

ADVENTISTS INSTEP FOR LIFE – THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

To help families address the obesity epidemic, the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church created Adventists InStep for Life, which forms partnerships between churches, schools and the public health community to reduce childhood obesity and inspire healthy eating along with physical activity.

They have set four goals centered on increasing physical activity and the consumption of fruit and vegetables:

1. Accumulating 2 million physical activity miles through walking, biking, swimming, running and other physical activities;
2. Having 60 percent of Adventist students achieve Individual Active Lifestyle awards by either qualifying for the the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award, which requires participants to commit to physical activity five days a week for six weeks, or the NAD Active Lifestyle Award, which rewards people for reaching mile milestones ranging from 100 miles of exercise to 2,000;
3. Launching 100 summer feeding sites, which provide nutritious summer meals to children who rely on the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs; and
4. Starting 100 vegetable gardens or farmers' markets.

Local Ministries

The **Allegheny East Conference Churches** started their "Let's Move Day" at 4:00 a.m. with a 20 minute exercise routine followed by worship and a 32-block walk to 15th and Christian Streets in South Philadelphia. Pastor Colin Brathwaite and his wife, Jeannie, joined the West Philadelphia members on the entire walk. While members were given bus tokens to ride back to the West Philadelphia Church, they were so excited about completing the initial walk to south Philadelphia that they decided to walk back. In total, they hiked more than seven miles. In Texas, **Killeen SDA Church**, which is close to Fort Hood, the largest military base in the United States, planned their event in just three weeks but got nearly 80 people to complete their 5K run/walk.

Orlando Junior Academy (OJA), in Orlando, Florida, has begun to focus on getting students "in step for life." All pre-K through eighth-grade students participate in a school garden that won first place in the 2011 Florida School Garden Competition. In addition, OJA has created healthy eating experiences for students through partnerships with a local chef, dietitian and nutritionist. Together, the educators provide healthy vegetarian food, a cooking class elective and a hands-

on nutrition health curriculum. The 22 students at **Cleburne Adventist Christian School**, located in Cleburne, Texas run one mile every day, and then play sports or participate in other activities for at least an hour a day. Students accumulate credits and can earn rewards for their participation.

The **Filipino Capital SDA Church** in Beltsville, Maryland, has focused on helping children understand what a healthy lifestyle means. Once a month, they host a healthy eating potluck featuring mainly vegetarian dishes. In addition, the SDA hosts quarterly cooking demos that make the preparation of healthy foods fun. Going beyond food, the SDA promotes an "In Step for Life" program; on the last Sunday of every month, congregants wear pedometers to count their total steps when walking.

In the Washington, D.C. Metro Area, the **Emmanuel Brinklow Church** recently organized a presentation from an Ironman competitor during the "Health Minute" segment of their worship. In addition, Brinklow created a fitness class under the direction of a personal trainer. The class was so successful that they now hold another class twice weekly for the entire community. The church also utilizes nearby Brinklow Walking Trail, which wraps around 30 acres that will eventually house the Emmanuel Brinklow health and fitness campus. The church has also used their land to sponsor more than 20 community gardens and has incorporated a healthy lifestyles unit in the science curriculum.

The **Kettering Adventist Church** in Ohio has created a Health Ministry team under the guidance of their Faith Community Nurse, Mel Miller. The team is planning a Community Garden project, during which church members will be encouraged to bring garden produce that will be delivered to the McKinley United Methodist Church (UMC) in downtown Dayton, Ohio. In addition, they will set up a farmers' market to sell fresh produce for a small fee, with all proceeds from the market being donated to the McKinley UMC.

Palm Harbor SDA Church in Florida recently challenged its members to participate in a half marathon or five-kilometer race. Participants could run or walk with proceeds going to the Childhood Obesity Foundation. "My first 5k was a great experience," said one participant. "When our Pastor first announced the 5k event and explained that it was a three mile walk, I said there is no way I could walk three miles. But the next week when it was mentioned again, I decided I would try it. So at age 80, I started practice for the three mile walk...I was able to complete the event. Now I am looking forward to another marathon."