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Gymnics Give Glory to God

Samantha Snively
Andrews University

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[EDUCATION NEWS]

Little Lambs preschoolers celebrate their graduation

Illinois—On Sunday, May 16, the Little Lambs Early Learning Center preschoolers delighted family and friends with their performance of “The Hot, Hot Furnace” by Karen Henley, at the Hinsdale Fil-Am Church. Throughout the play, the children covered the power of Jesus, the Ten Commandments and the Fruits of the Spirit! Their rousing rendition of “A-Ha Lelujah! Shout to the Lord!” delighted the 120 family and friends in attendance.

The group was also gathered to celebrate the graduation of 14 children from the Little Lambs Early Learning Center, situated within Hinsdale Adventist Academy. Director Cherie Jackson of Hinsdale said, “It is so important for us to stop and celebrate the significant milestones in our children’s lives. Our hectic schedules can take over day to day, but to be able to stop



Heather Hoffman

The Little Lambs Early Learning Center’s 14 graduates perform “Watch Me as I Graduate.”

and recognize how special our kids are makes life that much richer for them.”

Becca Conditt, Pre-K teacher, said, “It is so sad to let our little graduates move on, but we know we have given them a love for learning that will be an excellent foundation for life.”

For several of the attendants at the graduation, it was their first time inside a Christian church. “Little Lambs Early Learning Center attracts families from all walks of life,” said Jackson. “We have all major religions represented here—Muslims, Hindus, Jews—along with many families from different Christian denominations. Our Little Lambs Early Learning Center is one of Adventist education’s most effective channels for evangelism. We are very open about our faith, and the community families

willingly bring their children into an environment where they are going to learn about Jesus.”

The Hinsdale Fil-Am Church donated beautiful children’s Bibles as graduation gifts for each child.

Little Lambs Early Learning Center is a full childcare center offering preschool, pre-kindergarten and daycare for children three to five years of age. For more information, visit www.haa.littlelambs.org or call Cherie Jackson at 630-323-9220.

“He carries the lambs in His arms and holds them close to His heart” (Isaiah 40:11).

Diane Thurber, assistant communication director, Lake Union Conference, as shared by Cherie Jackson, director, Little Lambs Early Learning Center



Krista Tate, Justin Reece and Eliel Cruz (base) used their gymnastics skills to get the job done at the San Francisco Family House.

Gymnics give glory to God

Andrews University—Instead of spending a week on the beaches of some exotic locale, the Andrews University Gymnics spent their 2010 Spring Break participating in a mission project, with a few spur-of-the-moment performances along the way. They flew to California and spent the majority of their time volunteering at the San Francisco Food Bank and San Francisco Family House, a nonprofit organization housing families of young cancer patients who do not live locally but cannot afford to stay in the area for the time the treatments require.

The time spent at the Family House made memorable impressions on the

Gymnics. As the number two leading research hospital in the country, the San Francisco Hospital draws families from all over the country who bring their children there for treatment. The Family House provides meals and a safe place to stay for the families. The Gymnics spent three days there, painting, gardening and deep-cleaning the rooms to make them safer for patients. Their multiple impromptu performances along the way had effects beyond what the team could have imagined.

Caleb, a 13-year-old living at the house, has battled cancer since he was two. He had been in remission but the cancer returned and treatments weren’t working. “When we performed for him,” recalls Chrissy Lairson, sopho-

more English and journalism major, “he started laughing and smiling. He thought the moves were so cool. His mom came up to me, crying, and hugged me. She said, ‘Chrissy, I haven’t seen my son smile in months. Thank you so much for what you’ve done for him and my family!’”

Lairson also met Christian, a five-year-old from Hawaii who she got to talk and play with in between applying coats of paint to the walls. On her last day, Lairson remembers Christian running up to give her a hug. “‘Be careful of my heart!’ he said before hugging me,” she says. Christian’s grandmother later told Lairson he had undergone a two-hour heart surgery that day. “I

couldn’t believe the joy this little boy had; I know I would have been moping around ... crying my eyes out if I were him,” said Lairson.

“I think that little boy touched my life more than I touched his,” says Lairson of her experience. “It made all the paint in my hair, dirt in my fingernails and the thorns from gardening worthwhile.”

At the San Francisco Food Bank, which provides and distributes food to all the soup kitchens and homeless shelters in the Bay area, the Gymnics sorted and packaged large quantities of the food received from area donors.

Although the group is primarily known for their gymnastics, they had

no scheduled performances—however, that didn’t stop them from doing flips and pyramids. “In the streets everywhere we went, and also on the beach or in parking lots,” says Lairson.

Being a member of the Gymnics gives Lairson the opportunity to minister through her gymnastics. Previously, she says, she had struggled to find a way to make her sport all about God. “Gymnics, I believe, accomplishes it. We take care of our bodies and work hard to train so we can put on shows for people we would not be able to reach otherwise.”

Samantha Snively, student news writer, Office of Integrated Marketing & Communication

[YOUTH NEWS]

Youth ‘Connect with Jesus,’ the Church, the World

Lake Union—“Connect with Jesus” was the theme for the First Bilingual (affectionately referred to as “Spanglish” by Latino youth) Spiritual Revival Weekend. Last fall Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union Conference vice president, called together youth leaders from across the Union territory; he inspired them to dream of a “God thing” for this territory and then he empowered them to do it. The result was a spiritual revival on June 4–6 that spanned the globe and a created synergy within the body of Christ that brought glory to God.

Youth lay leaders from Lake Union territories, Conference leaders, pastors, Andrews University, North American Division Youth Department and the Center for Youth Evangelism all collaborated to promote and support the revival weekend. The cooperation of these different organizational bodies wasn’t just a good thing, it was a God thing. More than 800 young people came primarily from the Lake Union territory but also some came from across North America. Additionally, more than 1,500 young people from



The Lake Union is reinventing youth ministry for the Hispanic community. More than 800 young people recently attended the “Connect with Jesus” youth congress at Andrews University, and more than 1,500 young people worldwide joined in through a live Web feed online.

around the world joined in through a live Web feed online. A group from Mexico which watched the live feed asked when the next revival is, because they want to drive up to be a part of a God thing. The Lake Union is reinventing youth ministry for the Hispanic community. God be praised for youth and their leaders who are on the move to “connect” people to Jesus Christ.

This wasn’t just a revival weekend, it also was a reaping weekend. One young person invited by a friend had attended an Adventist church for two years, but

kept saying “no” to baptism. During one of the appeals, he decided he must get baptized. After leaders talked with the pastor of his church, that young person joined 18 others who connected with Jesus through baptism. When Mercado witnessed this happen, he says, “[I] knew then that the Holy Spirit was indeed present, and the experience taught me that Pentecost can happen again ... even in the 21st century.”

Jose Rojas, the general session speaker, along with several authors from the popular evangelism sharing book, *Changed*, presented and conducted seminars throughout the weekend. Their testimonies inspired people to be light in the darkness. But they didn’t just talk about being light, they were a light to the surrounding community through various outreach projects. “Prayers by the Wayside” got an amazing response right on the side of the road. Young people held up signs offering to pray with people if they were feeling sad or discouraged. Many others cleaned windshields at two gas stations while offering literature and prayers. Others visited a local trailer park and found more than 60 Bible study interests. Milton Coronado led a group of 60 young people as they painted a religious mural on the side of a liquor store with the blessing of the owner! Don Livesay, Lake Union Conference president, reflects, “The