

# FLORIDA FOCUS

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:  
LESSONS FOR LIFE

# ADVENTIST EDGE

## COMING TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU

Have you heard about the Adventist EDGE and wondered what it's all about? Perhaps you stopped by the education tent at Camp Meeting last year and enjoyed an apple with an Adventist EDGE sticker on it. Maybe you've seen the apple-and-dove logo on your school sign or on a flyer or banner at your church.

The Adventist EDGE, an acronym for Educators Delivering Great Education, is the comprehensive school improvement plan put into action by Southern Union Conference. Launched in response to the North American Division's Journey to Excellence (J2E) study, the EDGE holds a high standard for Florida Conference schools to set and achieve goals for positive change.

As our conference moves toward the vision of the Adventist EDGE, you can expect to see an increased emphasis to improve the following areas:

### **SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE**

The goal is to establish a place where spirituality is attractive to students and Christianity flows from the school, benefiting the larger community.

### **CURRICULUM**

Under the direction of the Southern Union,

a committee of educators has established standards and objectives for each subject and grade level, clearly defining what children should know and be able to do. These standards provide the basis for teachers to create lesson plans which are faith-based and offer students relevant, hands-on experiences that enable them to see connections between many fields of learning.

### **INSTRUCTION**

Through ongoing professional development opportunities, Florida teachers are discovering new ways to make learning meaningful for students. Cooperative learning, integrated units, service projects, increased reading and writing opportunities, and field experiences are just a few examples of what you can expect to see in the classroom.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Previously, the yardstick for student achievement was often limited to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. With

the Adventist EDGE, we are systematically examining everything we do to discover how it impacts student motivation and achievement. A variety of assessments are used to determine individual student needs and decide how and what to teach that will help students succeed.

### **CLIMATE**

The goal of the Adventist EDGE school is to establish an invitational climate where guests are welcome, school pride is evident, and teachers and students demonstrate enthusiasm about their work.

### **EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

With our One-to-One program con-

necting small schools through web-based technologies and AE21, our burgeoning distance learning program for secondary students, the Florida Conference is a leader in using technology to enhance student learning. You can expect to see increased use of technology in our classrooms as schools implement the goals of the Adventist EDGE.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Since the implementation of the EDGE, Florida teachers have been provided with the time and tools to engage in teacher study groups which have improved their knowledge and practice. Additionally, the conference has provided teacher in-services designed to directly impact what happens in the classroom.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP**

As local principals and school boards design their own unique

plans for improvement, they can expect to be supported by Florida Conference and Southern Union Conference. While the Adventist EDGE can establish a strong vision, the local site has some autonomy in working out the details that will result in positive change.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

The Adventist EDGE is not something that can be achieved alone. With strong partnerships between home, school, and church, we can work together to help our schools reach new levels of effectiveness.

—Sandra Doran



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COVER PHOTO: ADELE JENNINGS

## DISTANCE-LEARNING STUDENTS ON COURSE FOR BRIGHT FUTURE

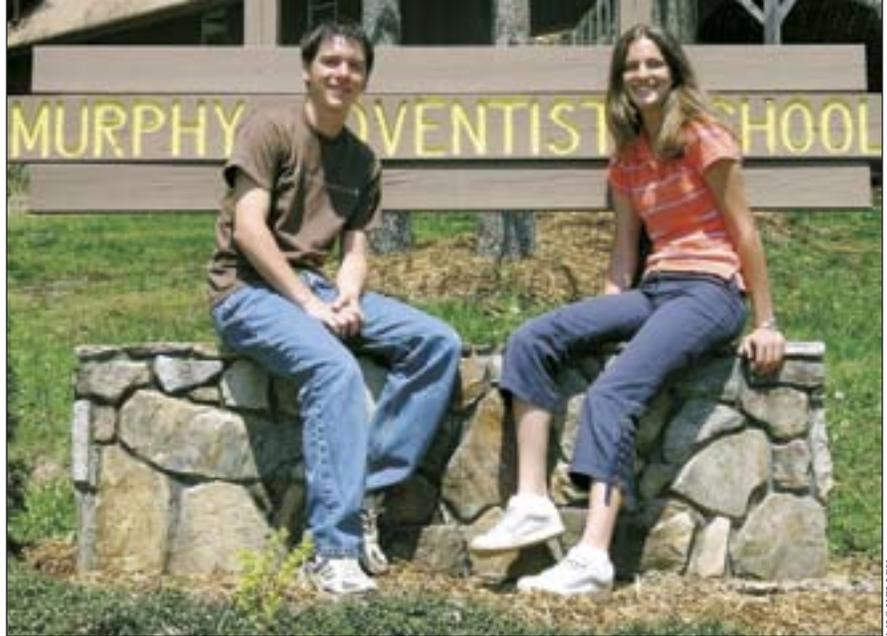
Three years ago, had you asked my sister, Lauren, if she wanted to be a student in the AE21 (Adventist Education for the 21st Century) program, she would have wholeheartedly said, “No way!” She didn’t want to talk to a computer all day long.

Now, as a sophomore in the distance learning program, if you asked Lauren to consider leaving AE21, again, she would say, “No way!” What made the difference?

For one thing, there’s a big misconception about what, exactly, we do in this online school. It may seem that all we ever do is talk to a computer. Some people even call us a virtual program—as if it wasn’t for real. Both of these assumptions are dead wrong!

Students enrolled in the Forest Lake Academy distance learning (online) program are real people using real-time technology to do real-time education in a real-world environment. Scattered across the United States from Florida to Washington, California to New Hampshire, Michigan to Alabama, and places in between, most of us attend school with a special room or area set aside for the distance program. Some students have a setup in their home.

First, however, it is important that students understand some basic principles that apply to AE21. Of course, we must become familiar with the computer and how it is used. We don’t play games all day or surf the web all the time. Instead, we use



Siblings Andrew Kelley, senior, and Lauren Kelley, sophomore, are Forest Lake Academy—AE21 students living in Murphy, North Carolina.

e-mail, instant messaging, word processors, online discussion boards, and web sites to complete our assignments. We can do our homework without computers, but they are especially helpful to send assignments.

The other main tool used in distance learning is videoconferencing. Most of our locations have a special video camera with a microphone that is connected to a television. This camera

sends the video from other locations to a bridge which, in turn, sends our picture and sound to other locations. When you switch the microphone on at every location logged into the session, others online will hear what you are saying and see you on the TV screen.

In business, people come in contact with others around the world to help promote their business toward success. We do the same thing. We take

the tools of today and use them in an educational environment. So, not only are we learning all the basics (math, English, literature, science, etc.), but we also learn some business technology that can help us succeed in tomorrow’s workplace. In essence, we are ahead of the curve and on our way to a bright future!

—Andrew Kelley

Reprinted by permission from Reflections, Forest Lake Academy’s alumni newsletter, Winter 2005.

## FOREST LAKE ACADEMY—AE21 SERVES STUDENTS WELL

Eight years ago, Florida Conference, North American Division, and Southern Union Conference embarked on an innovative program to provide affordable and accessible high school education to students without restraints of location or distance. This program, AE21 (Adventist Education for the 21st Century),



has succeeded in providing academically sound education to

**Bruce Anderson, vice principal for distance learning, now leads Florida Conference and Southern Union Conference in the distance learning program. For information about Forest Lake Academy—AE21, call (407) 618-0274 or e-mail [banderson@ae21.org](mailto:banderson@ae21.org)**

students across Florida and North America.

As technology has improved, this unique teaching method has also improved and expanded. During the 2004-2005 school year, 19 sites served more than 95 students to provide quality educa-

tion in a distance education format.

To expand and improve the course offerings, AE21 recently united with Forest Lake Academy and will be called Forest Lake Academy—AE21. All classes offered are fully accredited through

Florida Conference, North American Division, and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accrediting organizations. Graduates of AE21 will receive a diploma from Forest Lake Academy.

—Jim Epperson

# FOREST LAKE ACADEMY

## FLA STUDENTS BUILD MISSION CENTER IN BELIZE



YANIRA PALOMO



The FLA mission group enjoyed some rest and relaxation on the Belize barrier reef island of Caye Caulker .

Students mixed their own concrete to pour for the mission center's foundation.

Forest Lake Academy, Apopka, students gave their time, talents, and energy to touch lives during their annual spring mission trip, February 24–March 8. This year, 32 students and seven sponsors traveled to the Central American country of Belize to build a mission center in the San Ignacio area.

Prior to leaving, the group raised \$7,500 to help fund a facility to

house mission groups and serve as a center for Camp Meeting-type activities. The three-story building features a kitchen, dining and storage areas, and two barrack-style sleeping rooms with bathrooms and showers.

Nearly 1,000 combined working hours went into the new mission center. Daily projects included leveling dirt for the floor, pouring concrete, laying blocks for the founda-

tion level, and pouring concrete for first-floor columns and beams.

Many hours were also spent preparing materials for a Vacation Bible School (VBS) presented to 190 children in the Hillview community of Santa Elena. The program featured student-led singing, stories, drama, puppets, crafts, and games.

In addition, the students spent parts of two weekends with

55 children at King's Children Home in Belmopan where they played, provided Sabbath school and church services, and a Sabbath afternoon program. Clothing, toys, and supplies brought to share with the children were received with expressions of gratitude.

During their stay in Belize, students hosted the Monday–Thursday evening program, *Teen Talk*, over Christian radio *Faith FM*. On this

live program, students shared their belief in God and how that belief affects their lives.

With each workday starting in the cooler, early-morning hours, afternoons left time to enjoy cultural and recreational activities unique to Belize and neighboring Guatemala. Excursions included side trips to the Belize Zoo, Mayan Indian Ruins, Holchan Marine Park, an evening water taxi ride, and swimming at Big Rock.

Though many days seemed short on sleep—they were long on opportunities to see God working in and through the students, drawing them closer to God and to each other as they labored together during the Belize 2005 Mission Trip.

—Thure Martinsen

## CAREER DAY PROVIDES SOUND ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE



ROBBIE BURNHAM

**Chiropractor Cynthia Gabaldon, a representative in the medical field category, included a prop of a human spine in her career day presentation.**

Career Day is an annual event at Forest Lake Academy (FLA), Apopka, that provides an opportunity for students to learn about a variety of professions they might consider pursuing in their future. This year's March 15 venue featured more than 30 professionals.

Students were asked to choose three careers in which they were particularly interested. Then, they attended the presentations by professionals representing those careers.

Junior Ashley Jordan selected careers of interest to her: business/law, mass communications/technology,

and entrepreneur. During the presentations, she interviewed the guests about their careers:

Entrepreneur Wayne Clark explained that building a business is “a gradual process that takes time and patience.”

Attorney Heather Hilliard revealed that her interest in law became apparent in academy where she “enjoyed debating issues in class.”

Another FLA junior, Natalie Laroche, learned the following:

Adly Noreus, a Full Sail representative, outlined the qualities needed to be a successful movie director. He explained that one must “be patient, be a great thinker

for creativity, and be willing to work with a team.”

Robert Thompson, web designer, suggested a high school student “can begin preparing for a career in computer technology by taking every class offered on campus that involves computers, surround themselves with computers, and get to know everything they can.”

Jordan and Laroche summed up this year's Career Day as “an enriching experience and one that showed realities of the professional world where FLA students may find a future career.”

—Ashley Jordan,  
Natalie Laroche

# GREATER MIAMI ACADEMY

## GMA STUDENTS TAKE LIFE-CHANGING TRIP TO AFRICA

Eighteen students and two sponsors left Greater Miami Academy (GMA), March 20, for the West African country of Equatorial Guinea on a 15-day mission trip. Arriving in the city of Malabo, they teamed up with students from Mountain View Academy in California to help construct a new 100-member church.

“For years, I wanted to visit Africa and experience their culture first-hand,” says Greg Hannah, GMA senior. “This was a great opportunity—a dream come true for me.”

David and Daniel Colls, freshmen twin brothers, went on the trip “to help the people of Africa, travel the world, and have a part in spreading God’s Word.”



**Greater Miami Academy students joined Mountain View Academy, California, students in Africa to build a church.**



PHOTOS: DAVID AND DANIEL COLLS

**Students and local church members worked together at the job site in Malabo.**

Daniel was especially impressed with the happy spirit of the people who were “always smiling, in spite of having so little.” He was also touched to learn that several Adventist families went for weeks without eating much food so they could help purchase the land for their new church.

David was surprised when he saw the bathrooms—a hole in the ground and a cup of water for a shower.

“We’re so fortunate,” he said. “We have so much, and they have so little. Those of us who went on this trip will never be the same.”

Greg Hannah added, “Living nearly two weeks with so little fresh water forever changed my outlook on being wasteful.”

The “life-changing” expedition was led by Moises Guerrero, GMA chaplain, and Dennis Ortiz, physical education teacher.

“The trip was fun, yet very spiritual,” says Guerrero. “We conducted church services, held communion, and witnessed a baptism.”

Senior Menique Gainey, who had never traveled outside the United States, said, “The experience was amazing—never a dull moment. I wish I could have stayed.”

Memories that made an indelible imprint on the students’ minds included the 16 hours

of air travel each way to get to Africa, the six-hour layover in Madrid, Spain, giving time for a taste of Spanish culture, and a trip from Malabo to the beach in a rented bus that broke down a half dozen times.

GMA students are already contemplating what they can make or bake to raise funds for next year’s mission trip—to Chile.

—Moises Guerrero,  
Martin Butler

## STUDENTS HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING ESSAYS



MARVA FRASER

**In her acceptance speech, Nichelle Davis said, “In my school, there are many different cultures and we have learned to love and respect each other.”**

Two Greater Miami Adventist School students received special recognition from Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson and the City Council for essays submitted to *The Herald* newspaper, answering the question: Is Black History Month as significant in multi-cultural south Florida as it is in less diverse regions of the United States?

Eighth-grader Nichelle Davis earned the Outstanding Achievement award for writing the top middle school essay for students living in the city of Miami Gardens. Fellow classmate Adrian Perez received Honorable Mention. Their

winning entries were printed in the Sunday, February 16, edition of *The Herald*. Condensed thoughts from their essays include:

“We have all walks of races [in South Florida]. In my school, alone, there are many different cultures,” wrote Nichelle. “Florida’s African-Americans...played key roles in our cultural growth, frequently overcoming great adversity. Many have achieved great importance and appreciation, and their influence reaches far beyond Florida’s, and the nation’s, boundaries.”

Adrian wrote, “I think that Black History Month is as

significant in multi-cultural south Florida as in any part of the United States. It doesn’t matter how many cultures there are in a state. What matters is how enthusiastic the people are about their background... In the end, God made us all the same.”

As Florida Conference continues to emphasize the importance of literacy, teachers are finding new ways to make writing more meaningful for their students. “I love to give my students real reasons for writing,” says Carol Byrd, English teacher and Junior High coordinator.

—Carol Byrd, Martin Butler

# THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

*“With every fiber of my being, I want parents to know the importance of Christian education.”*

*—Adele Jennings*

Adele and Marian Jennings grew up in New England knowing the value of Christian education. As children, they watched their mother scrubbing floors on her hands and knees as a housekeeper to earn money to pay for church school tuition.

When both girls reached school age, their mother returned to the teaching profession she had placed on the back-burner eight years earlier so she could raise her family. Before Effie Jennings closed the church school door for the last time, she would complete 36 years of setting the standard for classroom excellence. Adele has continued to exemplify that standard in her own teaching career which began 33 years ago.

Today, Adele Jennings blends the latest effective teaching methods with lessons from the Master Teacher as she builds foundations for life on the hearts

and minds of her first- and second-graders at Port Charlotte Adventist School.

“The reading and the math are so very important, but the most important thing is for my students to become like Jesus and know Him as their best friend,” she explains. “With every fiber of my being, I want parents to know the importance of Christian education.”

Even lessons taught through gardening take on a spiritual dimension. “One project taught the children how to work together while illustrating the importance of getting rid of weeds in their hearts so they can grow,” says Jennings.



PHOTOS: ADELE JENNINGS

**A field trip to the beach turned a science class into a science lab for Port Charlotte Adventist School first- and second-graders.**

Classroom guests also bring real-life perspectives to the learning experience. Each year, a return missionary from Russia, a children’s book author, and a missionary kid who grew up in West Africa share spellbinding stories with the students.

## PETS BRING STRESS RELIEF TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

Baby squirrels, Chip and Dale, lost their home and family when Hurricane Charley devastated Charlotte County last August. The tiny orphans were adopted by Port Charlotte Adventist School first- and second-graders in Adele Jennings’ classroom.

Dealing with the trauma of hurricane destruction to their own homes and church school, the also-misplaced students regrouped in late August for classes in the Port Charlotte

Church. Here, they nourished and cared for their young pets during the weeks the baby squirrels could not survive on their own.

“Every morning, Chip and Dale brought stress relief to the children’s lives as they’d leave their own personal devastation behind and arrive at our temporary classroom to feed their hungry babies,” says Jennings. “This heaven-sent gift of being needed gave the students added purpose for coming to school each day.”



**Brielle Collands plays with Chip while Peder Nielsen (cover photo) feeds Dale.**



# AN EDUCATION



an A. One student went from reading 40 words a minute to fluently reading 90.”

As important as the aim-line is in Jennings’ Port Charlotte classroom, the

were captured before they were returned to their natural habitat.

Joining the students and their teacher on this field trip was Dr. Sandra Doran, associate director of education at

for her eager students. “With Adele’s competence and love for teaching, she is a natural for our new literacy initiative,” says Doran.

“This year, we have instituted a new instrument to track the reading progress of children in grades K-3 three times per year,” Doran continued.

“Adele has wholeheartedly embraced the process, plotting an aim-line to bring up the scores of those who test low. Through her diligence, we have seen the scores of these students rise steadily.”

“It’s a phenomenal approach,” says Jennings. “I’ve had kids go from a C in reading to

bottom line is still the same, “Every year, I pray that God will use me to help my students know Him better and give of themselves to help others. This is God’s school. We’re here to learn what He wants us to do, because that is the essence of Christian education.”

—Martin Butler

There’s also Velma Wright, a newly baptized church member who is deaf and volunteers teaching sign language. This year, the children learned more than 100 words and all of Psalm 91. One day, they even hosted lunch for 22 deaf retirees in the community.

“It’s in my personality to enjoy variety,” says Jennings. “I can’t stand a dull, day-in and day-out classroom.”

For example, when a study unit on sea life came up in science, Jennings took the students on a shallow-water wading trip to Charlotte Harbor where nets filled with samples of ocean life drove the lesson home. A professional guide described all the “crawly creatures” that

Florida Conference, who had scheduled a visit with Jennings to assess a new phonics, handwriting, and spelling program the Conference has instituted to give students a jump-start in reading and writing.

“Not only was the outdoor class on the beach a lot of fun,” admits Doran, “it was also an opportunity to see one of our veteran teachers in her element, infusing excitement for learning into her students.”

In a followup visit to Jennings’ classroom, Doran discovered that, besides implementing the new phonics program, the veteran teacher had also visited a school in Fort Lauderdale where she was showered with books

## TICKLES THE TURKEY DELIGHTS STUDENTS

Springtime in Adele Jennings’ Classroom brings real-life opportunities for her students to experience new beginnings. Usually, the lessons-on-life hatch from the eggs of ducks, geese, and chickens.

A recent lesson came, instead, from 10 donated turkey eggs. Only one of the eggs hatched and Tickle was the name given to the new classroom pet. He brought delight to the children during the weeks they raised him prior to summer vacation when he went back to live on the farm. Here, Tickle found it difficult to adjust to life in the barnyard without children, so he moved in with the family.

Each evening, the likable turkey would sit on the living room couch to watch television with the children. During the day, he enjoyed riding in the front seat of the family van and poking his head out the passenger’s window, intently watching passers-by.



With school back in session this past fall, students at Port Charlotte Adventist School were in for a surprise when Tickle was dropped off for class with his little red wagon and a lunch bag.

“The reunion was a picture to behold,” says Jennings. “That day, recess included a lively game of tag with Tickle in the chase, reading time with an attentive turkey listening to children’s stories, a picnic lunch together, and rides with Tickle in his wagon.”

# SOULS STUDENTS LEARN AT HOME AND ABROAD



**SOULS—  
A PLACE WHERE  
STUDENTS ARE  
MENTORED TO  
KNOW AND FOLLOW  
JESUS AND SHARE THEIR FAITH  
IN REAL-LIFE WORK SETTINGS**



PHOTOS: RICK CHRISTMAN



**Above, from left: Patrick Clifford, Rebecca Sanchez, Rose Fitch, Cherie Meharry, and Jerri Sandberg chill out before entering a high school in the Czech Republic to present a health program. Left: students Michelle, left, and Martina, who were raised as atheists, spent a Sabbath with the SOULS team and, as a result, are learning to walk with the Lord.**



PROVIDED BY JOE HOLLOWAY

**SOULS students, staff, and guest lecturer James Rafferty (fifth from right) gather at the entrance to Pine Lake Retreat, Groveland, where the campus is located.**

**P**icture this scene with me. Seated in a public high school assembly program, students, who are mostly atheists, listen carefully to a health lecture about the freedom found in a drug-free life. “Without God, it is impossible to quit drugs,” says the speaker. “Becoming drug-free is only possible by the power of Jesus Christ.”

This scenario actually did play out, not once, but more than 30 times for students and staff from Southern Outreach Leadership School (SOULS) who spent two weeks in March giving health presentations in public schools throughout the Czech Republic. The assembly programs went over so well, many Czech teachers have requested a return visit on a future mission trip.

Although SOULS students are back in classes at Pine Lake Retreat in Groveland, their ministry to the young people of the Czech Republic continues. One public school videotaped the presentations and, today, tapes are replaying throughout the country to reinforce the dangers of drug addiction along with steps to gain the victory over drugs.

At least one student has already won

the battle over tobacco. Michelle told how she had tried for two years to quit. Then, Jesus began to change her life after she met the students from SOULS and spent a Sabbath with them. Today, Michelle doesn’t smoke or go to parties anymore. Furthermore, she is experiencing the power of prayer and learning to walk daily with the Lord.

### **A CHANGE OF SCENERY**

Now, picture another scene with me. This time we are seated in class with a group of students in the United States. In fact, a closer look reveals these are the same young people from SOULS who ministered a few days earlier in the Czech Republic. Listen, as they ask questions like, “Why does God continue to permit sin?”

Listening intently, they concentrate as James Rafferty, speaker for Light Bearers Ministry, presents a one-week intensive on the book of Revelation. Rafferty points out that, throughout Revelation, God is seeking to show us His love, His Mercy, and His grace. Learning to discern messages of hope and love in this great book, as well as in the rest of the

Bible, frees the young students from an incomplete and inaccurate picture of God’s character.

### **SOULS OFFERS VARIETY**

What do these two snapshots of young people in America and the Czech Republic have in common? They represent the varied learning experiences that SOULS offers its students.

If you would like to see Jesus work through you to influence a change in people like Michelle, SOULS may be just the right learning place for you.

—James Dietrich

**SOULS is recruiting students for the 2005-2006 school year. Contact James Dietrich at (352) 551-4866 or [jdietrch@fastmail.fm](mailto:jdietrch@fastmail.fm) More information is available at [www.soulscollege.com](http://www.soulscollege.com)**

## STUDENTS FOLLOW JESUS INTO REAL-LIFE SETTINGS



LEE BENNETT

**SOULS student Cherie Meharry canvassed a sports bar with Forest Lake Academy senior, Eric Dunn.**

Cherie Meharry, a student at SOULS, was assigned to Forest Lake Academy in Apopka to partner with students in discipleship training. One morning, she teamed up with senior Eric Dunn to sell MagaBooks at a nearby business plaza.

Among their stops was a sports bar where the bartender welcomed them, listened to the sales pitch, and bought a book, *Peace Above the Storm*. When Meharry asked if she and Dunn could speak to the customers, permission was given if they promised “not to bother anyone.”

Soon, Dunn found himself in a theological discussion with a customer who was reading the Koran and other religious writings. Dunn gave him a copy of *The Great Controversy* to add to his reading material.

Meanwhile, Meharry mingled with customers and sold eight books, including *Peace Above the Storm*, *The Great Controversy*, and *More Choices*, a vegetarian cookbook. She also gave away 10 copies of *Happiness Digest (Steps To Christ)*, and prayed with several individuals.

“That day, Eric and I had a glimpse into the lives of customers in a bar,” says Meharry. “It was our privilege to share Jesus with them and witness the power of God reaching His children wherever they are.”

—Cherie Meharry, Eric Dunn



JONATHAN MORRA

**Meharry, left, gave customers and employees in the sports bar a copy of *Happiness Digest (Steps to Christ)*, including Michelle, a waitress.**

## JUST DO SOMETHING DOES IT AGAIN



ORLANDO PHOTOS: LEE BENNETT

**Forest Lake Academy junior Nikki Cuizon, left, and schoolmates spent a day at Orlando’s Greenwood Cemetery to clean gravestones and spruce up vegetation. Other students painted the homes of several elderly Orlando residents.**



PERRY PHOTOS: SHEILA ALVAREZ

**North Florida youth joined forces in Perry to clean city streets. Left: Shanti Hollis, Jenessa Ancion, Kristen Robinson, and sponsor Rosemary Ancion from the Jacksonville Mandarin Church. Right: Jon Barnes from the Perry Church and Matt Dollar from the Crossroads Mission Group in Ocala.**

“Watch what God does, and then do it. ... Keep company with Him and learn a life of love.” (*Ephesians 5:1 The Message*)

That’s exactly what 400+ high school-age young people did for the city of Orlando as a part of the annual Just Do Something youth congress. Through their hands, feet, and strong backs, these students showed love.

It took all of 12 buses to deploy the crews of young workers on February 18 who left Forest Lake Academy after a morning devotional. They were charged, they were ready, and off on a mission for God.

So, they painted houses for the elderly, put a face-lift on one of Orlando’s oldest cemeteries, and

spread around a lot of joy. Throughout the day, many sermons were preached, much witnessing was done, yet, hardly a word was spoken.

When the long day had ended, a familiar response echoed from Orlando City Hall: “Well done. Please, come back again next year!”

### NORTH FLORIDA YOUTH CLEAN PERRY STREETS

North Florida youth converged on Perry, February 20, to clean the city’s major streets of litter and show the community that Adventist young people care. Proof of their actions during the Just Do Something rally weekend spread even further when Tallahassee CBS television affiliate, WCTV-6, sent

a crew to capture the story for their Sunday evening newscast.

A day before the young people did something special for Perry, God did something extraordinary for them through His Word when Willie Ramos, a lay member from the Hollywood Spanish Church, preached with such power that lives were changed.

When the weekend warrior, nationally known “Ghetto Preacher,” made an appeal for commitment to Christ at the end of his sermon, many youth came forward. Several, including 10 from the Crossroads Mission Group in Ocala, are now preparing for baptism.

—Bill Crofton,  
Juan Rodriguez

# ASI... A PASSION TO WITNESS IN THE MARKETPLACE

An interview with Debbie Young, ASI president, by Wayne Hamilton, Esq., ASI vice president—Florida, Southern Union chapter



**Wayne Hamilton**



**Debbie Young**

Each of us live busy lives. If we pause to think about why we are really here, could we say our “busyness” is focused on God’s call for each of us to witness for Him and to tell others that, through Jesus, they can have a better life today and for eternity?

There are many ways to engage members in witnessing. One organization has

been extremely successful in creating a lay movement that harnesses a passion for witnessing and seeks to empower this spirit in others. ASI (Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries) sets the stage to inspire, motivate, and equip lay peo-

ple to fulfill the Gospel Commission. I spoke with Debbie Young to learn how God is using ASI to tell others about His soon coming.

### WHAT IS ASI?

ASI members are lay people who operate for-profit or not-for-

profit businesses and ministries and have a passion for Christian witnessing. They recognize that telling others about Jesus is the main objective in their daily work. This is reflected in ASI’s motto, Sharing Christ in the Marketplace.

### HOW DOES ASI RELATE TO THE CHURCH?

ASI supports the mission of the Church. We are reminded by Ellen White that laity are critical team members with the Church to finish the work of spreading the Gos-

pel and that it won’t happen otherwise!

ASI is a department of the North American Division and functions in harmony with the Church to fulfill the Gospel Commission. ASI chapters are defined by Union territories and also have representation at the local conference level. The Union chapters hold annual spring or fall meetings which include many of the same features as the ASI National Convention.

The ASI spirit transcends the North American Division.

## BUSINESS PARTNERS WITH GOD

I first learned about Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) in 1984 when our business, Golden Harvest Fruit Company, was just getting started. As I contacted Adventist schools to see if they would like to sell our fruit to raise money for special projects or their worthy-student fund, I kept running into the question, “Are you an ASI member?”

After several inquiries, I decided there must be credibility in joining ASI, so I asked how to get in touch with their office. “All you have to do is call the General Conference,” I was told.

Since our fledgling com-

pany was already selling fruit to employees at the General Conference office, I made it a point on my next visit to Silver Spring, Maryland, to locate the person in charge of ASI. That’s when I met Con Arnold, a gracious gentleman who took me in like I was his lost son. We chatted nearly an hour and I left with an application to become a member of ASI.

Twenty years ago, I joined ASI and, at their

1985 national convention in Williamsburg, Virginia, I became hooked on the organization. Since then, I’ve hardly missed a convention because of their impact on my life and my business.

The annual ASI gathering has the inspiring atmosphere of a mini-Camp Meeting where powerful testimonies are heard from spirit-filled business people who share Christ in the market-

place. It’s real-life stuff, right from the heart. Hearing their stories has emboldened me as I see the spirit of God working in the leaders of these independent businesses and ministries. Now, I can’t imagine doing business without introducing Christ or sharing the Christian way of life with those I meet.

Today, I also look for opportunities to tell fellow Adventist private business owners about the partnership I have formed with Christ. I believe when

ministry and business go hand-in-hand, it’s a natural progression to become an ASI member because ASI shows you how to grow your ministry with Christ as a partner.

Since I made my decision to join ASI, I’ve seen many new doors opened for business and witnessing opportunities. Sometimes, business activity becomes such a flurry, I forget to put the giveaway missionary fliers in my pocket which say, “Are you having a good day? Christ wants every day of your life to be a good day.”

Without a doubt, ASI has opened my eyes to new avenues where I can share Christ. Each day, I pray that my life will be a testimony of my Partner’s example by treating people fairly and with honesty.

—Dale Bass



PHOTOS: DALE BASS



LEE BENNETT

**Dale Bass, right, ASI member and owner of Golden Harvest Fruit Company, Ft. Pierce, ships most of his Florida citrus to Adventist schools for special-project fundraisers. The 2004 hurricanes devastated the business so, while rebuilding, Bass dealt with his personal loss by helping others.**

ASI is an organization of Seventh-day Adventist lay men and women who provide support for Church programs from their businesses, professional offices, and/or outreach ministries under the motto: "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace."

International chapters exist around the world, encouraging lay people to be active witnesses in their marketplace.

#### WHAT KIND OF A PERSON IS AN ASI MEMBER?

Those who connect with the entrepreneurial nature and evangelistic spirit of ASI feel right at home. Members are some of the most innovative people I've met! The witnessing activities are as varied as the businesses and supporting ministries they represent. I think the most significant thing about ASI members is their active pursuit for witnessing opportunities. They leave no stone unturned when it comes to answering the question, "How can I share Christ today?"

#### ASI SEEMS LIKE A HUGE OPERATION! DOES IT TAKE MANY PEOPLE TO RUN THE ORGANIZATION?

With about 800 members, one of the wonderful aspects of the organization is the

spirit of volunteerism that is promoted and modeled. Officers are ASI members who volunteer their time and resources to support the mission.

Four ASI staff at the North American Division provide incredible, invaluable support managing the operations. The partnership of ASI officers and staff has proven to be an effective way to keep the organization running.

#### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTIONS?

ASI holds an annual convention each year during the first Wednesday–Saturday of August. The foremost purpose of the convention is to inspire attendees to be active witnesses for Jesus. The environment encourages networking and the seminars provide education for ministry development and continued business improvement.

Features of the convention include preaching, seminars,

exhibits, music, testimonies, and exciting reports on ASI Youth for Jesus outreach activities. There is also a great children's program that's just as mission-motivated as the adult meetings. With attendance swelling to more than 3,000 on Sabbath, it's impossible to describe the inspiration of the convention.

#### WHERE DO I LEARN ABOUT THE MANY THINGS GOING ON IN ASI?

There is a tremendous amount of ASI activity going on. Anyone can visit the ASI web site at [www.asiministries.org](http://www.asiministries.org) which contains ASI testimonies, mission opportunities, upcoming convention dates and locations, and more.

#### WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE FOR ASI?

We want to continue doing what we can to hasten the soon-coming of Jesus Christ. With that single purpose in mind, we want to create opportunities to empower, motivate, and equip lay people for witnessing and strengthen the organization's foundation to support an expanding membership.

We know Jesus' coming is imminent and there are millions who yet need to hear about His love. ASI wants to do its part by Sharing Christ in the Marketplace.

# Coming Events

A complete calendar is available online:  
<http://www.floridaconference.com/calendar.html>

**Florida Pathfinder Events.** <http://www.floridapathfinders.com/>  
**Singles' Ministries Spiritual Study Group.** Every Friday evening.

Forest Lake Church, classroom #4. 7:30 p.m. Details: Melody West, (407) 292-1421 or [mwest@ahss.org](mailto:mwest@ahss.org)

**Singles' Ministries Monthly Fellowship Dinners.** *Second Sabbath*, Forest Lake Church, Apopka. *Third Sabbath*, Kress Memorial Church, Winter Park. *Fourth Sabbath*, picnic, location/details: Melody West, (407) 292-1421 or [mwest@ahss.org](mailto:mwest@ahss.org). *Fifth Sabbath (if any)*, Deltona Church.

## MAY

**Summer Camps and Day Camps.** May 30–Aug. 7. Camp Kulaqua, High Springs. Details: <http://www.campkulaqua.com/> or (386) 454-1351. Day camp schedule can be found in the January–February–March 2005 issue of *Florida Focus*, page 11.

## JUNE

**Campestre Hispano (Spanish-language Camp Meetings).** June 10–12: Forest Lake Academy, Apopka. June 17–19: Miami Fair Expo, Arnold Hall, Miami. Details: (407) 644-5000 x259. Guest speaker: José Cortés, New Jersey Conference executive secretary, Trenton, New Jersey. Theme: En las huellas del Maestro.

#### Evangelism Series.

June 10–July 16. Plymouth–Sorrento. Marc & Sarah Swearingen.

June 23–July 30. Ft. Pierce. Lester & Zula Pratt.

July 23–30. Homestead. Rolando & Rebeca de los Ríos.

July 23–Sept. 3. Melbourne. Bill & Sunshine Waters.

July 30–Aug. 6. South Dade. Rolando & Rebeca de los Ríos.

Aug. 13–20. Apopka Spanish. Rolando & Rebeca de los Ríos.

Aug. 25–Oct. 1. North Lake in Tavares. Lester & Zula Pratt.

#### Estate Services Clinics and Seminars.

June 10–12. Spanish Camp Meeting in Apopka.

June 17–19. Spanish Camp Meeting in Miami.

Aug. 20. Starke.

Aug. 27. Coral Springs.

**Florida Adventist Book Center.** Winter Park: (800) 765-6955.

Miami: (305) 805-9900. High Springs: (386) 454-7956. Shop online: <http://www.floridaconference.com/abc/> or order by e-mail: [FloridaABC@floridaconference.com](mailto:FloridaABC@floridaconference.com).

#### Florida Adventist Bookmobile Schedule.

Maps to churches: <http://www.floridaconference.com/churches/>

June 11: Tallahassee. June 12: Perry, Lake City, Ocala, Silver Springs Shores, Belleview, Inverness. June 18: Spanish-language Camp Meeting in Miami. June 19: Fort Lauderdale, Lauderhill, Pompano Beach. June 25: St. Petersburg. June 26: Clearwater, New Port Richey, Spring Hill, Brooksville, East Pasco in Zephyrhills, Plant City.

July 9: Port Charlotte. July 10: North Port, Venice–Nokomis, Sarasota, Palmetto, Brandon, Tampa. July 16: Maranatha in Miami. July 17: Plantation, Lauderhill. July 23: West Palm Beach. July 24: Midport, Ft. Pierce, Cocoa, Titusville.

Aug. 13: Naples. Aug. 14: Fort Myers, Fort Myers Shores, Arcadia, Lakeland, Lakeview in Haines City, Winter Haven. Aug. 20: North Miami. Aug. 21: Fort Lauderdale, Lauderhill, Pompano Beach. Aug. 27: Jacksonville Southpoint, Jacksonville First, Orange Cove, St. Augustine, Palatka, New Smyrna.

## JULY

**Costa Rica Mission Trip.** July 15–24. Details: (407) 644-5000 x129.

**Mexico Mission Trip.** July 26–Aug. 3. Details: (407) 644-5000 x129.

## AUGUST

**North Florida Back To School Rally.** Aug. 6. Gainesville Church.

Guest speaker: Lewis Jones. Details: (850) 584-9508.

**ASI NATIONAL CONVENTION 2005**  
Sacramento, California • August 3–6  
"Christ's Power...Our Hands"

#### ASI MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

[WWW.ASIMINISTRIES.ORG](http://WWW.ASIMINISTRIES.ORG)  
[ASI@NAD.ADVENTIST.ORG](mailto:ASI@NAD.ADVENTIST.ORG)

# PRAYER SUMMIT: A MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCE

In 1991, the Lord worked a miracle in my life when I attended a North American Division prayer conference in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. God came so close to me at that Boulder, Colorado, meeting, I seemed to understand His character as I never had before.

Through the preaching, prayer, praise, testimonies, and worship, I was led

to surrender my life to Jesus in a deeper way. With renewed conviction, I was impressed that the secret to making a difference in the Kingdom of Heaven is not just about working hard and using the greatest methods. It is about depending more deeply upon God. It is about leading our people into a life-

giving and life-sustaining relationship with Jesus. When these steps are taken, we'll see a major spiritual breakthrough in God's Church.

## FLORIDA PRAYER SUMMIT

As we planned our first Florida Conference Prayer Summit, March 11-13, individuals across North

America were praying for us. We were not disappointed. God came near. The music, preaching, seminars, and seasons of prayer were all a great source of spiritual renewal. All weekend, we felt as if we were in the atmosphere of heaven.

Every Spirit-filled presentation directed our hearts toward a

deeper relationship with Jesus. We sensed God's awesome power in many ways. This time together was everything we had prayed it would be.

Many of the 400+ people who attended requested that we plan another Prayer Summit in 2006. We are already working on a date and, next year, we hope to have a dual track in both English and Spanish.

—Mike Cauley



JOEL HONORE



PHOTOS: YASMIN THEN

## Personal Testimonies

- The weekend was life-changing. I made a commitment to immerse myself in God's Word. —Nancy, Deltona
- The Holy Spirit set me free to pray like never before. —Glenn, Avon Park
- I will carry the ripple effect of this weekend to my home church so it can become a house of prayer. —Heather, Ft. Lauderdale
- Now, I want to be continually in prayer with my dearest Friend, Jesus. —Roy, Mt. Dora



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