

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **From the President: ADVENTIST Education — We Can Fix This!**
- **Education Growth and Initiatives**
- **Introducing some departmental leaders**

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ADVENTIST Education — We Can Fix This!

Adventist education is an important part of who we are as Seventh-day Adventists. Ellen G. White wrote numerous books and articles about education. Historically Adventist education has been one of our highest church values.

If health is the right arm of our denominational message, then education certainly has been the left arm. When you think about our global church, what pops into your head? For me it's incredible church growth through evangelism, education, and medical ministries.

Our church can boast about having the largest protestant educational system in the world! In many countries, our schools are mission schools because the majority of the students come from homes with no connection to our church. These schools help many students to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior through baptism prior to graduation.

Beyond the vitally important spiritual component, there's the social upward mobility result. Public evangelism often appeals and reaches a blue-collar population. These honest-in-heart new believers join the church and are encouraged to place their children in our schools. Years later these same children graduate with professional degrees. And of course, who our children will marry and the ramifications of

our grandchildren counts too.

Church schools are a long-standing part of our church's DNA. Adventist education is a dominant, bright-colored thread woven repeatedly into the beautiful tapestry called Adventism.

Today in North America we have some real educational challenges. Enrollment continues to drop as costs continue to climb. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out the problem. There's no shortage of available students. There is, however, a shortage of funds. We can fix this!

We need to recognize that parents are expected to pay the vast majority of the tuition bill. The bulk of our available children come from under-resourced homes. Many immigrant families have an annual combined income of twenty thousand dollars. These hard-working parents desire to have their precious children receive an Adventist education; academically and spiritually strong, taught by caring Christ-centered Adventist teachers. We can fix this!

In Illinois we have 119 churches and 10 schools. This ratio shows most churches have no school. Let's fix this. What a blessing it is to be part of an Adventist school. Please ask the Lord in prayer what you and your church should do. Here are suggestions.

Pray daily for our teachers, schools and students.

Encourage your church to vote to contribute money monthly for worthy students. Your pastor has or will be talking to your church board about this. Encourage strong financial support.

Consider personally adopting a worthy student by financially supporting their tuition in part or in whole.

Adopt a school. Volunteer some time regularly to serve. Ask the principal for projects to do like grading papers, reading to students, serving lunch, etc. I have personally adopted a school and have helped to paint classrooms and hallways.

Contribute money to our conference's education endowment fund. The interest each year is divided among all of our schools. Let's increase this fund from nearly 5 million to 20 million dollars.

If we lift together as a conference family, we can fix this. We can enroll more fully-funded students into our schools, helping parents obtain an Adventist education for their children...for our children.



Ray Pichette,
Illinois Conference President

Fulfilling the Vision for Education

God's relentless efforts in fulfilling His goal of educating His children for eternity have again been shown! A new school, Metro-East Adventist Christian School (MACS) opens August 17, 2015, which is in keeping with carrying out the Conference's vision of opening new schools.

Located just a few miles east of St. Louis, MACS is a constituent school of the Oakhill and Fairmont City churches. Our new school will serve as a youth evangelism training center for a diverse student body

from three churches, including the nearby New Jerusalem Church—our soon-to-be constituent or partner church from a sister conference.

In the past few years, Pastor Dale Barnhurst and others have kept the flame for starting a new school flickering, and together with Jay Ellington, School Board Chair, MACS Board, and constituent churches, the school recently held its first Open House which drew interested parents, even well wishers like Evelyn Hainey and Megan Cowin from

our Thompsonville school.

Special thanks to the Oakhill Church where the school will be housed. The combined expertise and commitment of our new teaching principal, Kristina Forberg, MACS Board members, volunteers, and the church communities, provide encouraging energy and a spirit of collaboration. We are excited to launch a new school in Southwest Illinois. Please continue to pray for this new venture.

- Ruth Horton, Education Superintendent



Open house at Metro-East Adventist Christian School.

"We are richer and stronger when our resources are used collectively"

Constituent Churches for Schools

What better way to reach out and disciple, than doing it together in unity? The Joliet Church, with its supportive church family, knew the challenges of having a single church support Crest Hill Christian School (CHCS).

Encouragement came at the beginning of 2014/15 school year as the new principal, Lisa Hauck, started to reach out to neighboring churches and forge relationships with them. At the same time she, along with parents, church members and generous donors, put in much hard work to make improvements to the face of the school.

She invited Pastor José St. Phard, from the Bolingbrook Church, who also saw the need for Christian education in his congregation, to brainstorm ways for that church to get involved. He began coming once a month to lead Friday Chapel. As the church's awareness of the school and its needs increased, so did their response of support. They donated a backpacks, pencils, markers, erasers, paper, water bottles, note cards, notebooks, and glue sticks.

Under the leadership of Pastor Saint Phard, God provided the blessing of the Bolingbrook

Church Board voting unanimously to become constituent members of the school and also operate a PreK and Kindergarten class at the same location. The boards of CHCS and Joliet Church welcome the sister church as a constituent member of the school with open arms. This constituent partnership allows CHCS to continue and expand ministry in the area.

They are richer and stronger because resources are now being used collectively for the same goal—excellent Christian education for many more children!

- Shona Cross, with Lisa Hauck, and Pastor Adrian Amarandei, Joliet District

Caught in the Act!

Recently while attending the West Central Church, during the collection of the tithes and offerings, deacon Darryl Allen quietly and sincerely said, "thank you" to all who placed their gifts into the offering basket.



"This was a very pleasant first for me."

I couldn't remember in all my years attending worship services a deacon doing that. This was a very pleasant first for me. Darryl's simple act was polite and gracious. We all have a need to be appreciated. Thank you Darryl for your kind, Christ-like, courte-

ous example.

Also thank you to every faithful tithe and offering giver in the Illinois Conference. May the Lord continue to bless you for your love and financial support for God's work here locally and abroad.

- Ray Pichette

Highlighting Some Departmental Leaders

Paul Saint-Villiers has been the Director of Trust Services & Stewardship for the Illinois Conference for the past 13 years. Just recently Paul was asked to direct the Adventist Community Services program at the Conference level in Illinois. Certified in Trust Service by the General Conference in 1990, he has served the Adventist Church in Planned Giving and Stewardship for more than 25 years.

After studying Business Administration at Southern Missionary College, now Southern Adventist University, Paul embarked on a 20-year career in sales and management, including serving as the Community Services Director for the Commission on Aging in Southeastern Indiana .

In 1989, after singing for an Amazing Facts evangelistic series in his home town of Cincinnati, Paul was called by the ministry's founder, Elder Joe Crews, to serve as Amazing Facts' first Development Director. There



Trust Services, Stewardship and Adventist Community Services Director, Paul Saint-Villiers

he established the ministry's planned giving department and charitable gift annuity program.

Paul has also served as the Director of Trust Services & Stewardship for the New Jersey Conference and the Chesapeake Conference in Maryland, before being called to the Illinois Con-

ference in 2001.

His work in Adventist Community services includes overseeing both state-wide disaster relief, and clothing and food distribution in many of our communities. Considering that Matthew 24 predicts that natural disasters will increase as the return of Jesus draws near, it is important for our churches to develop plans for disaster relief in their community.

Paul's wife, Paula, serves as the Illinois Conference Church and School Auditor, providing training and support for the 119 church treasurers.

Paul and Paula have been married for 40 years. They have three beautiful daughters and three precious granddaughters. Obviously, Paul has always been "odd man out" in his home!

Paul praises the Lord every day for the privilege of serving God's church and the wonderful people of the Illinois Conference.

- compiled by Shona Cross

"...the power of the Holy Spirit... [transforms] people through the Gospel and [equips] the church to fulfill God's mission."

Pastor Leonardo Oliveira is the pastor of the Dekalb district and Young Adults Coordinator of the Illinois Conference.



Young Adult Leader, Leonardo Oliveira

A native of Brazil, he has served in ministry since his childhood. He earned a bachelor in Theology in Brazil and a Master in Divinity at Andrews University.

During his 15 years of ministry he has worked both in Brazil and United States in several different roles such as Bible worker, teacher of religion, associate pastor, youth pastor and senior pastor.

Currently, he has been serving at the Illinois Conference for 2 years. He is happily married to Vanessa, who is a great support in ministry and a nurse.

Pastor Oliveira believes in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform people through the Gospel and

equip the church to fulfill God's mission. He also deeply believes that God is raising a generation of Youth and Young Adults that is going to be powerfully used by him to turn the world upside down before the Second Coming of Jesus.

His ministry is based on the 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

- compiled by Shona Cross



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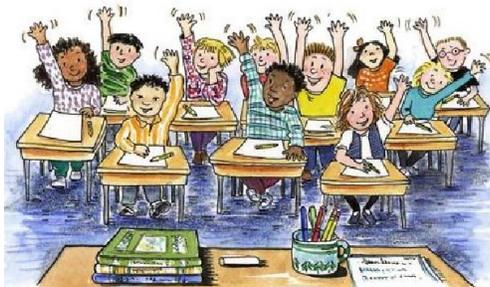
Special Education — New Phonics Program

This year I have been privileged to work with students attending Illinois Conference Adventist schools that have learning problems. After testing to see where the learning problem lies, classroom accommodations are given to help the students become more successful. The biggest disability found is called dyslexia, a reading-based learning disability. Research has shown that students with dyslexia learn best with an Orton-Gillingham phonics reading program. For instance, most programs will say when you hear the (k) sound you can use either the letter k or c to spell a word - but Orton-Gillingham programs teach the rules behind the English language. It explains that you use the letter C if it is followed by the letters a, o, u, or any consonant (cat, cot, cut, class) and you use the letter K if it is followed by an e, i, or y (Kent, king, Kyle). See how much easier it would be to read or spell if you knew the rules?

Learning the rules behind the language not

only helps students with dyslexia, it helps all students. When I taught special education in the public school, I would pull out the students with dyslexia to teach them individually. But in the Adventist schools, we do not have special educators to work with students. Therefore, all of the kindergarten through second grade teachers have been trained using an Orton-Gillingham phonics program, so they can teach all students the phonetic rules to become better spellers and readers.

This program is very expensive. By writing



grant proposals to The Commonwealth Foundation and Versacare Foundation, we have received the funding to purchase the phonics program for all of our schools. Their condition was that we do beginning and end of year testing to determine the student growth with the new program. This testing has revealed great success already. Many students gained two years of growth in spelling and reading this past year, and the students with dyslexia caught up to their grade level! They also did not have to go to the public school to get their academic needs met, but were able to remain in our schools. Here they not only showed great gains in their academic success, but also received the benefit of being in a loving Christian environment where they could develop a relationship with Jesus - which is the main goal of Adventist education.

- Lori Aguilera, Associate Superintendent of Education