
South Central Conference

Disabilities Ministry Newsletter

A persons "A-bility" – Not "Dis-ability" is what counts"

July 2007

Oakwood College Church- Huntsville, Alabama

The Oakwood College Church purchased its 2nd handicap accessible van with hydraulic lift to transport disabled persons to and from church services. Head Deacon Mr. Sam Williams was responsible for its acquisition. Mr. Williams is also an ardent supporter of the Oakwood College Church disabilities ministry.

Smyrna SDA Church – Disabilities Day – Huntsville, Alabama

Smyrna SDA Church, Christopher Stuckey, senior pastor, celebrated their first Disabilities day Sabbath May 26, 2007. This special day was planned by Elder Lucious Brown, a recent participant at one of Oakwood College Church's disability workshops. Elder Brown was also the Divine Worship speaker for the day and the title of his message was "He is Able". The afternoon workshop participants were Danny Grant of People First of Alabama, Mrs. Shermete Brown, wife of Elder Brown, and George & Flore Hamilton. Pastor Stuckey enjoyed the program so much that he requested we return for another phase as soon as possible!

New Heights SDA Church – Disabilities Day – Jackson, Mississippi

New Heights SDA Church, Fred Batten, Jr., Senior Pastor, celebrated their first disabilities weekend Friday June 22nd and

Sabbath June 23rd 2007. The event was planned by the church coordinator, Ms. Travia Adams, with assistance from Ms. Elaine Newsome Mississippi State District Leader. Ms. Adams brings a wealth of experience to this ministry because her full time employment is the area of disabilities. She has already instituted several programs that minister to the disabled in her community as well as her church family. The Divine Worship speaker was Elder Robert Douglas, a retired pastor, now living in Huntsville. The title of his sermon was "Walls of Salvation" and the scriptural reference was Isaiah 26:1-4. This weekend was different from others because the workshop was held Friday night in lieu of the traditional AYS Sabbath evening time slot. We were a bit nervous about how many would show up, but we were surprised and thrilled by the numbers and the interest displayed. Ms. Octavia Carson, Elaine Newsome, Flore Hamilton, and George Hamilton were the workshop presenters. We were very happy to see numerous young people present and participating!

SCC Camp meeting Disabilities Training Session- Oakwood College – Huntsville, Alabama

The disabilities ministry conducted a

training session Monday June 11, 2007. George & Flore Hamilton SCC disabilities coordinators conducted the training entitled "How so set a Disability Ministry in your Church". The session went over it allotted 2-hour time because of the enthusiasm of the participants. We encourage all SCC camp meeting attendees to participate in the 2008 camp meeting session.

National Easter Seals April's Autism Awareness Month Campaign

Easter Seals is shining the spotlight on its services for individuals living with autism, among the vast array of services the national nonprofit provides for people with disabilities and their loved ones. Over the last 20 years, Easter Seals has seen a dramatic increase in the number of children and adults with autism the organization serves. Today, as many as one in every 150 children is diagnosed with autism -- that's a new diagnosis every 20 minutes -- making autism more prevalent than Down syndrome, childhood diabetes, and childhood cancer combined. "Autism Awareness Month provided us with an opportunity to help raise awareness about autism services and treatments available to families -- today," says James E. Williams, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Easter Seals. "Easter Seals is unique as one of the nation's leading providers of services and support for children and adults living with autism. And, we're working internationally to deliver personalized treatments for people with autism."

Critical Need for Services

Every family living with autism faces unique challenges. And while the Combating Autism Act of 2006 calls for new funding for autism-

related research, early detection and intervention, it's a modest first step. The fact is, individuals with autism face many road blocks that prevent them from getting the help they need today:

- overall research on autism is sparse;
- funding for research, therapy and services is largely inadequate;
- quality services -- especially for adults -- are limited;
- unemployment among adults with autism persists; and,
- general knowledge and understanding gaps about autism prevail.

"Services for children with autism who age out of the school system are critical. There is an urgent need for increased funding and services -- especially for adults with autism," adds Williams. "We want to help change all of this and make a difference for America. "We are excited that Easter Seals is highlighting autism among their services and supports with us last April."

Credits: [Kristen B. Leone](#)
Easter Seals
312.551.7147
www.easterseals.com/media

We are in dire need of input on disabilities ministry for children. If you have news or expertise in this area, please contact George Hamilton at 256-883-7751 or via email at George.Hamilton@scc-adventist.org.

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