

southernconnect



James P. Willis II,
*Vice President for
Education*

Discipleship in *Education*

“**D**iscipleship and Leading Others to Christ” is one of five strategic objectives for members of the Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This objective is based on Jesus’ commission to His disciples:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20, NKJV).

The commission is intentional and requires action. Traditionally, such intentions are thought of as literature evangelism, religious tracts, large-scale evangelistic campaigns, or Daniel and Revelation seminars. We have launched health fairs, food distribution services, and thrift store ministries. All these avenues have brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to thousands, but there is one avenue not normally viewed as a tool to bring about discipleship—Adventist education.

“Grow,” a ministry created by Kenny and Elle Campbell, highlights three ideas that connect to what Adventist education does in discipling our young people (<https://growcurriculum.org>).

Discipleship Is Living, Not Learning

This school year, our educators are serving over 1,800 pre-kindergarten to 12th-grade students. Time spent with

them is at minimum 180 days per year. Each day, we average six hours together, totaling at least 1,080 clock hours in a year. Beyond the average is afterschool tutoring, school clubs, class and field trips, mission trips, summer enrichment programs, and more. Adventist education is an experience that is lived. Time spent with students includes eating, playing, singing, and praying together. During the time, we are modeling, aiming to counsel them on how to maneuver and manage relationships at school and home. We partner with parents and guardians, helping their child find their calling in life. Adventist education is an experience that evolves into lifetime relationships.

Discipleship Happens in Community

Spending time together undoubtedly creates community. In community, we draw from, lean on, learn from, and grow with each other. Jesus, while on earth, created community with His disciples. His disciples expanded the community. In their community of believers, they worked in harmony with each other, sharing resources so that others in the community weren’t lacking. They were together in ways

that created a sense of belonging, comfort, and safety (Acts 2:42-47). Adventist education draws on that same model. We intentionally create communities whereby teacher and students work together, sharing space and resources with each other. In time, a real sense of belonging, comfort, safety, and security is experienced. In this type of environment, discipleship is cultivated and is more likely to grow in school among our students.

Discipleship Is a Process

Discipleship is not a quick trip to the local mini-mart,

DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT A QUICK TRIP TO THE LOCAL MINI-MART, PURCHASING A SNACK THAT IMMEDIATELY SATISFIES. DISCIPLESHIP TAKES TIME.

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Refuge for Ukrainian Students

GAA provides a place of refuge for four Ukrainian students



STEAM Lab at LVAES

One-time donation enables LVAES to establish a STEAM lab

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GAA a Place of Refuge for Ukrainian Students

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GAA students come from near and far. While the pandemic has impacted the number of international students at Glendale Adventist Academy (GAA) over the last couple of years, there are still a handful who come from outside the United States. The ongoing war in Ukraine has forced many to flee their home in search of safety, and a couple of those families have found their safe haven in Southern California, thanks to the efforts of Pastor Anatoliy Gurduiala from the Russian-American church.

GAA has opened its arms and embraced these students; however, the cultural differences and financial limitations have made it difficult for these students to adapt. Moreover, the needs for the well-being of these families are real concerns. Thankfully,

with the combined efforts of the local churches, Southern California Conference, and our school, we have made it possible for these children to attend school and thrive!

Even though the adjustment to GAA has not been easy, Darya (Kindergarten), Daniela (fourth), Violina (seventh), and Anastasia (ninth) are



eager to learn and are trying their best to adapt to their new way of life. All four girls are wonderful and a joy to have! ●



With a one-time donation of \$2,000, Linda Vista Adventist Elementary School (LVAES) has implemented a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) lab for our fifth- through eighth-grade students. Students spend 40 minutes twice a week absorbing real-life skills that bring textbook learning alive and provide the opportunity to use cool



LVAES Launches STEAM Lab

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technology through theme-centered building challenges.

This year's theme is transportation. Students began by learning about internal combustion engines and basic mechanics, culminating in groups of two disassembling and reassembling lawn mower engines. From there, they'll move on to the future of vehicles: electric cars. Students use professional-level CAD software on their iPads to design their own cars and engineer how the components will fit. The students will turn

their virtual models into reality with their 3D printer and assemble a circuit that includes a motor, switch, and at least two LEDs. It will culminate in a design contest and an endurance race across our parking lot.

From electric cars, they will move on to rockets. Students will build model rockets, including designing and printing their own nose cones, fins, and motor mounts. A software program allows them to model the potential height of their rocket's trajectory and calculate the center of pressure, which they'll confirm with their wind tunnel to ensure safety. The project will culminate by launching the rockets from the LVAES field. ●



Southern California Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists

MISSION

The Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists exists to exalt Christ by serving its diverse communities through networked and creatively engaged churches and schools.

VISION

Embracing Community in Christ

CORE VALUES

Integrity With Transparency
Engagement | Stewardship
Unity in Diversity | Relationships & Team

LEARN MORE

<https://scc.adventist.org/about-us/mission-vision>

in transition

TRANSFERS WITHIN SCC

Voted January 26, 2023

Eustace Laurie | From Pastor, Canoga Park church, to Pastor, All Nations church, as of January 15, 2023.

RETIREMENTS

Voted February 9, 2023

Alfredo Lee | From Pastor, El Rio, Santa Barbara, and Santa Paula Spanish churches, as of January 31, 2023.

LEAVING SCC

Voted February 23, 2023

Alexa Fitzgerald | From Teacher, Conejo Adventist Elementary School, as of June 30, 2023.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Voted January 12 & 26, February 9 & 23, 2023

Hyemin Cho | APC, Olympic Korean church, as of February 20, 2023.

Wilson Catolico | APC, Light Above church, as of February 1, 2023.

Samuel Sempelsz | Junior Accountant, SCC Conference Office, as of January 9, 2023.

Angel Smith | Associate Pastor, North Hills church, as of January 1, 2023.

Geraldine Sigue | Pastor, Smyrna church, as of January 8, 2023.

SPOTLIGHT

Vacation Bible School

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Summer is almost here! Are you ready for VBS 2023?

Download resources for Fiercely Faithful VBS or Stellar VBS by visiting the

children's ministry page on our website.

In the meantime, check out this video from a recent training held by our Children's Ministries team for both VBS programs. ●

WATCH: <https://scc.adventist.org/vbs-training-2023>



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purchasing a snack that immediately satisfies. Discipleship takes time. It takes investing in the lives of our young people until they come to a point of owning their faith. Adventist education is a long-haul experience. We may not see the fruits of our labor in three months or three years, but we do see the buds of ADVENTIST EDUCATION IS A LONG-HAUL EXPERIENCE. Buds like asking how they fit into God's plan; taking a personal interest in Bible study; behavior that came to us with rough edges that are now smoother. Buds like a young man or young woman committing to be baptized for Jesus and live life for Jesus.

Our SCC Office of Education honors students who declare discipleship to Jesus through baptism. When students get baptized, we gift them with a Bible. Last year, we gifted 32 Bibles. That Bible represents their Adventist education experience, community, and process toward discipleship. ●