

# COHUTTA CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of the Cohutta Springs Foundation



## FIRST ELDERS' RETREAT HELD AT COHUTTA SPRINGS

**MICKEY P. EVANS**

*President, Georgia-Cumberland Adventist Elders Consortium*

On Friday, Sept. 28, 2018, approximately 100 elders from across the Georgia-Cumberland Conference (GCC) gathered in the picturesque North Georgia mountains to attend the first Georgia-Cumberland Adventist Elders Consortium (GCAEC) weekend retreat at the Cohutta Springs Conference Center. One elder and his wife drove all the way from Orlando, Fla., to attend what is hoped to be an annual event at Cohutta Springs.

GCAEC is a new ministry that is designed by elders for elders in the GCC. The idea of an elders' consortium came after seeing the collaborative efforts of several Atlanta-metropolitan Adventist churches as they prepared for the 59<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session in Atlanta, Ga., in June 2010. Those efforts lead to scores of baptisms and

several community services opportunities. So, the question was asked: What would happen if churches came together more often? How many more baptisms would there be?

The mission of GCAEC is to provide opportunities for elders to network and collaborate with each other, to bring awareness to the educational resources available to elders, and to provide additional training

**THE MISSION OF GCAEC IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELDERS TO NETWORK AND COLLABORATE WITH EACH OTHER... [TO] HELP THEM BE THE BEST ELDER THEY CAN BE.**

activities that will help them better support their pastors, more ably serve their local churches, and be the best elder they can be. Additionally, GCAEC encourages elders to model the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. That is the most effective way to make the greatest impact on those they serve.



*Steve Keiser, from the Buford Church, presents on how to give a better Bible study at this year's elders' retreat.*

GCAEC launched its ministry in October of 2017. Ivan Williams III, director of the Ministerial Department for the North American Division, was the keynote speaker. Its first training exercise was held at the 2018 Collegedale Camp Meeting on the campus of Southern Adventist University. Roger Hernandez, ministerial and evangelism director for the Southern Union Conference, was the invited guest presenter.

Pastor Williams spoke about spiritual leadership essentials. He said, "It could be that local elders are the sleeping giant that the devil does not want to see come together." Pastor Hernandez's training was titled "5 Levels of Spiritual Leadership." He taught principles of spiritual leadership based on the life of Moses. Both speakers were dynamic and engaging. The speakers for the elders retreat at Cohutta Springs were no different.

The theme for the retreat was *Empowering Elders!* It began on Friday evening with a warm welcome and a personality assessment given by Mickey P. Evans, GCAEC president and first elder at the Duluth Church. After the ice-breaker, Victor



Maddox, vice president for pastoral ministries and evangelism for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, gave a motivational challenge to the elders. Pastor Maddox reminded the elders that "...instead of timidity, God has given us power (dunamis)." And that "...leadership is about the gospel of Jesus Christ."

On Sabbath morning, Dr. Chukwuma Onyeije, from the Atlanta North Church, started the day with an early morning prayer service. The day continued with a wonderful worship experience, fellowship, and several learning opportunities.

There were several topics elders could choose from. In addition to Pastor Maddox, the list of speakers included many of the GCC ministerial team: Neil Reid, ministerial director for the central region; Harold Cunningham, ministerial director for the southern region; and Miguel Tirado, director for Latin-American Ministries. The topics they covered were: "How to Write a Sermon," "Promoting Unity," "1:1 Evangelism," "Inside & Outside Church," and "How to Finish God's Work."

Other speakers included Steve Keiser, from the Buford Church, who presented "How to Give a Better Bible Study." Rachel Williams-Smith, Ph.D., Ed.D., dean for the School of Journalism and Communication at Southern Adventist University, gave expert advice on being a better communicator and speaker. Shelbert Gaines, from the Greater Atlanta Mission, presented "Being an Elder 101." Brian Cummings, from the Peachtree City Church, spoke about how to handle conflict in

the church. Tammy Fisher, communication director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, talked about how to excel in leadership. And Pastor Justin Yang, senior pastor at the Atlanta Korean Church in Duluth, Ga., shared his experiences and lessons learned as a young pastor in his presentation, "How to Motivate Church Members."

The feedback received from elders after the retreat was encouraging. One elder said, "It was such an inspirational meeting! Our elders decided to give a synopsis of the presentations at our next elders' meeting. It seemed everyone walked away feeling encouraged and excited to put new ideas in place." Another elder wrote, "Thank you so much for sharing this with us! I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the next elders' retreat!"

As we grow and extend our reach, elders from churches within the South Atlantic Conference (and beyond) will be invited to join our efforts, creating opportunities and accomplishing things that neither entity could achieve by itself, thus, making significant progress in the fulfillment of the great gospel commission and hastening the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The presentations at the retreat were recorded and will be posted on AudioVerse at [www.audioverse.org](http://www.audioverse.org), in the coming weeks. Visit our website at [sdaec.net](http://sdaec.net) for more information about GCAEC. Also follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/adventist.elders](http://www.facebook.com/adventist.elders) ♦

## COHUTTA SPRINGS YOUTH CAMP 2018 REPORT

**ROB LANG**

*Former Youth Director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference*

The 2018 summer camp season has finished at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, and there is much to be thankful for! This report represents our conference-wide summer effort for our young people. I am sure you will agree: The Lord answered our prayers abundantly, again! Throughout the past 16 years, I have been blessed to witness campers making decisions for Christ and baptism. Praise the Lord!

Even after being a camp director for 27 years, it is still hard to describe what it is like to prepare for and then begin the summer with 103

young adult staff, many of whom have never been employed before! As these 103 imperfect people (which we all are!) become a team that functions and is dedicated to the mission of camp ministry, I am sure you can see why this report is a clear answer to prayer!

As we have all worked diligently together here in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, Cohutta Springs Youth Camp has become the largest youth camp in our church, in regards



*The 2018 Cohutta Springs Youth Camp staff.*

to both youth attendance and ministry outcomes. In order for us to reach this potential, a "designed institution" approach has provided the platform for the outcomes we celebrate. The facility and program are working in tandem for our target group—youth and young adults! As these young people come to Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, they are at very critical crossroads in their lives! They are needing to encounter the committed staff role models who are pointing them to Jesus and the important work of our church. May there be a continued commitment by everyone for these very important results, and may they increase! With the beginning of DiscipleTrek, Cohutta Springs Youth Camp starts to become a discipleship center as well as a gospel center. While we celebrate all of the positive results above, DiscipleTrek is the most exciting outcome of this past summer! It is a critically important next step in the faith journey, and it is now being made available for our young people. ♦

### 2018 STATS

Youth Campers 1,315

Family Campers 187

**TOTAL CAMPERS 1,502**

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Decisions for Christ 1,024

Requests for Baptism 329

DiscipleTrek Campers 27

## ANNALYSE HASTY JOINS COHUTTA SPRINGS TEAM

### ANNALYSE HASTY

*Group Sales and Marketing Manager*

Hello! I am Annalyse Hasty, the group sales and marketing manager at Cohutta Springs. God led me to Cohutta Springs this past January. Since that time, I have been working with the amazing team here on a complete re-branding project, all the while keeping up with incoming group events. I handle all the inquiries and contracts for group events, so the next time you want to book a group with us, just give me a call! The marketing part of my job ranges from social media and brochure design, to working in guest services and making sure Cohutta presents well, even as guests walk through the front door.

I graduated from Southern Adventist University in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in mass communication with an emphasis



*Annalyse Hasty serves as the Group Sales and Marketing Manager for the Cohutta Springs Conference Center.*

in writing and editing. My past experience is social media, editing, and event coordinating. I am thankful for the great team and mentors I work alongside here at Cohutta Springs. Please feel free to contact me any time, whether it's for a group event, marketing questions, or just to say "hi." Reach me at [ahasty@cohuttasprings.com](mailto:ahasty@cohuttasprings.com) or 706-422-4106. ♦



## MISSING IN THE MANGER

LISA WHITMER | [hutchcraft.com](http://hutchcraft.com)

Each year when we pull out our Christmas decorations, we have some nativities that are missing their people. One is missing Mary—a little problem. Sometimes it's a missing wise man or shepherd, which, thankfully, isn't as much of a crisis! One year it hit me that what was really missing was...me.

Oh, I'm all about Christmas. And I'm sure you join with me—we each have our own

list we're checking twice, crossing off the shopping, organizing, decorating, wrapping, delivering, traveling, cooking, eating, working. I can hardly say it all, and yes, we can hardly do it all.

Yet in the middle of our crazy, a Baby beckons us to His cradle in a stable—and to a cross. The Bible says "He loves me and gave Himself for me." And He chose to die to get rid of the junk that keeps us from Him. All so we can have a relationship with Him. ♦



## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The reconciled balance of the Cohutta Springs Foundation account, as of Nov. 30, 2018, is **\$68,351.69**

Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness!

## MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't yet paid your 2018 Cohutta Springs Foundation membership dues (\$500), please send them to:

Cohutta Springs Foundation  
Attn: Jennifer Haldeman  
PO Box 12000  
Calhoun, GA 30703



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Cohutta Springs Appreciation Weekend**

April 26-28, 2019

Cohutta Springs Conference Center  
Crandall, GA



## QUOTE WORTHY

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.

*Roy L. Smith*

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.

*Hamilton Wright Mable*

