

the

JUNE 2008 EDITION

FOCAL Point

CENTERED ON ACTIVITIES OF TOLEDO FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FAMILY



"Let all that you do be done in love."
1 Corinthians 16:14

It is not always the talented people who serve the Lord best — it is the consecrated ones.



✧ Hungry to Serve? ✧

Mission Trip to Toledo 2008
Theme: "International Neighborhood Days"

Kids with cancer have been comforted. Firemen, policemen, and EMS workers have been thanked. Hospitality to the residents of two nursing homes and one assisted living center has been extended. Winter is long gone. And Spring is giving way to Summer. So with that in mind, please save the dates for the following ordinary outreach opportunities rapidly approaching. And please remind your friends and family that they do not have to be members of Toledo First to participate in any of these activities!!!



Prayer At The Pump

Date: Friday June 20, 2008 [Time TBA]

Location: Muslim and/or Christian owned gas station(s)

Action: A handful of representatives from both the Islamic Center of Toledo and the Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church meet at a gas station to pray that Allah [God] would: 1) increase volunteerism while lowering gas prices worldwide and 2) help us highlight our shared responsibility to protect the environment. *If our Muslim friends decline our invitation, all co-sponsored events will become local Christian partnering events.

(Continued on next page)



Service is nothing but love in work clothes.

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Hungry to Serve? (Continued)



Prayer Service and Concert

Date: Friday June 20, 2008
from 7 PM - 9 PM

Location: Toledo First

Action: A simple shared program of music and readings and blessings asking God to increase community volunteerism, lower gas prices, and help us all be better stewards of the environment.

International Neighborhood Day Block Party and Fashion Show



Date: Sunday June 29, 2008, 2 PM - 6/7 PM

Location: Downtown Toledo campus of The Aurora House

Action: Provide a co-sponsored block party downtown for the approximately 21 women

and children of the Aurora House and their neighborhood [500+] closing with a 45-minute program highlighting music, art, dress, or apparel from all countries represented with representatives from the Aurora House and City Hall commending our partnerships and celebrating the diversity of the world that makes Toledo home.

Evangelistic Picnics In The Park



Date: Every Sabbath in July

Location: Wildwood Metro Park

Action: Making Sabbath miraculous and delightful for the many walkers and joggers who love free lemonade!!! Donna's wrist is

getting better so she'll be prepared to defend her Ladder Ball supremacy. And don't forget nature walks, roller blades, bike rides, face painting, the playground nearby and Connections worship @ 5 PM will also be available. Serving is so fun!!! Are you hungry to do so?

Extreme Home Makeover



Date: End of July

Location: Downtown Toledo campus of The Aurora House

Action: Women's Ministry leaders will again be leading us in the makeover of one small home recently acquired on the campus of the Aurora

House. A local financial firm has awarded the non-profit organization we created last winter, Haven of Hope Toledo Inc., recipient of a grant for the makeover. So their money plus your labor will show many people how much God loves them like crazy!!!

Cars 4 Kidz



Date: September 1, 2008

Location: Toledo First

Action: St. Vincent Children's Medical Center will be sponsoring our 2nd annual car show raising more money for

Webkinz to comfort kids with cancer all winter long. There will be more live oldies music, food, and lemonade with 3 People's Choice awards and invitations to Kid Connect, Circles, and Pathfinders galore. The "Cool Bus" won't be there, but plenty of other cool cars ready to "burnout" will!!!! —Pastor Mike ##

It is within my power either to serve God or not to serve him. Serving him, I add to my own good and the good of the whole world. Not serving him, I forfeit my own good and deprive the world of that good which was in my power to create. -Leo Tolstoy

Couldn't find the words, so I borrowed lyrics...

I noticed it last Sabbath, May 24th... I don't know who did it... but when I looked at the whiteboard on my office door, somebody had written: "Please Aly! Don't leave us. We will miss you. We will miss you! We will miss you!" Unable to move or think, I simply let myself feel... and to whoever wrote it, I want you to know that I feel the same... I will miss Toledo First. I will miss JMLC. I will miss TJA. I will miss YOU.

The thought of leaving Toledo reminds me of when I left college and was absolutely clueless about 'the future.' All I knew is that God would provide. As my dad loaded the truck with my last suitcase, shut the car door, and we began to drive off, I quickly stuck half of my body out of the window, threw my hands up to the sky and with great sadness began to sing at the top of my lungs. Friends and parents along the road waved good-bye in disbelief as I sang to the following lyrics of Evita, "Don't cry for me Argentina! The truth is I never left you." (Can you just hear the melody in the background of this letter?) Although completely crazy and out of context, those words made a lot of sense to me at the time; they were comforting. I had graduated. I was leaving. And yet the only thing that was changing was proximity because my experience at Denison is something that will never leave my heart. Similarly, my experience in Toledo will always be treasured and remembered lovingly.

Beloved Saints of the Most High...
It won't be easy; you'll think it strange, When I try to explain how I feel... (borrowed lyrics)

Okay, okay, no more quotes from Evita but honestly, I am speechless.



I'm finding myself at a loss for words... and the funny thing is... it's okay (borrowed lyrics). I sincerely, cannot find the words to explain the kind of influence our TF church community has had in me. Since day one I was in awe of the kindness and acceptance that surrounded me. Not once did anyone make me feel as though my age and/or gender was a flaw for ministry and although the place where I am going, humbly feels that way, – God has called and that is the most that I can say. Although, I am only 22 years in the making, I have learned that the most important part about life is our reliance in God. As you can see, this is by no means a good-bye letter. This is simply an attempt to tell you how much I truly love this church and that I know in my heart that God brought me here to expose me to an overflowing spirit of kindness.

Your generosity and enthusiasm for God is something that has faded away in many communities but to you I say, *keep the dream alive don't let it die, if something deep inside is inspiring to try, then never give up, no never give up on you, don't give up* (borrowed lyrics). Continue to do all that you do for it has been my inspiration to go out and make a difference in churches that are losing souls due to lack of kindness and acceptance. Please pray for me as I head out to minister in Chicago and begin my courses at Andrews and know that this is not a good-bye. My faith leads me to

believe that we worship an eternal God and that we live to claim His promises! Someday, we will no longer have to worry about saying good-bye for He has promised that we will live forever. So while we're here, *Let us labor for the Master from dawn 'til setting sun, let us talk of all His wondrous love and care, then, when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done, and the roll is called up yonder, we'll be there!* (borrowed lyrics). Toledo First will never be forgotten.

***I'll keep my promise
Don't keep your distance...***

(224) 330-7468

—Pastor Aly Benitez
(Come to the June 7th potluck to say Farewell & Way to Go to Pastor Aly.)



'Treasures' Sale to benefit Gym Fund

We're having a sale at the end of July, so look through your garage and attic and closets for some treasures you no longer need which can be sold to benefit the Gym Fund. Who wants a new gym at our school? We do! Call Kyla Reams with any questions or suggestions about fundraising, 419.283.1199 ##

Come to Fundraising Potluck June 28

Speaking of Fundraising for the New Gym, we're having a special potluck on Sabbath, June 28th as a kickoff. Plan to come and get on board the New Gym express! ##



Mother's Day Tea—enjoyed by all

Many thanks to Jeff Batchelder for these pictures of the Mother's Day Tea on May 10th. The beautifully decorated room was filled

with members and our guests from the community. They dined on delicious gourmet treats and heard tributes to mothers written by their

daughters. Music that touched the heartstrings was also a central part of the afternoon. Grateful thanks to Kendra Bills, Mindy Flack

and all of the Women's Ministry team for a wonderful afternoon. ##

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 7
Farewell Potluck for Pastor Aly

JUNE 8-14
Ohio Camp Meeting

JUNE 21
Honor Graduates @ Potluck

JUNE 28
"Let's Build a Gym" Potluck



The Music is Awesome!!

What do you do when it looks like God is closing a door. Toledo First's 5 PM worship service, *Connections* experienced the loss of our worship leader Cory Payne. God blessed us with Cory and his musical ability for most of our services since we began back in March of 2005. When Cory informed us that he would be accepting a position with a contempo-

rary SDA church in the Dayton area, The Stillwater SDA Church, we thought, OK God now what? This is a great opportunity for Cory, so of course we are happy for him to be able to expand his talent in music ministry. However that still left us wondering how we would fill that position for *Connections*.

God is so good; he knows our needs and sends the right people our way at just the right time. Before Pastor Nathan moved he introduced us to a friend of his that he thought might be able to help with the music for *Connections*. Curtis Klotz has been

leading us into worship for the last several weeks and we have been wonderfully blessed by his talent and his commitment to ministry.

Curtis and his wife, Iris, are great additions to our *Connections* Ministry team and we are grateful to God for leading us to them.

We encourage you to come and experience *Connections*. Bring a friend and enjoy the music, worship and fellowship. This is one of the easiest ways you will ever find to share the love of Jesus with a neighbor or friend. Everyone is welcome. If you haven't had the opportunity

to hear Curtis lead the worship music yet, make it a point to do that soon. It's an uplifting experience!! — Dave Case ##

Need a ride to Camp Meeting?

Pastor Mike's going to Camp Meeting for the first half [June 8-11] and you're invited to ride with him. You will need to arrange for your own accommodations. Call Pastor Mike at church, 419.882.6200. ##

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