptable. You believe in each student's full potential and push us to reach it. You are stern when necessary, but kind always. You motivate me daily to work hard and have helped me believe in myself at times when I felt like I was failing.

One of the things I admire most is how gracious and understanding you are. No amount of silly mistakes, incorrect answers, or confused questions has ever changed how you see a student. You remain patient and forgiving, reflecting Jesus in the way you teach and care. You show a Christ-like selflessness, whether through the time you've spent tutoring me on high school math problems or the daily effort it takes to teach multiple classes across four different grade levels.

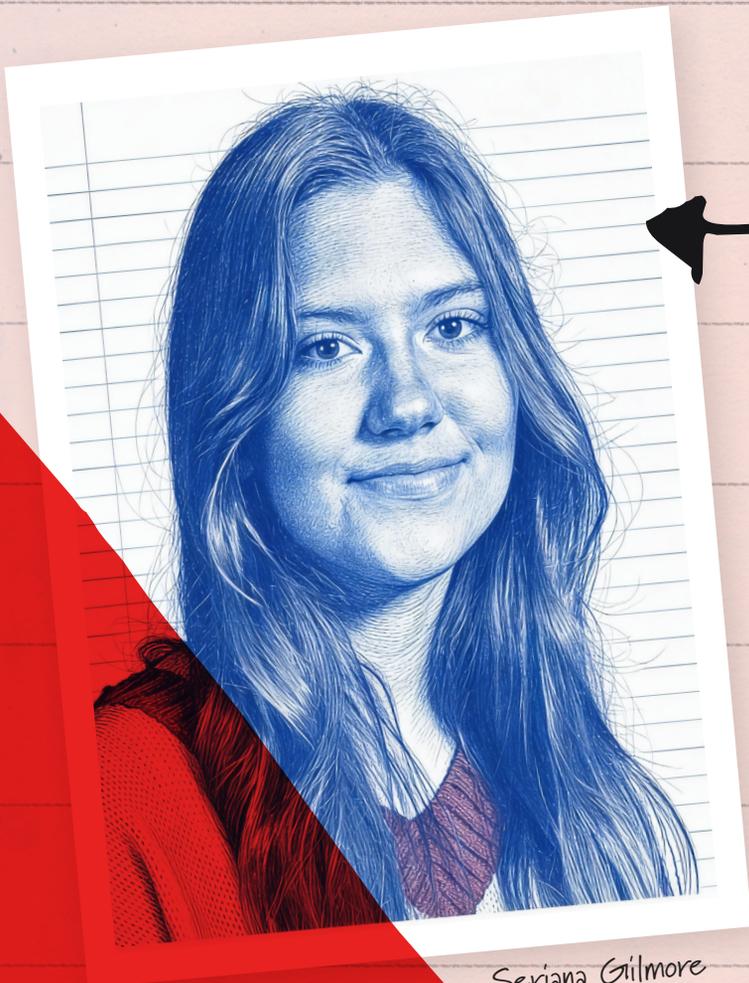
Any student would be lucky to have you as a teacher, and I am so blessed to be one of them. I am forever grateful for the impact you have had on my life. Thank you for being exactly the teacher—and person—that you are.

With gratitude,
Ania Prodanov

**THIS GRAND
RAPIDS
ADVENTIST
ACADEMY
TEACHER**



Mrs. Grimsley



Seriana Gilmore

**SHOWED THIS
SENIOR THE
MEANING OF
GRACE**

Dear Mrs. Grimsley,

It feels like yesterday when you used to be my teacher in second grade. Now being a senior, I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to have you as my teacher. I remember being in your classroom with all the bright and beautiful colors, but something more important that felt even brighter was the golden rule that you had hanging up in the classroom. You always encouraged us to be good classmates to every student around us. Not only were you fun with the ways that you would teach us, but you always had a kind and warm presence when I came into the classroom. You taught me so many things back in second grade, and I've learned so much as to what it means to be a Christian and a leader of Jesus Christ.

When I was in second grade, I didn't make the best decisions and when opening up to you about them, you listened to me with an open heart. I had never felt that close to God until then. Then years later, coming to Grand Rapids Adventist Academy was one of the best things that have ever happened to me, especially because I was able to see you again. I had no idea that would ever happen again, and I think it was definitely God's plan.

It wasn't until I experienced grace from you that I really knew how God was working in your life, as well as mine. You have so much of God's light and to know that you didn't judge me when I shared those important things with you so long ago really touched my heart and spoke to me.

Thank you for being a teacher who chooses to listen and understand. Your grace and forgiveness is something that still inspires me every single day and that will continue to shine through my life going to college and with what I want to do with my career someday. I hope to always show the example of your relationship with God with others and to never forget the things you have taught me over the years. Thank you, Mrs. Grimsley, for being a teacher that is an example of what it means to be a follower of God.

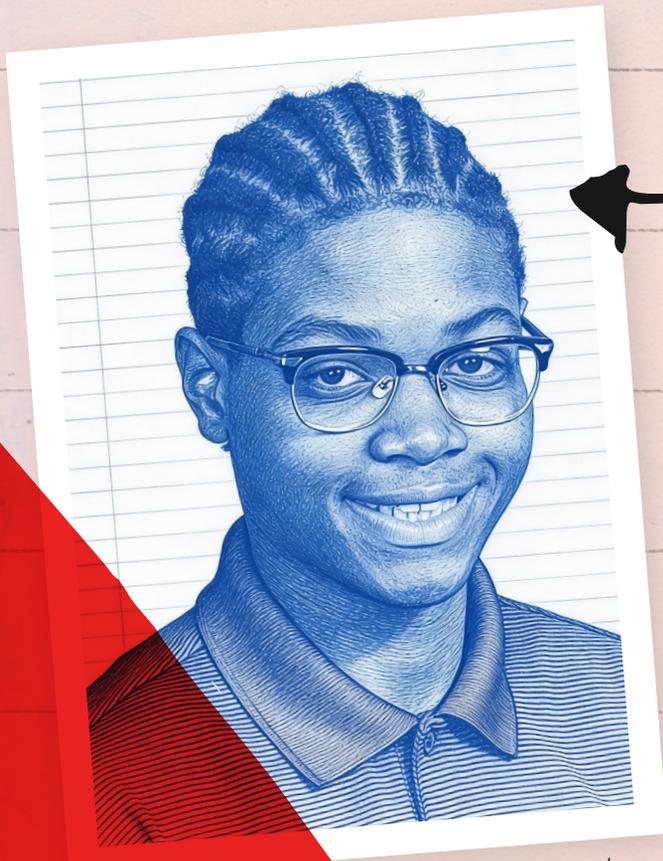
Sincerely,

Seriana Gilmore

**THIS INDIANA
ACADEMY
STAFFER**



Mrs. Reeves



Solomon Hawkins

**NURTURED
THIS
SOPHOMORE'S
GROWTH**

Dear Ms. Reeves,

You have helped me grow so much in just two years. I remember a time when prayer wasn't a part of my life, but it was still deeply rooted in my heart; I just needed someone to nourish and encourage me. That someone was you, Ms. Reeves. I utterly enjoyed every Bible study where you taught the residents of the nursing home about the second coming of Christ. The Tipton residents were ecstatic to see us every Tuesday and Thursday. Nonetheless, I always looked at you and would always admire and be encouraged by your adamant longing for the Bible and the desire for others to discover what you had in the Bible.

I remember, like it was yesterday, when it was my freshman year, and I knew absolutely no one. I was very closed off and never thought I would come out of my shell. Then, I remember when you had asked someone to pray after our Bible study, because no one wanted to volunteer. You chose me. I remember when you told me that, "That prayer was so touching; you should pray [for us] more often." I knew what you meant, and I took it as an opportunity to apply this to my own life, thanks to your kind words.

One of the things I really appreciate about you is your humility and honesty. You're never, like ever, afraid to be blunt when it's necessary. Yet your words come from a place of sincerity and care. This alone makes your advice great. Not to mention how you've made me laugh through times, in which laughter seemed far removed from me. I was very skeptical about my new life at the dorm and was really worried. So, I came to you and I remember you told me that, "You'll get used to it." You weren't wrong, Ms. Reeves.

Most of all, I want to thank you for your nurturing not just your workers, but every student. Last year, when there was an incident in the Cicero Church; you drove there. You tried everything in your power to calm the mentally distressed woman, and told us you were even willing to die for us that day. That's who you are, Ms. Reeves, and I will love you always, my grandma away from home.

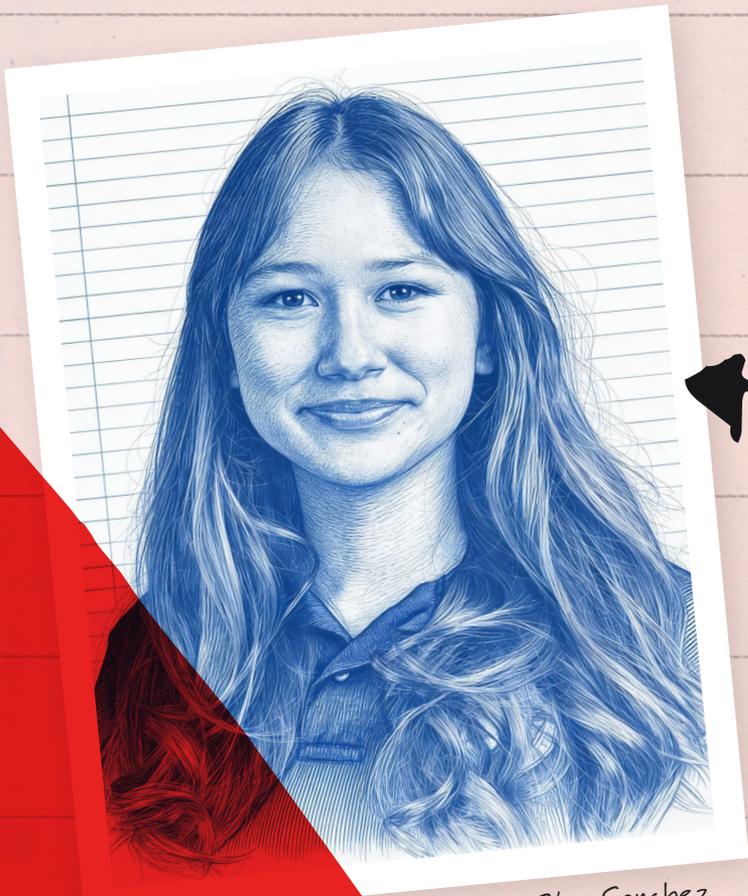
With love and gratitude,

Solomon Hawkins

**THIS WISCONSIN
ACADEMY
PRINCIPAL/
VOLLEYBALL
COACH**



Mr. Timms



Diana Rios-Sanchez

**TAUGHT
THIS JUNIOR
CONFIDENCE**

Dear Mr. Timms,

You probably never knew this, but before volleyball, I never truly loved a sport. Deep down, I always felt like I wasn't enough. Like, no matter how hard I tried, I could never succeed. When I joined volleyball, I expected it to be the same, another sport that I was only in for the credit, no passion or confidence. But God had other plans in my life, and through you, He showed me something I never expected.

From that very first volleyball class my sophomore year, you never let me give up. Even when I couldn't serve or get a pass up, you always saw something that I didn't. I spent that whole year feeling discouraged, doubtful, and like I had no confidence, but you never gave up on me. You saw something in me that I couldn't see, and I truly believe God used you to help me discover it.

I'll never forget those three one-on-one practices before school started this year. They were tough, but they changed everything. You didn't just teach me volleyball, but you taught me how to trust the abilities that God gave me. You kept pushing me to step up and hit, even when I said, "I can't." You never gave up on me. At the end of those three days, you didn't just teach me how to hit (my worst skill back then), but you taught me how to believe in myself. The first time I got a solid hit, you cheered me on, and I felt something shift inside of me. It wasn't just confidence, it was gratitude. From then on, I stopped doubting myself and realized that I was enough. That I really did have something going for me.

You taught me that success isn't about perfection, but about effort, teamwork and showing God's love in everything I do. I learned that confidence is built through faith and effort. Thank you for believing in me when I didn't believe in myself. For reminding me that with God's strength, I can do all things. You didn't just teach me skills in volleyball, but to love the sport, to have confidence, patience and faith in God and myself. You've had a bigger impact on my life than you probably realize, and I'll carry your lessons with me always. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Diana Rios-Sanchez

New VP of Mission and Ministry Leads with Purpose

Growing up in East Fullerton, California, as the son of Mexican immigrants who worked as janitors and housecleaners, David Ocegüera experienced marginalization firsthand. “My parents came here with very little,” he said. “What they dreamed of was giving their children a life they didn’t have.”

That dream was nurtured through faith. After responding to an Adventist magazine offer for a free Bible, Ocegüera’s parents began Bible studies and eventually joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church’s emphasis on education became transformational for the family.

Though Ocegüera attended public school through high school due to financial limitations, he later pursued higher education at Adventist institutions. He earned his

undergraduate degree at La Sierra University and completed seminary at Andrews University, followed by doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Those formative years planted seeds that would later flourish in ministry, shaping his theology, leadership and passion for dignity-centered care.

Ocegüera spent nearly 20 years in pastoral ministry, serving vibrant congregations and walking closely with people through life’s joys and deepest sorrows. Over time, his calling expanded into health care chaplaincy, when he began serving at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth’s four hospitals in the Chicagoland suburbs in 2020.

“In our Adventist tradition, we say health care is the right hand of the gospel and the church is the left,” he said. “In a hospital, people may not come looking for a sermon, but they are absolutely searching for comfort, meaning, peace and hope.”

As a chaplain, Ocegüera witnessed how presence, simply showing up, listening and honoring a person’s story, often mattered more than answers. Those experiences deepened his understanding of whole-person care.

“Physical healing matters deeply,” he said, “but so do the heart and the soul.”

Today, those early lessons are lived out in his newest calling. As vice president of mission and ministry for UChicago Medicine AdventHealth, Ocegüera brings with him a

deep conviction that health care is one of the most sacred spaces for extending the healing ministry of Christ.

“My vision is simple,” Ocegüera said. “To embed mission into everything we do, so it’s not a statement on a wall or a line in a strategic plan, but a shared language and lived culture.”

Where Mission Becomes Culture

Since joining the organization in his new role last December, Ocegüera is focused on ensuring that mission is embedded throughout the organization and not confined to a single department.

Guided by Mission Integration Councils at each hospital, which help translate mission into action, Ocegüera is building a culture rooted in collaboration. He also draws from his doctoral work on resilience and organizational change. He believes resilience grows when people feel connected to a meaningful mission and supported by those around them.

“When mission is embedded at every level, it becomes the way we care for patients, support one another and bring healing into our communities, together.” ■

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

IN A HOSPITAL, PEOPLE MAY NOT COME LOOKING FOR A SERMON, BUT THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY SEARCHING FOR COMFORT, MEANING, PEACE AND HOPE.



UChicago Medicine AdventHealth

▲ David Ocegüera, UChicago Medicine AdventHealth’s new vice president of mission and ministry, plans to bring mission to life for patients, team members, and the communities they serve.

Andrews University Announces New Student Missions Director



World Changers Made Here.

Andrews University welcomes Rebecca Fanai as the new student missions and service program director in the Center for Faith Engagement. In this role, Fanai mentors and connects students with meaningful service and mission opportunities, both locally and internationally. She also collaborates with campus partners—including churches, community organizations and global mission agencies—to build sustainable service pathways and develop programs, trainings and outreach initiatives for the Andrews community.

“I guide students through the entire journey—from exploring their calling, to preparing for cross-cultural service, to supporting them during and after their mission experience,” Fanai says. “Overall, my role is about creating spaces where students can grow, serve and discover how God is calling them to make a difference.”

Fanai was born and raised in Myanmar, with family roots in Northeast India. She also spent time living in the Philippines, which she notes, “deeply shaped my worldview and my love for service in multicultural settings.” Most recently, she lived in Maryland and affirms, “Each place I’ve lived has shaped my heart for ministry, service and building community across cultures.”

She attended Andrews University for her undergraduate degree, sharing, “Being here shaped me in so many ways—spiritually, academically and personally. I was involved in ministry and service opportunities on campus, and those experiences planted the seeds of purpose and calling that I’m now able to pour into my work with students.”

In 2020, Fanai graduated from Andrews with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, later becoming a licensed registered nurse. She also started a nonprofit organization called Project Chin Hills, which serves the Chin

diaspora and provides humanitarian aid to communities in need. Her work in these roles developed important skills in communication, outreach, service and support.

“Both my nursing background and non-profit leadership have prepared me to serve students in missions by giving me a strong foundation in compassion, cultural sensitivity, mentorship and practical problem-solving,” she explains. “These experiences allow me to walk alongside students in meaningful ways as they prepare to step into unfamiliar environments and explore God’s calling for their lives.”

Earlier in 2025, Fanai learned about the opening for student missions and service program director at Andrews. She reflects that the position immediately resonated with a passion God had placed on her heart: to empower young adults to serve with purpose. “It felt like God opening a door back to a community that shaped me, and I sensed a calling to return and invest in students the same way mentors once invested in me.”

Fanai most looks forward to journeying with the students on campus—hearing their stories, encouraging their sense of mission and witnessing the growth that happens through service. She hopes to bring a spirit of compassion, openness and intentional mentorship to her new role, noting, “I want to help cultivate a campus culture where service and mission are woven into everyday life and where students feel empowered to live out their faith through meaningful action. I hope that each individual/student I encounter would come to know the love of Jesus or live out their love for Jesus and serve like He did.” ■

Isabella Koh is the communication coordinator for the Office of University Communication



▲ Rebecca Fanai serves as the new student missions and service program director at Andrews.



Courtesy IA Class of 1960

▲ Members of Indiana Academy's Class of 1960 present a \$1.4 million check—an endowment gift that grew to \$1.5 million before alumni weekend events concluded.

Indiana Academy Class of 1960 Leaves \$1.4 Million Legacy of Faithfulness

The Indiana Academy Class of 1960 has a point to make—to the tune of \$1.4 million. That was the amount of the check presented during the alumni reunion weekend, Oct. 10-13, 2025. When class president Larry Schalk stood before the crowd in the school gymnasium, the audience rose to its feet in applause.

For Schalk, the gift represents more than generosity. “We wanted to make sure every student who wants a Christian education can have that opportunity,” he said. “Money should never be the reason a young person can’t attend Indiana Academy.”

Schalk and others have watched in dismay as several Adventist academies across the country have closed in recent years—including Bass Memorial Academy in Mississippi and Dakota Adventist Academy in North Dakota.

Indiana Academy’s enrollment isn’t threatened, at the moment. This year, the school welcomed 106 students, nearly reaching its capacity of 120. Many are from immigrant and refugee families from Burma and elsewhere, often with limited financial means. Indiana is in a unique position as one of only two states in the Lake Union (the other is Wisconsin) that provide a \$6,500 voucher subsidy per student. With an additional \$2,000 to \$4,000, Adventist education becomes a more affordable option for families

who want their children to experience a faith-based environment. The new endowment will strengthen that model.

An Extraordinary Class

To understand the heart behind this generosity, one must understand the Class of 1960.

“We were a family of kids that created a lot of problems for the school,” Schalk said with a chuckle. “I was class president for most of the year, but on our senior class trip with a month of school to go, the principal removed all four gentlemen that were officers of the senior class.”

The incident left a sting, but the hurt only seemed to tighten the bond among the class of 1960 and they stayed close throughout the decades. At their 50th year reunion, 41 out of the 48 living graduates returned. At the 60th reunion, about half came.

Classmates Elizabeth Rogers and Don Gettys credit Schalk as the person largely responsible for holding the class together. “He’s planned some really wonderful get-togethers during alumni weekends,” said Rogers.

Now in their golden years, between 82 and 87 years old, the classmates reflect on how their Adventist education shaped them. Rogers said her parents sacrificed so she could attend. “There were times they were ready to send me home because my bill wasn’t paid, and by a miracle my dad, a realtor, would sell a property,” she said. “My parents really sacrificed for us to go. I mean, really sacrificed.”

Gettys echoed that theme of “huge sacrifice,” recalling his parents selling their home and moving to a smaller home in Cicero so he and his sister could attend the academy. His dad drove every day back and forth to his job an hour away, so that they could live near the school.

From Lessons to Legacy

Many of the 1960 graduates went on to lead accomplished lives. Gettys, a longtime



WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS ENDOWMENT SO THAT MANY MORE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE AN ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

Adventist pastor and evangelist, became known for his decades of ministry and preaching. Rogers earned her doctorate and later served as a university professor and dean. Others pursued leadership in health-care, education and public service.

“A lot of us turned out A-OK,” Rogers said. “Many of us went on to college, which wasn’t that common for women back then. And we’ve done well.”

Schalk himself spent his career in Adventist institutions, serving as chief financial officer at Andrews University and earlier with Adventist healthcare. “We’ve all been blessed,” he said. “And I think that’s part of why people gave so freely. We wanted to help others have the same chance we did.”

How It Happened

The million-and-a-half-dollar gift began with an anonymous class member who wanted to give back through the creation of an endowment. They wanted to remain

anonymous and asked Schalk, as class president, to present it and make it happen.

The donor’s initial gift was \$600,000, with a two-for-one matching challenge for new gifts up to \$200,000. As momentum built, the donor increased the match to \$300,000, bringing the total to \$1.5 million. At alumni weekend, they had raised \$270,000 in pledges and donations. They turned to the audience and asked if they would give \$30,000, of which the donor would match with \$60,000. That brought the number up from \$1.4 million to \$1.5 million by the end of the weekend.

Schalk worked closely with Indiana Conference administrators, including President Vic Van Schaik, treasurer Mark Eaton and academy business manager David Dickerson.

Van Schaik said the conference is grateful for the generosity of the IA Class of 1960 and friends for their support of this endowment. “These funds will provide financial assistance for students who would like to attend

Indiana Academy but are not able to do so because of finances,” he said, adding, “We want to encourage others to contribute to this endowment so that many more young people can have the opportunity to receive an Adventist Christian education. This is a unique way to leave a legacy that will impact generations to come.”

Sixty-five years after their graduation, the Class of 1960 has made its mark through a legacy of faithfulness and hope in future generations. ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.



Courtesy Adrienne Benton

▲ Thandiwe Chiwaya (center) is flanked by, left to right: Milwaukee Sharon Church Pastor Richard Sylvester Sr., U.S. Navy Chaplain Adrienne Benton, North American Division Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Director Washington Johnson, U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black, Lake Region Interim President Abraham Henry and North American Division Associate Director of Chaplaincy Ministries Denny Rengifo.

Thandiwe Chiwaya Commissioned as U.S. Navy Chaplain

Thandiwe Chiwaya was commissioned as a U.S. Navy chaplain on Saturday, Dec. 6, during a service at Oakwood University, an affirmation of her call to ministry and a milestone nearly 30 years in the making.

The ceremony in Alabama marked a brief pause from her regular post in Illinois, where she currently serves as a staff chaplain at the Navy's only bootcamp in Great Lakes. Returning to the location where she first trained as a young recruit is a full-circle moment in her journey.

A Call She Tried to Outrun

Chiwaya enlisted in the Navy at 18, arriving in Illinois for boot camp with no idea that ministry would one day shape her career. It wasn't until years later—after deploying, becoming a career counselor and meeting Adventist chaplains—that the stirrings of a call to ministry grew louder.

At the time, she resisted. "I just felt so unusable," she said. "It wasn't me looking to tell

God no; I just didn't believe that I was good enough. But God makes us good enough."

Her turning point came when Sabbath conflicts began surfacing during deployment, something she had never experienced in her first decade of service. "I realized God was trying to get my attention," she said. With encouragement from a chaplain, she finally said yes.

What followed was a two-and-a-half-year journey to seminary. She began studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 2011, moving through the program part-time while navigating military transitions. When she finished in 2018, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries endorsed her, and the Navy accepted her as an active-duty chaplain.

Back to Great Lakes

After Andrews, Chiwaya received her first assignment. Expecting a ship on one of the coasts, she prayed as her detailer prepared to read her orders. Instead, he told her she wasn't going far at all. She would return to Great Lakes as a staff chaplain. The placement felt providential.

"It gave me the opportunity to learn my craft before I actually had to execute it," she said.

At Great Lakes, Chiwaya provides counseling and religious support for staff and thousands of recruits. She oversees Seventh-day Adventist services with support from Shalem and Gurnee churches, preaches periodically at Protestant worship, and teaches classes on Navy core values, suicide prevention and character development.

Anchored in God's Faithfulness

As she reflects on her commissioning, Chiwaya returns often to Psalm 33:16–19, a passage she clung to throughout her journey. "His call is an equipping call," she said. "I don't have to be perfect. I just have to trust Him."

Her childhood memories reinforce that trust. At 7, kneeling beside her grandmother at Jamaica Seventh-day Adventist Church in Queens, she prayed her first spontaneous prayer. Soon after, still painfully shy, she was asked to give the children's story at her large home church. The only story she could find was one titled, "When I grow up, I'm going to be a pastor." She delivered it, never imagining it would one day reflect her own life.

For Chiwaya, the commissioning service at Oakwood marked the moment her decades-long call became visible to others. "When I started seminary, commissioning seemed so impossible and so far away," she said. "But God opens doors. And He brought me all the way back to where my journey began, so I could help shape the journeys of others." ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.



Dauren Heslop

▲ Educators had the opportunity to participate in a variety of labs during STEM Day.

STEM Day at Andrews University Engages Adventist Educators

Nearly 50 educators from schools in the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, as well as other conferences across the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, participated in the second STEM Day at Andrews University on Sept. 4, 2025.

This professional development event for educators in the STEM disciplines—science, technology, engineering and mathematics—enabled teachers to engage in interactive labs and discussions. Sessions covered topics such as physics, biology, geometry, innovation, coding and chemistry, all designed to be implemented in K–12 classrooms. The event was co-sponsored by Andrews University and the Lake Union Education Department.

STEM Day opened in the Science Complex, under the theme “STEM by Design: Hands-on = Minds-on Engaged.” Ruth Horton, director of education for the Lake Union, and Wagner Kuhn, Andrews University’s chief academic officer, welcomed participants and spoke about the goals of cultivating Adventist education. Anthony Bosman, chair of the Department of Mathematics, gave a brief

worship in which he quoted various scientists, mathematicians and Adventist pioneer Ellen White to highlight how science and mathematics reflect the brilliance of God.

After the opening program, the visiting educators were able to participate in four different lab lesson plans that were tailored to specific student age ranges. The labs were led by several Andrews science and mathematics professors, and each lab was designed to be interactive, physical and engaging, with the goal of helping students better comprehend and retain information about the subject.

Monica Nudd, one of the lead organizers of STEM Day and the director of Andrews’ Mission: Invent initiative, described the free, high-quality lab kits as a truly impactful blessing. “The schools receive materials that they can use year after year. They don’t have

to pay anything to come [to STEM Day],” she said. “Most things that are this caliber would cost hundreds of dollars, and [for this event] they come for free.”

All participating teachers and administrators were able to take kits full of reusable lab supplies back to their schools at no cost, thanks in large part to a \$40,000 grant provided to Andrews University by the Versacare Foundation, an independent Seventh-day Adventist philanthropic organization.

In addition to working on the labs, the visiting participants were treated to a tour of the University’s Agriculture Education Center and Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. At the close of the program, Nudd led a group discussion with the educators to gather their feedback on the day. Several teachers expressed deep appreciation for the STEM Day labs, tours and discussions that occurred.

Jeremy Hall, vice president for Education for the Michigan Conference, spoke highly of the training that STEM Day leaders provided. “I think that learning needs to be fun, and I think that what I’ve seen from the people who have been teaching the teachers, they’re making the learning fun and interesting,” he shared.

Nathan Crabtree, a fifth- through eighth-grade teacher at Aboite Christian School, also praised the labs and professional development instruction. “I really enjoyed the coding seminar that was given. That’s something I have no experience in, and I really enjoyed doing that,” he said. “Chemistry is [also] always fun. Finding not just experiments that can be done, but also safely, in the elementary school classroom, I do like.”

To learn more about Andrews University’s STEM Division and its initiatives, please visit the division’s web page. ■

Andrew Francis, *University Communication student writer*

Math Teachers Explore Artificial Intelligence at Lake Union Professional Training

Ten math teachers from junior and senior academies across the Lake Union gathered on Oct. 14 at the Lake Union Conference in Berrien Springs, Michigan, for a day of professional growth focused on artificial intelligence and math instruction.

Ruth Horton, Lake Union education director, said the math training was designed to strengthen instruction in a subject that continues to require deeper dives for students and educators alike. “Math has always been the class many people say they struggled with,” she said. “Since fewer teachers specialize in mathematics instruction, we find many students moving through elementary, middle and into high school without as strong a math foundation as we would like to see.”

The theme of the day-long training, “AI and Math Instruction,” began with a devotional by Anthony Bosman, chair of the Andrews University math department, exploring what the Bible has to say about AI followed by an exploration into “The Mathematics of Thinking Machines.” Another presenter explored how artificial intelligence can support teachers and students by “harnessing the potential of AI to make math instruction more manageable while fostering meaning that builds on mathematical concepts for increased learning,” Horton said. “Teachers are constantly scaffolding for students at multiple levels. Technology can certainly assist, once you’ve laid a solid foundation.”

Deeper dives into content areas of geometry, specifically Isosceles, as well, and single

area statistics added some more mathematics content learning to the day.

Other presenters included Aaron Long, a North America Division Education technology representative from Burton Academy in the Southwestern Union, and Chantel Blackburn, teacher at the Berrien RESA Math and Science Center.

Attendees represented Andrews Academy, Battle Creek Academy, Greater Lansing Junior Academy, Hinsdale Adventist Academy, Holland Adventist Academy, Indiana Academy, Ruth Murdoch Elementary School, Thompsonville Junior Academy, Village Adventist Elementary School and Wisconsin Academy.

Horton said participants had some healthy interactions and noted the need for more time for teachers to connect with each other in future math professional learning communities. “Overall, it was a good day” and teachers also “now are more aware of the other math teachers [throughout the union] and can begin to network and support each other.” ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.



Photography by Darren Heslop

▲ **Top:** The theme of the day-long training, “AI and Math Instruction,” began with a devotional by Anthony Bosman, chair of the Andrews University math department, exploring what the Bible has to say about AI.

▲ **Middle:** Presenters included Aaron Long, a North America Division Education technology representative from Burton Academy in the Southwestern Union, and Chantel Blackburn (pictured above), teacher at the Berrien RESA Math and Science Center in Berrien Springs.

▲ **Bottom:** Ruth Horton, until recently Lake Union education director, said the math training was designed to strengthen instruction in a subject that continues to require deeper dives for students and educators alike.

Darren Heslop



Lake Union Expands Kosrae Partnership with New School Bus Project

About seven years ago, the North American Division Educational Leadership Team embraced a compelling vision: to partner with the Guam Micronesia Mission's nine islands in a way that would strengthen and enrich both communities. The Lake Union Conference was paired with the island of Kosrae in the Federated States of Micronesia.

This small, six-mile-long island is home to approximately 6,000 residents and currently supports two Seventh-day Adventist church groups meeting on opposite sides of the island. It is also home to a Seventh-day Adventist school serving between 40–80 students each year. Most of the teachers are student missionaries, many of whom come from Andrews University.

An early visit to Kosrae in 2019 by a team from the Lake Union Conference and the NAD Education Department highlighted an urgent need: a covered gymnasium that would provide students with expanded opportunities for play, exercise, and gathering. In response, the Lake Union Conference partnered with Habitat for Humanity to launch a Union-wide fundraising campaign involving schools across the territory. Students and communities rallied—selling handmade pillows, hosting 5K marathons, and working diligently to raise the necessary funds. In total, more than \$100,000 was raised to support the project. Although the COVID pandemic caused construction delays, the gymnasium—complete with new restrooms—was completed in 2023. Final details and equipment were added, and the gymnasium was dedicated in May of 2024.

Today, another significant need has emerged for the school: a bus. The school currently borrows a bus from the local Kosraean government office, whose officials are eager to reclaim it for use in their own

schools. Because nearly all student attendance depends on daily transportation, the loss of this bus would have a serious and immediate impact on the school.

To address this need, a new fundraising campaign has begun from January through June 2026 as a tangible way to show continued support. Early estimates for a used bus and shipping costs total approximately \$50,000. A brand-new bus is not ideal due to limited access to replacement parts, so guidance has been given to seek a used bus that meets very specific requirements. With the help of the Guam Micronesia Mission and partners on the West Coast, officials have identified a feasible plan to ship a much-needed bus.

Schools—and churches that wish to help—will begin fundraising efforts as soon as possible. We're encouraging participation. We anticipate more pillows, more 5Ks and, this year-- cashews! Cashews? Yes! Most recently, a partnership with ADRA's sustainability fundraising initiative has begun to support cashew farmers in Ghana. ADRA assists with packaging and transporting cashews to a storage warehouse in the United States, where they are held until sold. Schools and churches can sell the cashews, earning a 25% profit, while the remaining proceeds support farmers and families in Ghana. Participating students will receive a wonderful "bus" sticker for their water bottle. It is a beautiful example of outreach on both ends—so if

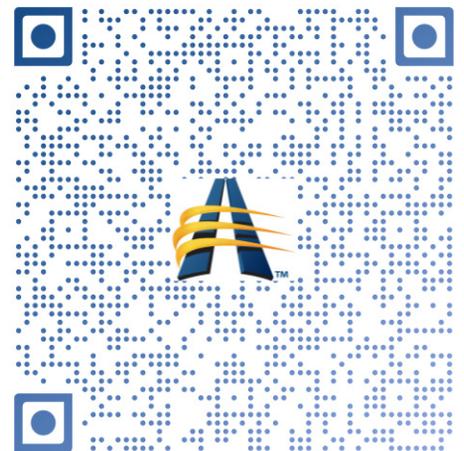


someone offers you Goodone cashews, be the "good one" and say yes...because we are committed to "Keep Kosrae Prayed For and Cared For!"

Here are three ways you can help:

- Reach out to your local school about their fundraising campaign.
- Follow this QR code to donate directly.
- Pray for us to raise the funds needed. ■

Nicole Mattson is interim director of education for the Lake Union Conference.



Clergy and Educator Memorial Medallions Available

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the sacrifices and dedication of its employees and seeks to demonstrate its appreciation in a variety of ways. One way the church expresses appreciation after the death of a pastor or educator is with a Seventh-day Adventist Clergy or Educator Memorial Medallion. The Seventh-day Adventist Clergy and Educator Memorial Medallions honor the sacrificial service of the men and women who dedicated their lives of full-time gospel or educational ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

PRESENTATION OF MEMORIAL MEDALLIONS

The medallion should be presented in gratitude for the faithful worker's service.

The presentation should be made publicly at the funeral, memorial service or graveside committal.

The family may wish to keep the medallion in their home, or have the medallion affixed to the cemetery grave marker. The funeral home director may be able to assist the family in finding the right person to ensure the medallion is placed securely on the tombstone.

Suggested Ceremony

Ask all denominational employees to stand/raise their hands.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church family is here to support you. On behalf of the _____ (example: Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists), please accept this Seventh-day Adventist Clergy/Educator Memorial Medallion as our expression of gratitude for the faithful service of _____ (name) in ministry to our churches/schools. May the Lord comfort you and your family. Together we reaffirm our hope in the soon coming of Jesus and pray that God will keep us all faithful 'til He comes."

QUALIFICATIONS

Individuals can purchase Memorial Medallions from Advent Source independent of the Lake Union qualifications. To qualify for a Memorial Medallion from the Lake Union Conference, the deceased must have:

1. Been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in good and regular standing
2. Served in Seventh-day Adventist Education/Ministerial work
3. Served within the LUC footprint

When someone from Seventh-day Adventist Education or Ministerial work has died who meets the three qualifications listed above:

- The family of a current employee within the LUC footprint may receive a medallion from the Lake Union Conference without charge.
- Family, conferences, churches or schools may request a medallion for someone who has retired (or for another reason is not currently working). There will be a \$35 fee charged to the requesting entity.
- It is the responsibility of the conference, church, school and/or family to request a medallion.

Please contact Vicki Thompson with any questions or to initiate this process (269-473-8221, vicki.thompson@lakeunion.org).

The Memorial Medallion may be presented by a principal, pastor, conference officer, university leader or union representative. Who presents the medallion will depend on calendar availability, leadership position, and knowledge of the deceased worker. ■

-Lake Union Education Department



'TIL HE COMES:

Special Memorial
Medallions Honor
Service of Seventh-day
Adventists

Ruth Horton Elected Vice President for Education, North American Division

On October 31, during the 2025 North American Division Year-End Meeting, Ruth Horton, director of education for the Lake Union Conference, was elected to serve as vice president for education for the North American Division.

Horton has faithfully served as an advocate for Christ-centered education, inspiring students, educators and leaders with her passion and commitment to excellence.

Originally from the island of Dominica, she holds an Associate of Arts in business administration from Caribbean Union College (now University of the Southern Caribbean), a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Arts in educational administration from Andrews University, and a doctorate in educational leadership from National-Louis University. Her experience spans all levels of education including public, private and denominational systems.

Before joining the Lake Union, she served as superintendent of education for the Lake Region and Illinois conferences. Most

recently, she has served as director of education for the Lake Union, overseeing Pre-K through 12th grade programs across the territory.

Reflecting on her new assignment, Horton said, “I’m humbled by the opportunity to serve in this wider field of ministry at the North American Division, continuing a life’s work so precious to me — the education of children and young people who are indispensable assets to God’s kingdom. Throughout my journey, one thing has remained constant: a desire to strengthen the systems and people who pour into our students each day. I’m deeply grateful to the Lake Union team and our dedicated educators, and as I continue in this next chapter, my prayer is to help build on the strong foundation of Adventist



Dave Sherwin

▲North American Division Education Director Ruth Horton

education so every student may experience a vibrant life with Jesus.”

We are grateful for Ruth Horton’s leadership and pray for God’s continued blessing as she begins this new chapter in ministry.

Lake Union Herald staff

Nicole Mattson Named Interim Lake Union Director of Education

Nicole Mattson was appointed to the role of interim Education director for the Lake Union, effective immediately. She has served as associate director for elementary since 2022.

The appointment follows Ruth Horton’s transition to Education director for the North American Division.

“As the Lake Union Education team moves forward, we are very thankful for Nicole’s steady leadership and collaborative spirit,” said Elden Ramirez, Lake Union Conference president. “Over the years we have witnessed her deep commitment to the mission of Adventist Christian Education. We believe her energetic leadership in this season will be marked by continued creativity, prayer and a



Dave Sherwin

▲ Nicole Mattson

clear focus on our students and our schools.”

Mattson, a native Michigander who has served as an Adventist educator and administrator for 28 years, said she was grateful for the opportunity.

“I am honored to serve at the Lake Union Conference in whatever capacity God calls me,” said Mattson. “I strongly believe in the transformative impact of Adventist Christian Education and its vital role in uncertain times. I also believe in the calling to lead young people to know Jesus personally, to grow in love and learning, and to discover and develop their gifts to serve Him faithfully.”

Mattson’s teaching career began with 12 years in lower elementary and middle school classrooms at Battle Creek Academy and extended to serving for four years in K-4th grade classrooms in Grand Junction, Colorado, at Intermountain Adventist Academy.

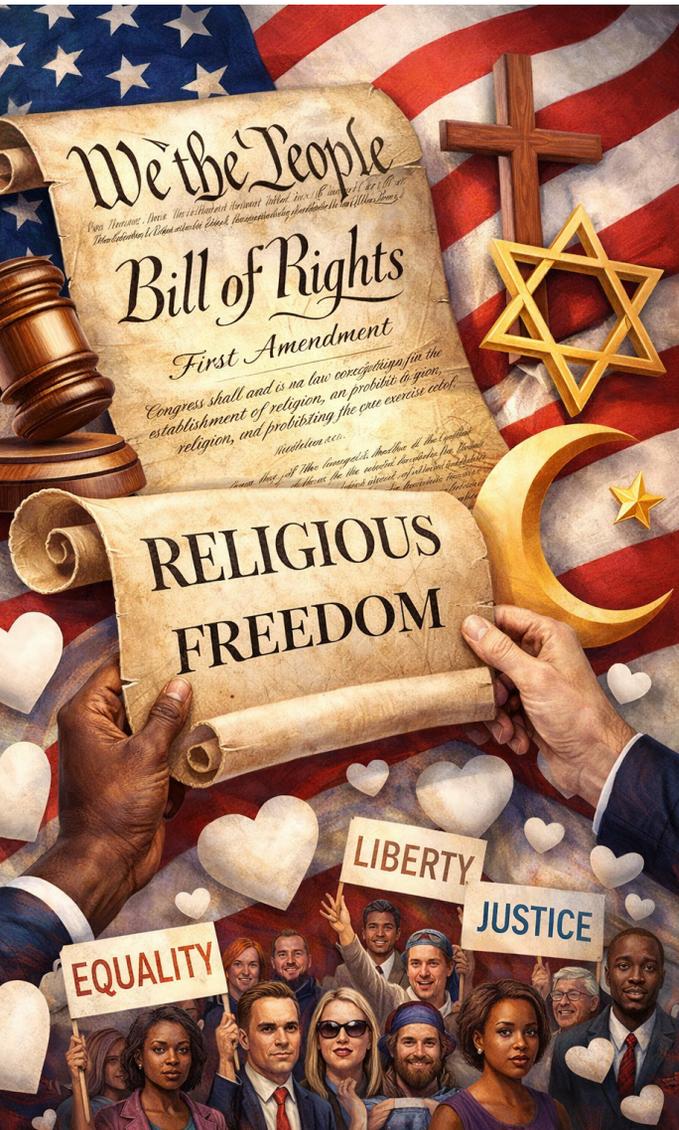
She has served as superintendent of Education for both Indiana and Arizona, before joining the Lake Union Conference.

She holds an associate of arts degree from Northwestern Michigan College, a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Andrews University, and a master’s degree in education technology from Western Michigan University.

Her greatest joys include helping to equip others for the ministry of education, teaching the integration of technology for the classroom to pre-service teachers and inspiring others to live and minister for Jesus.

An avid hiker and lake-lover, she loves to play pickleball and enjoys the great outdoors with her husband, Terry, and extended family that includes seven beautiful grandchildren.

Please join us in praying for Nicole and her team, as she leads out in this crucial role. ■

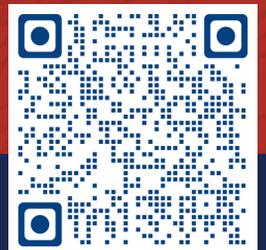


Two Freedoms, One Nation: Religious and Civil Liberty at 250

*Our keynote speaker
for Divine Service is
Pastor John Lomacang*

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

April 11



MILEPOSTS

OBITUARIES

CLARK, Charles “Chuck” L., age 90; born Jan. 9, 1935, in Kalkaska, Mich.; died Oct. 27, 2025, in Traverse City, Mich. He was a member of the Boyne City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Boyne City, Mich. He is survived by his wife, Beverly “Bev” J. (Dell) Clark; stepson, Lee (Debby) Chapaw; daughters, Thelma Caldwell, Karen (Chet) Leatherman, Carla (John) Miller, Debra (Scott) Mortimer, Rona (Leo) Kreiser, Julie (Pete) Wood; stepdaughter, Betty (Don) Adama; stepbrothers, Lance Clark, Ronald Stoops, David Stoops; stepsisters, Donna (Clark) Schriener, Sharon (Pflum) Johnson, Marilyn (Stoops) McCool; 20 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. A memorial inurnment was conducted on Nov. 7, 2025, by Pastor Chris Ames, with a graveside service at Kalkaska Evergreen Cemetery in Kalkaska, Mich.

CURRIER, Warren R., age 94; born March 23, 1931, in Detroit; died Sept. 2, 2025, in Sturgis, Mich. He was a member of the Wolcottville SDA Church in Wolcottville, Ind. He is survived

by his sons, Gene Currier, Terry (Lucinda) Currier; daughters, Lou Ann (Pete) Kamphues, Nancy Currier, Diana Butler; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and great-great-grandchildren. A funeral inurnment was conducted Sept. 8, 2025, at Farrand Funeral Home in White Pigeon, Mich.

ERHARD, Darla Rae (Rouse), age 66; born Oct. 2, 1959, in Amarillo, Texas; died Dec. 13, 2025, in Ooltewah, Tenn. She was a member of the Collegedale SDA Church in Collegedale, Tenn. She is survived by her husband, Ricky Harris; sons, Nicholas (Brooke Reading) Erhard, Neal (Corinne Thomas) Erhard; mother, Darlene (Herr) Rouse; brother, Arden (Jan) Rouse; and 5 grandchildren. A memorial inurnment was conducted Jan. 4, 2026, by Pastor Dave Ferguson, in Tennessee.

POWERS, Herbert “Wayne” W., age 82; born Jan. 31, 1943, in Hammond, Ind.; died Nov. 15, 2025, in Hurley, Wisc. He was a member of the Clearwater Lake Church in Eagle River, Wisc. He is survived by his sons,

Michael (Debra) Powers, Mark (Autumn) Powers; daughters, Marla Powers, Margo (Michael) Holm; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Inurnment at the Woodland Cemetery in Woodland, Wisc.

QUITTMAYER, David W., age 80; born Dec. 26, 1944, in Taunton, Mass.; died June 14, 2025, in Kendallville, Ind. He was a member of the Wolcottville SDA Church in Wolcottville, Ind. He is survived by his wife, Judy (Keeran) Quittmeyer; children, Paral, Sharal, Daral, Brian, Diana; sisters, Janet, Cathy; brothers, George, Charles; and many grandchildren. A memorial was conducted Aug. 31, 2025, at the Wolcottville Adventist Church in Wolcottville, Indiana.

SCOFIELD, Merle “Maxine” (Foster), age 100; born Jan. 4, 1925, in Devils Lake, North Dakota; died Oct. 7, 2025, in Lincoln, Nebraska. She was a member of the Piedmont Park SDA Church in Lincoln, Neb. She is survived by her son David (Anita) Scofield; daughter Judy (Ken) Finnell; son-in-law Jan Follett; half-sisters Loel (Foster) Steagall, Linda (Foster) McEwen; cousin, Phyllis Wood

(Foster); eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and one great, great-granddaughter. A memorial inurnment is planned for the spring in Richland Center, Wisc.

VALLIERES, Gail (Vanick), age 87; born March 13, 1938, in Chicago; died May 12, 2025, in Berrien Springs, Mich. She was a member of the Village Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. She is survived by her son, Scott (Shari) Vallieres; daughter, Shelly (Jamie) Erhard; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. A memorial interment was conducted June 28, 2025, by Pastor Glenn Russell, with a private graveside service at Rosehill Cemetery in Berrien Springs, Mich.

WILLIAMS, Thomas “Tom” K., age 95; born May 16, 1930, in Milwaukee, Wisc.; died Dec. 4, 2025, in Loma Linda, Calif. He was a member of the Loma Linda University Church in Loma Linda, Calif. He is survived by his son, Tom Williams; daughters, Teri (Mark) Muir, Tonyce (Phil) Bates; and five grandchildren. A memorial inurnment was conducted Jan. 25, 2026, in California.

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.

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

MARCH

- 7 Local Church Budget
- 14 World Budget Adventist World Radio (GC)
- 21 Local Church Budget
- 28 Local Conference Advance

CLASSIFIEDS

ANNOUNCEMENT

LEGAL NOTICE

The 24th business session of the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in the Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, on May 31, 2026. The first meeting of the session will convene at 9:00 a.m. on May 31. This session is being held for the purpose of receiving reports for the three-year period ending December 31, 2025; the election of officers, associate treasurers, departmental directors, associate directors, and executive committee for the ensuing five years; to consider proposed constitutional changes; and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the delegates. Elden Ramirez, president Ted Huskins, secretary

EVENTS

Hone your fundraising

skills at the 2026 Missional Philanthropy Conference at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, July 14-16. Learn from nationally recognized experts in education, healthcare, corporate foundations, and nonprofit work to effectively generate financial support for projects. Early-bird registration is open through April 1 at southern.edu/philanthropyconference.

ATTN: Broadview Academy

Graduates. Our 2026 School Reunion is: April 24 & 25, 2026, at the North Aurora SDA Church, 950 Mooseheart Rd., North Aurora, IL. Let your classmates know. Honor classes: '56,'66,'76,'86,'96, '01, and '06. Friday Night Vespers: 7:30 p.m.; Sabbath Services: 9:30 a.m.--5 p.m. Bring a dish for lunch to share if you can. All are welcome!

TABERNACLE SACRED CONCERT SERIES 2026

presents Christian singer Steve Green in concert April 4, 2026, at 7 p.m. at the Battle Creek Tabernacle, 264 West Michigan Ave., Battle Creek. Green has been a Dove Award winner with 18 No. 1 songs and has been inducted into the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame. With over 40 recordings to his credit, including children's projects and Spanish-language albums, Green has sold over 3 million albums worldwide. A freewill offering will be taken at the concert. For more information, go to www.bctab.com.

EMPLOYMENT

Union Adventist University

is searching for a director of Human Resources. This is a full-time, exempt position with excellent benefits. This position plans, leads, develops, coordinates, and implements policies, processes, and initiatives to support the University's human

resource compliance and strategy needs. Please view the full description and apply at uau.edu/employment.

Union Adventist University

is seeking applicants for two positions in the Student Success Department: Student Success Career Development program manager to oversee career development services including coaching and advising students in calling/vocational exploration and other related duties; Life Coach to implement strategic indicatives related to student retention, engagement, and graduation. Both are full-time positions with full benefits package including tuition assistance to dependents. See job descriptions and apply at uau.edu/employment.

Strong Tower Radio has a job opening for an engineering director. Prior broadcast engineering experience a must. Having a General Radio Telephone Operators License preferred. Work is mainly at the STR headquarters in Cadillac, Michigan, but will involve travel. See StrongTowerRadio.org for complete job description or contact us at 231-468-2087.

SERVICES

Wings of Life — Follow the journey of frontline missions in Central America as we plant churches, conduct health outreaches and more. Read the exciting stories, pray for us, and consider volunteering on a short-term trip. Follow, engage and partner with us in our mission of saving lives. Visit www.wingsoflife.net

FREE APP — Discover stellar faith-building, Bible-based and Christ-centered radio programs for all ages. LifeTalk Radio streams all music at LifeTalkMusic.net and awesome kids programs at LifeTalkKids.net or listen to talk radio at: LifeTalk.net. Download our handy free app from: LifeTalk.net

Need a vocation? Gain hands-on training in HVAC, welding, electrical, or other in-demand trades—and be equipped to share the Three Angels' Messages. Streams of Light Training Institute is where trades meet mission. Learn more at StreamsOfLightInstitute.net or call 888-765-7654.

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>.

EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE



Experience college life and earn tuition-free college credit before the school year begins!

July 27–Aug. 14, 2026

An in-person summer college experience for rising high school juniors and seniors, as well as incoming freshmen.

- ✓ Earn 3 college credits through 1 academic course
- ✓ Engage in seminars, activities, and local travel
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Email: undergrad@andrews.edu

Phone: 269-471-6343

Tuition is free. Participants are responsible for a discounted, flat lodging fee that covers room and board, textbooks, and local transportation.

March

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

GENERAL EVENTS

- March 6-9:** March Weekend Experience
- March 26:** Innovation Week:
Pitch Competition Finals
- March 27-30:** Conociendo Event

HOWARD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER EVENTS

For more information on the following events and to purchase tickets, call 888-467-6442 or 269-471-3560, or visit howard.andrews.edu.

- March 5, 7 p.m.:** Andrews University Symphony Orchestra Showcase Concert for Music Festival
- March 6, 7:30 p.m.:** Andrews University Wind Symphony Vespers Concert
- March 7, 4 p.m.:** Music Festival Finale Concert
- March 8, 4 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series: Andrews University Composers
- March 11, 7 p.m.:** Michigan Seventh-day Adventist Music Clinic & Concert
- March 23, 7 p.m.:** Michigan Schools Band & Orchestra Association Clinic & Concert
- March 29, 7 p.m.:** Howard Center Presents: K-Anthony

ILLINOIS

- March 7:** Conference Level Pathfinder Bible Experience, Richland Bridge SDA Church
- March 13-15:** Kids 360 / VBS Training Live / Alive in Jesus, Camp Akita
- March 21:** Global Youth Day, Location TBD

INDIANA

- March 6-8:** Indiana Pathfinder/Adventurer Training Institute, Timber Ridge Camp
- March 7-8:** Hispanic Women's Retreat, Indianapolis, IN
- March 13-15:** Indiana Men's Conference, Timber Ridge Camp

LAKE REGION

- March 7:** Women's Day of Prayer
- March 21-28:** Youth Week of Prayer
- March 21:** Global Youth Day

MICHIGAN

- March 1-16:** Camp Meeting Registration
- March 6-8:** Health Ministries Retreat, Camp Au Sable

March 7: Conference Level Pathfinder Bible Experience

- March 27-29:** ACS | DR Weekend, Camp Au Sable
- March 29 - Apr. 4:** Emmanuel Training, Conference Office

WISCONSIN

- March 7:** Conference Level Pathfinder Bible Experience
- March 20-21:** Global Youth Day, Milwaukee

LAKE UNION

- March 28:** Union Level Pathfinder Bible Experience, Camp Wagner, Cassopolis, Mich.

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

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	March 7	March 14	March 21	March 28
Berrien Springs, Mich.	6:43	7:51	7:59	8:06
Chicago	5:48	6:56	7:04	7:12
Detroit	6:29	7:37	7:45	7:53
Indianapolis	6:43	7:50	7:58	8:05
La Crosse, Wis.	6:01	7:10	7:18	7:27
Lansing, Mich.	6:35	7:43	7:52	8:00
Madison, Wis.	5:54	7:03	7:11	7:19
Springfield, Ill.	5:57	7:04	7:11	7:19

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At Great Lakes Adventist Academy, we strive to provide a nurturing environment that allows students to develop academically, socially, and spiritually. Our no cell phone policy, high-quality Adventist curriculum, and loving, family atmosphere, allow them to learn, grow, and connect with others and with their friend and Savior, Jesus.



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Academy Days
April 12-13, 2026

Scan Here!



Register Today at glaa.net



Uplifting Christ
Pursuing Excellence
Serving Others





▲ JENNIFER GRAY WOODS

Do incarcerated individuals still have any religious liberty rights?

Yes, under both the First Amendment's free exercise clause and the 2000 federal law, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (referred to as RLUIPA), individuals have the right to practice their faith without substantial burdens from the government even if they are incarcerated.

RLUIPA specifically applies to land use or zoning laws as they relate to religious organizations and religious uses and to protections for institutionalized persons, including individuals in prisons, juvenile detention centers and other government-run facilities.

Both RLUIPA and its sister statute, the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act of 1993, prohibit governments from placing a substantial burden on an individual's religious exercise unless the government can show that imposing the burden is necessary to further the government's compelling interest and that imposing the burden is also the least restrictive way of furthering the government interest.

For institutionalized persons, such as those in prison, this means that they should be granted accommodations, if necessary, to allow them to practice their faith if there isn't a compelling government reason for not allowing the accommodation. Often safety was used as the justification for denying prisoners' requests for religious accommodation. The argument was made that allowing religious accommodations would interfere with discipline, order or safety. However, often times these arguments failed to identify how granting accommodation would actually negatively impact safety.

RLUIPA is designed to protect the constitutional rights of individuals who historically were often arbitrarily denied the right to practice their faith after incarceration or institutionalization. And these days some common RLUIPA accommodations include:

- Providing prisoners with religious diets such as kosher, halal or vegetarian meals or allowing fasting during religious observances
- Allowing prisoners access to religious materials such as a Bible, Qur'an, Torah or other religious text
- Allowing prisoners to wear religious headwear or follow religious grooming practices as wearing a hijab, yarmulke, having prayer beads, or growing a beard or hair, and
- Allowing prisoners to participate in religious services such as Sabbath services or Bible studies.

In recent years, the Supreme Court has protected the rights for a Muslim inmate to grow and keep a short beard as part of his faith, and for a Christian inmate to have his pastor present and lay hands and pray during his execution. During this 2025-2026 term, the Supreme Court is looking at the scope of remedies for a RLUIPA violation in the case *Landor v. Taylor* where a Rastafarian inmate's religious liberty was violated when prison officials cut off his dreadlocks in clear violation of RLUIPA.

As advocates of religious freedom for all people, the Seventh-day Adventist church is active in defending the religious liberty rights of those in prison who want to practice their faith. We understand that an individual's religious liberty does not end just because an individual is incarcerated. ■

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



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MARCH 14, 2026**



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AWR360°
BROADCAST TO BAPTISM

My Mentor

DEAR MR. WILKINSON,

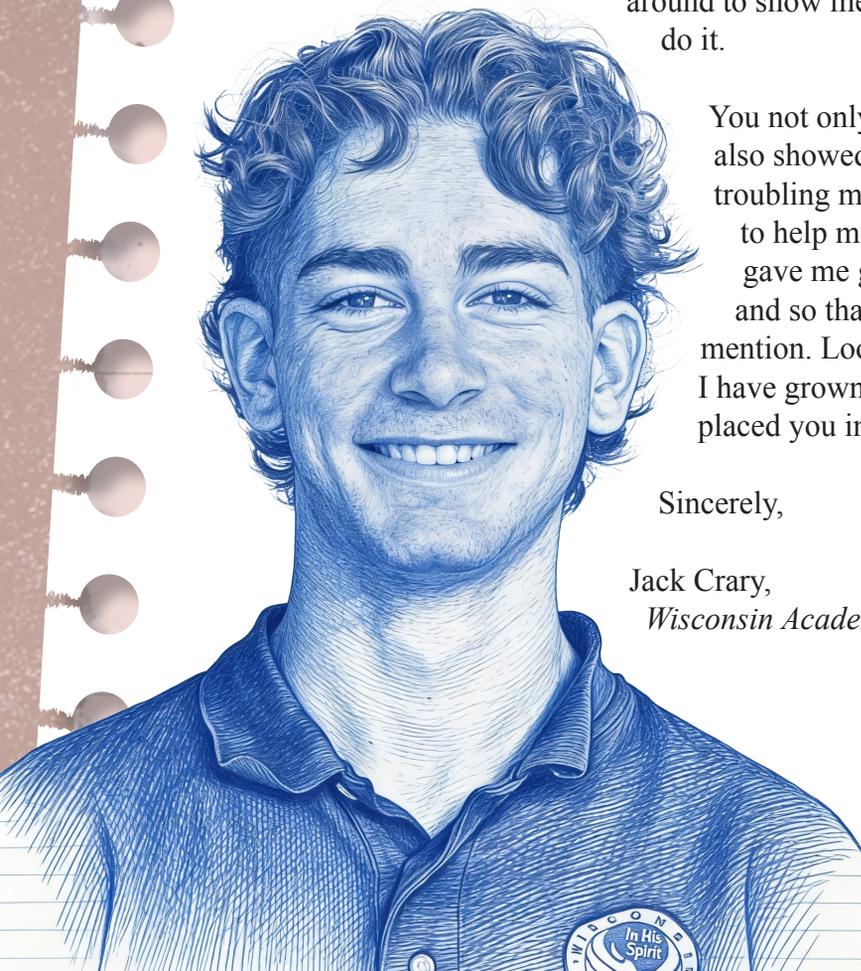
I'll never forget the first day I met you; it was my sophomore year of high school, and I had just started working maintenance that year. I had heard that a new assistant maintenance director would be joining, and I was excited to meet this person. I went to work, and my job for the day was to help you fix the cracks in the parking lot down by the conference office. I headed over there and that's when everything started.

I will admit I thought you were kind of weird when I met you because my first interaction was with you naming all the family members of mine you knew. As time went on, you grew on me with your sense of humor, joking around with you, your poems, and most importantly you were there for me when I needed help or advice. You pushed me to grow and to be a better person. When I messed up or made a mistake, you took that situation as a teaching moment instead of criticizing me. You taught me how to use a variety of tools and how to build or repair many things. You taught me that it is important to be honest in my work and to do my best even if the job is as small as sweeping dust up that will accumulate back up in a couple of minutes. You also taught me the value of initiative, that when even Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Wilkinson aren't around to show me what to do, I needed to find a job to do and do it.

You not only showed me how to be a great worker but also showed me the love of God. If I had a question troubling me, or a question about God you were open to help me. If I needed help writing a chapel talk, you gave me great advice. I am so blessed to have met you and so thankful for everything and more that I didn't mention. Looking back at my sophomore year until now I have grown so much, and I am so thankful that God has placed you in my life.

Sincerely,

Jack Crary,
Wisconsin Academy Senior



Thank You for Telling Me, Even If I Didn't Want to Listen

DEAR MR. AND MRS. BYRD,

You might not know this, but you had a huge impact on my life during my junior year. That was one of the hardest years of my life. We had just moved to Indiana Academy, and I did not want to be here because I thought that my relationship with God and with my other friends would be lost. Even though I didn't have a very close relationship with God, I was learning and growing. I ended up being completely wrong, and you helped me realize that.

At that time, I was also struggling with my relationship with my dad, and I couldn't see how God could be any different from my earthly father. Many people had told me God is different, but I didn't want to listen because I didn't know God. That year, I was in your faculty family, and I really looked up to you both, as sort of a father figure in Mr. Byrd, and a mother figure in Mrs. Byrd. You both helped me understand a lot of new things about God. You told me that He loved me, He would never leave me, and He would never hurt me. It was still hard, and, at first, I just heard it as the same things I had heard my whole life.

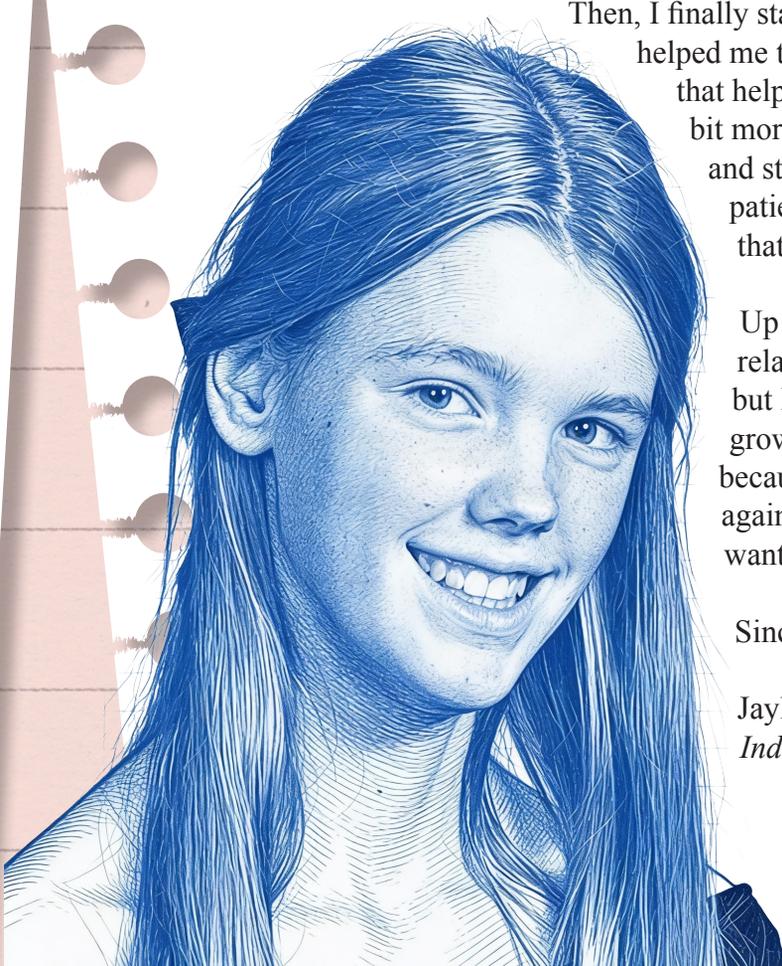
I had fallen deep into depression, and I was tired of trying and pretending for everyone.

Then, I finally started to listen. I remember many times when you both helped me through processing everything that had happened, and that helped me start to understand things and open up a little bit more. I opened my heart and mind to new opportunities and strategies for worship. Through your loving support and patience, I began to understand who God truly was, and that He could heal me.

Up to this time, I had tried to fill the hole I felt from my relationship with my father with a bunch of other things, but I constantly just felt worse. However, you helped me to grow in faith and trust, and lean into God and His healing, because He is the only one who can truly heal our hearts. So again, thank you for telling me; even though, at first, I didn't want to listen.

Sincerely,

Jayla Slade,
Indiana Academy, Senior



Illinois

Alpine Christian School ♦ Rockford
Downers Grove Adventist School ♦ Downers Grove
Gurnee Christian Academy ♦ Gurnee
Gurnee Christian Preschool ♦ Gurnee
HAA Little Lambs Early Learning Center ♦ Hinsdale
Hinsdale Adventist Academy ♦ Hinsdale
Illinois Inspire Academy ♦ Illinois Conference
Marion Adventist Christian School ♦ Marion
Metro-East Adventist Christian School ♦ Caseyville
North Aurora Elementary School ♦ North Aurora
North Shore Junior Academy ♦ Chicago
Thompsonville Christian Junior Academy
♦ Thompsonville

Indiana

Aboite Christian School ♦ Fort Wayne
Adventist Christian Elementary ♦ Bloomington
Cicero Adventist Elementary ♦ Cicero
Cross Street Christian School ♦ Anderson
Door Prairie Christian Daycare ♦ La Porte
Evansville Adventist Academy ♦ Evansville
Indiana Academy ♦ Cicero
Indianapolis Junior Academy ♦ Indianapolis
Indianapolis Southside Christian Academy ♦ Indianapolis
INspire Academy ♦ Indiana Conference
Maple Creek Adventist Academy ♦ Columbus
Northwest Adventist Christian School ♦ Crown Point
South Bend Junior Academy ♦ South Bend

Lake Region

Chicago SDA Christian School ♦ Chicago, IL
Flint Fairhaven Elementary School ♦ Flint, MI
Indianapolis Capitol City SDA School ♦ Indianapolis, IN
Peterson-Warren Academy ♦ Inkster, MI
South Suburban SDA Christian School ♦ Park Forest, IL

Michigan

A.S.P.I.R.E. Academy ♦ Michigan Conference
Adelphian Junior Academy ♦ Holly
Andrews Academy ♦ Berrien Springs
Ann Arbor Elementary School ♦ Ann Arbor
Battle Creek Academy ♦ Battle Creek
Bluff View Christian School ♦ Bessemer
Cedar Lake Elementary ♦ Cedar Lake
Charlotte Adventist Christian School ♦ Charlotte
Eau Claire Elementary School ♦ Eau Claire
Edenville SDA Elementary School ♦ Edenville
First Flint Elementary School ♦ Flint
Gobles Junior Academy ♦ Gobles
Grand Rapids Adventist Academy ♦ Grand Rapids
Grayling Elementary School ♦ Grayling
Great Lakes Adventist Academy ♦ Cedar Lake
Greater Lansing Adventist School ♦ Lansing
Hastings Elementary School ♦ Hastings
Holland Adventist Academy ♦ Holland
Ionia Elementary School ♦ Ionia
Ithaca Seventh-Day Adventist School ♦ Ithaca
Kalamazoo Junior Academy ♦ Kalamazoo

Metropolitan SDA Junior Academy ♦ Plymouth
Mount Pleasant Elementary School ♦ Mount Pleasant
Niles Adventist School ♦ Niles
Northview Adventist School ♦ Cadillac
Oakwood Junior Academy ♦ Taylor
Pine Mountain Christian School ♦ Iron Mountain
Ruth Murdoch Elementary School ♦ Berrien Springs
The Crayon Box ♦ Berrien Springs
Tri-City SDA School ♦ Midland
Troy Adventist Academy ♦ Troy
Troy Adventist Academy Preschool ♦ Troy
Village Adventist Elementary School ♦ Berrien Springs
Wilson Junior Academy ♦ Wilson

Wisconsin

Bethel Junior Academy ♦ Arpin
Frederic Adventist Christian School ♦ Frederic
Green Bay Adventist Junior Academy ♦ Green Bay
Hillside Christian School ♦ Wausau
Milwaukee SDA School | North Campus ♦ Milwaukee
Milwaukee SDA School | South Campus ♦ Milwaukee
Milwaukee SDA School | Waukesha ♦ New Berlin
Otter Creek Christian Academy ♦ Altoona
Petersen Adventist School ♦ Columbus
Three Angels Christian School ♦ Monona
Wisconsin Academy ♦ Columbus
Wisconsin Inspire Academy ♦ Wisconsin Conference

Education statement

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in all of its church schools, admits students of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools, and makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, country of origin or gender in the administration of education policies, applications for admission, scholarship or loan programs, and extracurricular programs.

