

CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Health Leaders Affirming Day



We believe the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference has the best health leaders in the nation! They work hard for their churches, have great ideas and initiatives and use the health message to evangelize. So, the Conference, specifically the Health Ministries / Health Evangelism Department, believes in thanking them for their service, which we did at the very first “Affirming Day,” November 2, 2023, in Shreveport, Louisiana.

We reminded them that they are helping to win souls for the kingdom through their unique work in their respective health departments and we are forever grateful for all their efforts. November 2 was a nice, cool Thursday and leaders from Arkansas and Louisiana met at the Conference Office. They came from Clinton, Gentry, and Bonnerdale in Arkansas, Eben-Ezer, Shreveport South and Slidell in Louisiana. Upon entering the foyer, they were immediately met with a Health Ministries backdrop portraying the many dimensions of health and wellness,

and a table where they were given multiple items to assist their ministries, which included: The Keys to a Successful Health Evangelism book authored by the General Conference, the Health and Wellness—Secrets That Can Change Your Life book by Dr. Peter Landless, General Conference Health Ministries Director and Elder Mark Finley, and a Health Disparities book by the North American Division. They also had an opportunity to look at the CREATION book, respective teacher guides and DVD’s to see if the CREATION model would meet the specific needs of their churches. In thanks for their service they were given bags, notepads and pens engraved specifically from the Health Ministries/Health Evangelism Department to keep them equipped for their mission. First, the leaders and entire ARKLA staff met in the committee room for devotion and prayer.



(Story continues on next page)

7025 Greenwood Road, Shreveport LA 71119
Phone: 318-631-6240
Fax: 318-631-6247
www.arklac.org
<https://www.facebook.com/arklac/>

Following an inspiring devotion and prayer by Sr. Peggy Dyke, the health leaders had a wonderful opportunity to network with each other. The leaders got to talk and get acquainted through a series of specific “health” icebreakers. It certainly got them out of their comfort zone but served its purpose of getting them acquainted and more familiar with each other. Subsequently, a series of round table discussions began of different ideas, initiatives that are working at their local churches, what is not working and what they feel can be done to better assist them from the conference level. A plethora of creative, innovative ideas and concepts for health evangelism were discussed and will eventually be implemented.

The leaders then had an opportunity to meet some of our conference administrators. Our administrators reiterated to the health leaders how much they are valued and how much their department is making a difference in the world of evangelism, for we know that: *“The principles of health reform are found in the Word of God. The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the Word. It is the Lord’s design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.”-Ellen White—Medical Ministry, 259 (1899).*

Then they heard from our Southwestern Union Health Ministries Director, Dr. Randall Phillips, who affirmed them and thanked them for their service and stated how much the Southwestern Union is proud of the work that they see at Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. He also promised his continued support of any efforts we have in the future.

A series of trainings occurred, where the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Health Ministries/Health Evangelism Director, Dr. Marjorie Bélizaire, trained them how to plan a budget for their local department and conduct a needs assessment for their community. They also were excited to hear about various plans the department has for the upcoming year and beyond. Finally, they were trained to plan for their own church health departments and how to assist the Pastor in a vision for the church, aiding in their growth and moving them in a positive direction locally.

Many have never been to the Conference office, so before heading to lunch, they toured the building and got to meet many of the staff. Our health leaders were then treated to lunch at Olive Garden, where they were joined by treasurer,



Rodney Dyke and his wife, Peggy. It was a wonderful time of fellowship as we got to know one another better.

After lunch, the American Red Cross gave a “hands-on training” for all leaders: Adult and Pediatric First Aid, CPR, and how to use the AED (automated external defibrillator.) This experience was golden as they “acted out” how to save a life in an emergency. We also heard some very sad but important stories, reinforcing that **CPR and AED machines save lives!!**

The day concluded as the group brainstormed together, and then a debriefing over the events of the day. The health leaders stood together and said: *“I pledge to God, our Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Family, our churches, their families and our community to do my very best to improve our members’ health and wellness by praying for them, guiding them and by providing opportunities and resources for health and wellness as a member of the health ministries/health evangelism team. I know that the health message is the right hand of the gospel and that this helps win souls for the kingdom.*

I know that by myself I am nothing, but with Christ success is sure as I help in achieving the mission of ministering the healing power of Christ to all who should hear. With this I will be able to fulfill the vision of “changing lives, throughout the ARKLA territory, with the distinct message of Christ’s overwhelming healing power. To God be the glory.”

Dr. Bélizaire concluded by presenting each with three more gifts. This was the very first Affirming Day, but we hope it will become an annual recognition day, as it shows gratitude for our workers and we share specific training. When a group of like-minded individuals comes together, learns together and prays together, success is guaranteed! May the Lord Almighty continue to reign among us, so that through His love, we can reach others.



And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him.”-1 John 4:16. To God be the glory!

HEALTH CORNER

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”



Raw Apple Crumble: This dessert is easier and faster to make than an apple pie or crisp, and it requires no baking. Instead of refined sugars, this recipe uses dates for sweetness, and lemon juice and nutmeg for that extra zing. This is a MUST TRY!!

Ingredients:

For the Crumble Topping:

½ cup walnuts and 2 pitted Medjool dates (or 4 Deglet Noor), chopped

For the Diced Apple Filling:

4 apples, peeled and diced and 1 tablespoon lemon juice

For the Applesauce (to be tossed with the diced apples):

2 apples, peeled and diced, 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

5 pitted Medjool dates (or 10 Deglet Noor), chopped

¼ cup raisins, ¼ teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Recipe:

To make the crumble topping: Blend the walnuts and dates in a food processor to make crumbly nuggets similar in size to Grape Nuts cereal. Spoon into a small bowl and set aside.

To make the filling: Toss the 4 peeled, diced apples with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, and set aside in a bowl.

Next, blend all of the sauce ingredients in the food processor: 2 apples, 2 tablespoons of lemon juice, plus the dates, raisins, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Toss this mixture with the sliced apples.


To serve, spoon into dessert dishes and sprinkle with the date-nut crumble topping.

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-desserts/raw-apple-crumble/>



MANDEVILLE HEALTH EVANGELISM

A mini week of health evangelism event recently took place at the Mandeville church, featuring seminars conducted by Dr. Marjorie Belizaire. Throughout this health seminar, attendees gained insights into various aspects of well-being. While our faith journey often focuses on nurturing our spirits, it's equally essential to extend care beyond the church's walls, addressing the emotional and mental needs of others. These health seminars at churches serve as a bridge connecting spirituality with physical well-being, encouraged attendees to take proactive steps towards a healthier and more balanced life. —From Jerson Sical, Mandeville Pastor




HEALTH EVANGELISM WEBINAR

LIVE STREAMING AT: www.arklac.org


December 12, 2023, 7:00 pm CT

Special Guest: David DeRose, MD, MPH

Topic: Hemorheology

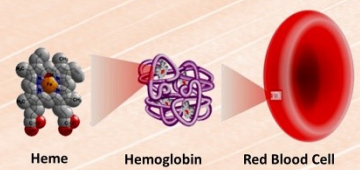


For many years Dr. DeRose has been teaching both professional and lay people about the healing powers of optimal blood fluidity, also known as hemorheology



Come learn how improving your “Methuselah Factor” promises to help:

- Improve mental performance and decrease risk of dementia
- Decrease risk of killer diseases like heart disease, stroke & cancer
- Improve or prevent common causes of arthritis
- Enhance physical performance while decreasing risk of visual impairment & obesity



Heme Hemoglobin Red Blood Cell

Brought to you by The Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Health Ministries / Health Evangelism Department

Health Evangelism—About you and your church: What is going on in your church? How is Health Evangelism being demonstrated? How about doing a First Aid / CPR/AED training and inviting your community? CPR and AED machines save lives! Let us show our community the love of Christ by any means, including training them in case of an emergency. Send your request to: Marjorie Belizaire, M.D, M.S., ARKLA health ministries director at: mbelizaire@arklac.org



Mental health Sabbath is February 10, 2024.

Celebrating 95 Years

Nell Holden-Copsey is a vibrant 95 year old who still lives alone, drives to the supermarket and does yard work. On August 30th, Nell celebrated her 95th birthday with her church family at DeRidder SDA Church. She was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1928. When she was two years old, her parents joined the Baton Rouge SDA Church. Her grandmother was one of the first members when the Baton Rouge church was organized. At the age of 14, Nell made a decision to be baptized. In 1977 she married Dave Copsey and the two worked together in ministry until Pastor Copsey's death in 2017. One of her fondest memories was attending camp meetings in Gentry, Arkansas. "In those days we had 10-12 days of reunion with friends and family". When asked what is her secret to longevity, she says "Never quit." Her grandmother once told her "Don't ever think about leaving the church, we've been in it too long." I recently asked Nell what her favorite verse in the Bible is and unequivocally she said "Why John 14:15, If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Written by Rosemarie Jeffries



Shreveport South SDA Hosts "Discovering Revelation" Seminar

Shreveport South SDA church hosted a prophecy evangelism series by Pastor Jorge Diaz September 21st – 30th. The event was well attended with a minimum attendance of 60. Each meeting was held over the two-week period on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with special music, worship, health clips and childcare included. The seminar culminated with 15 guests in attendance, three baptisms and five more member prospects who are continuing with post seminar prophecy bible studies.

Church members prepared for the seminar with much prayer, planning, passing out copies of the Great Controversy in the neighborhoods nearest the church and advertising through social media. At least one guest attended because of the seminar invitation included in the door-to-door literature deliveries.



It was truly a blessed experience for church leaders and members alike with great spiritual encouragement gained from engaging with the community in this endeavor. Many members expressed their individual excitement and motivation to host a future evangelism event after seeing God bless even the simplest of efforts during this prophecy seminar.

Written by Terrie Nugent



THAILAND MISSION 2023

At the time you are receiving this newsletter the 2023 Arkansas-Louisiana Mission trip is underway. Just before Thanksgiving day, Jeff Villegas and wife Darlynn, along with Ben Orrian and wife, Silvia and a whole host of other members of our Conference headed to Thailand. We have been unable to complete a trip in the past couple of years due to restrictions surrounding Covid and so we are thrilled to see this mission endeavor move forward. After about 22 hours on airplanes, airports and a scrappy truck ride to the final destination, things are happening! One of the projects they have is to work on a church in the Chang Mai region.



Pastor Orrian has been preaching at the evening meetings and the turn out has been very good. As well as putting in long days in the reconstruction of a beautiful church, there are other outreach ventures. The Eye Clinic was a success; people from the community poured in.

Your prayers are appreciated. We cannot wait to hear the amazing stories they will bring back with them.



REVIVAL & RECLAMATION IN GREATER NEW ORLEANS AREA



During the week of November 4–11, the conference held a Revival/Evangelistic series, going from church to church in South Louisiana each evening and on Sabbath morning. Elder Rick Dye presented each evening from the subject, "JESUS IS..." focusing on a different aspect of Christ's mission, ministry, and healing. Members and guests were invited to join us for encouragement, building faith and hope in the Lord's return. Every presentation was also translated into Spanish with Pastor Leonardo Melendez by Elder Dye's side. The event was also live-streamed thanks to media director, Ben Orian and Pastor Daniel Hoover. Sixteen people were baptized at the end of the series and at least four more in the following weeks. Many were blessed and renewed their relationship and committed to finishing the work of Jesus, so he can return soon.



BOGALUSA WOMEN'S MINISTRIES TEA PARTY

A Women's Ministry meeting was celebrated for the first time ever at the Bogalusa Church. The ladies of the church got together for a tea party. This ministry wants to empower women of all ages, and backgrounds providing a safe and nurturing space for them to connect, grow, and flourish. This ministry wants to become a beacon of inspiration at Bogalusa and transcend way beyond into the community. Katia Costa church Women's Ministry director challenged them to develop a deeper spiritual connection with God.

Submitted by Pastor Sical



BATON ROUGE & 3ABN

Five members of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of SDA were students recently in 3ABN's very first **School of Discipleship** (7-day Intensive) class, October 6-14, 2023. The theme was "Cultivating Minds for Christ." 3ABN plans to continue the School of Discipleship with a goal for students to EDIFY, EQUIP and EXCEL in preparing people to finish the gospel work by becoming and making disciples for Christ. Attendees from Arkansas-Louisiana were: Gabriela Jica (Shreveport South SDA), Hilda Day (Lake Charles SDA), Darla Gibson (Lake Charles SDA), Tracy Francis (Baton Rouge SDA), and Winn Morris (Baton Rouge SDA). We are happy to see them equipped and ready to edify and excel in Evangelism.

Submitted by Tracy Francis

International Students Welcomed by the Houma Church Family

Students from Papua New Guinea recently contacted the Houma Louisiana Seventh-day Adventist Church in August of this year. Transportation arrangements were made, and four to six students have been attending church since their initial contact.

According to an article in the Papua New Guinea newspaper, PNG HAUS BUNG, their government awarded forty-three students Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) scholarships to South Dakota State University and Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. The Houma church, located about ten minutes from Nicholls State, has welcomed the students and are enjoying sharing the Word of God and cultural exchange with the first-semester freshmen.

The STEM Scholarship is funded by the Papua New Guinea government through the Education department. The concept was brought about by Prime Minister James Marape when he was the education minister in 2009. This is the first group of students sent to the U.S. who were the top students in national Grade 12 examinations that they sat for in 2022. The Papua New Guinea Government is covering the scholarships which pay for travel expenses, boarding, tuition fees and living allowance for the recipients.

There is a very large following of Adventists in Papua New Guinea and the attending students, raised in the church and some already baptized, have made themselves right at home with the church family. "We have enjoyed fellowship lunches with the students and recently brought four of the group to the New Orleans Zoo and to a Thanksgiving lunch in New Orleans," according to Cliff Fenton, Houma SDAC Head Elder.

Submitted by Tidy Fenton



SAVE THE DATE

 Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SOUTHWESTERN UNION



Alive in Jesus

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TRAINING RETREAT

March 8-10
2024

Lone Star Camp
6829 FM317 | Athens, TX 75752

Registration Opens December 4, 2023



SCAN ME

SHREVEPORT ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL — NEW PLAYGROUND

The schoolyard was full of trees. Children do like trees, but this was not the safest playground for our kids. It seemed like a good idea to move forward with their removal to make room for play equipment. There had been donations made for that purpose, so the project began. Unfortunately, the summer was busy and the playground was not ready when school started at the end of August. But with great effort, coordinated by Mia Downs and Margie Wireman, almost everything was completed before Thanksgiving. As I write today, the final installations have just taken place. We will need a little more mulch to cover the ground, but it's ready for play, and the teachers, Darrell and Delecia are excited that the students now have a place to exercise. There are slides and swings, a merry-go-round, balancing beams and monkey bars and a climbing net to test their skills. A few items are coming soon. For team fun, a gaga pit and tetherball set will be next. And we also have plans for basketball and volleyball court in the near future.



All of the Staff at the Conference Office wish all of you a very Happy Holiday Season: **Merry Christmas** and a **Blessed and Peaceful New Year**

Richard C. Dye, Sr., President

Jeff Villegas, Secretariat

Rodney Dyke, Treasurer

Deyvy Rodriguez, Undertreasurer

Tim Kripps & Angeliqua Kripps, Education

Brendon Kilanda, Accountant

Margie Wireman, Payroll

Benjamin Orian, Media

Mia Downs, Planned Giving/Trust and Associations

Leonardo Melendez, Evangelism & Church Ministries

Marjorie Belizaire, Health / Evangelism

Darlynn Villegas, Conference Clerk

Peggy Dyke, Admin Asst in Treasury

Frances Alcorn, Communication / Admin Asst to President

LaVonne Dye, Admin Asst to Secretariat and HR

Juliana Mercado, Youth Admin Asst

Sylvia Downs, Receptionist and Admin Asst to many

Brenda Ebey, Housekeeping



¹He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

²I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

³Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

⁴He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

⁵Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

⁶Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

⁷A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

⁸Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

⁹Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

¹⁰There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

¹¹For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

¹²They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

¹³Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

¹⁴Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high,
because he hath known my name.

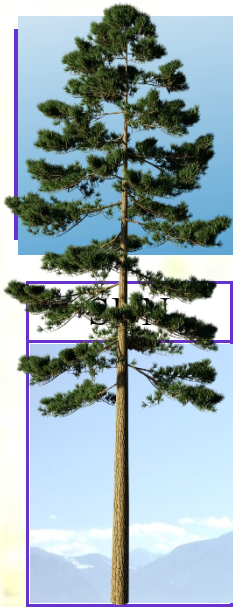
¹⁵He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

¹⁶With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Psalm 91 KJV

December 2023

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Events



	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
					UNION: Thailand Mission Trip (open to all members) Nov 22-Dec 6	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
UNION: Thailand Mission Trip (open to all members) Nov 22-Dec 6						EVANGELISM Virtual #4 Eng 3pm/Span 4pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
OAA BOE Meeting				ARKLA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 CHRISTMAS	26	27	28	29	30
		OFFICE CLOSED THIS WEEK				
31						
NEW YEAR'S EVE						

Claim, Reclaim

January 2024

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 Back to School	4	5 MG: 2nd Training Central AR Spanish)	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Ministers Meeting in Shreveport, January 7-11						MG: 2nd Training South LA Spanish)
Virtual Week of Prayer (Media Dept) January 7-13						
14	15 Martin Luther King Day OFFICE CLOSED	16	17 Union: Education Advisory & Curriculum Committee	18	19	20 South LA Prayer Conference
MAP Testing: January 16-26						
MG: 2nd Training South AR/ North LA						
NAD: Children's Ministries (California)						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
MAP Testing: January 16-26						
28	29	30	31			

2023 –2024 EVENT LIST *(Claim, Reclaim)*

FOR CHURCHES IN THE ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE



DECEMBER

- Dec 7 Pearl Harbor Day
- Dec 12 Health Webinar #2 (Hemorheology)
- Dec 14 Executive Committee Meeting (ARKLA)
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve
- Dec 25-Jan 1 (Office Closed for the Holidays)
- Dec 31 New Year's Eve

JANUARY

- Jan 1 New Year's Day (Office Closed)
- Jan 3 Back to School
- Jan 5-6 Master Guide 2nd Training (Spanish) in Central AR
- Jan 7-11 Ministers' Meeting in Shreveport, LA
- Jan 12-13 Master Guide 2nd Training (Spanish) in South Louisiana
- Jan 7-13 Media Dept Annual Week of Prayer
- Jan 15 Martin Luther King Day (Office Closed)
- Jan 16-26 MAP Testing
- Jan 19-20 Master Guide 2nd Training in South AR/North LA
- Jan 20 South Louisiana Prayer Conference

FEBRUARY

- Feb 3 Pathfinders Bible Study Bowls by area
- Feb 3 Volunteer/Lay Pastor Training (Location TBD)
- Feb 4 PAC Meeting (Virtual) at 7 pm
- Feb 4-8 NAD Annual Conference Presidents' Retreat
- Feb 10 Mental Health Emphasis Sabbath
- Feb 15 Executive Committee Meeting (ARKLA)
- Feb 18 Master Guide Honor's Day
- Feb 19 Presidents Day (Office Closed)
- Feb 25-Mar 3 OAA Music Festival / Visitation
- Feb 29 Leap Day

OUR HOURS

Our office hours are from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. We are closed on Fridays. Our office workers put in full-time hours; and the officers and department directors are often on the road serving our churches and communities over the weekend. So if you can't reach us during our normal working hours, please leave a message, or email: info@arklac.org We continuously keep you all in our prayers. (We meet each day for worship, so let us know if you have special needs and we will gladly add you to our prayer list.) God bless you all!

MARCH

- Mar 2 Pathfinders PBE Testing, Conference
- Mar 3 Sunday Fun Day: South LA Youth Federation
- Mar 8-10 Union: Children's Ministry training
- Mar 10 Board of Education Meeting at OAA & by zoom (9am)
- Mar 11-12 Union: Presidents Council and Executive Committee
- Mar 15-17 First Quarter Conference Event in Hammond
- Mar 16 Global Youth Day
- Mar 17 St. Patrick's Day
- Mar 24 SWAU: "A Night at the Myerson"
- Mar 24-26 Beyond the Bottom Line
- Mar 28-31 Third Master Guide Camporee in Hammond, LA

APRIL

- Apr 5-6 Master Guide 3rd Training (Spanish) in Central AR
- Apr 9 Board of Education meeting by zoom (7pm)
- Apr 11 Executive Committee Meeting (ARKLA)
- Apr 12-13 Master Guide 3rd Training (Spanish) in North AR
- Apr 12-13 Church Leaders and Volunteer Lay Pastor Training-AR

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