

women's ministries



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION



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News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

30 years "Family Center Noah's Ark" in Penzberg, Germany



Christian Values and Counseling for Families

On May 19, the Adventist Family Center Noah's Ark (FAN) in Penzberg celebrated its 30th anniversary with representatives from politics, co-operating partners, former clients and parents. The FAN serves as a professional companion for families – from birth until maturity. It combines various support services for families under one roof.

In her welcoming speech, Annelies Plep, founder and head of the facility, pointed out that the basic idea is a holistic education with Christian values, so that children grow up healthy in body, soul and spirit. This vision was first initiated in 1989 in her private living room with ten children from 3 to 6 years of age. Together with the parents they reflected on good education, useful toys and activities related to nature. More and more parents wanted to participate.

The idea to start a nursery school group followed, but was initially rejected by the skepticism of the authorities and the lack of public funding. Thus the children's group continued with regular parents' evenings, lectures and creative courses. Another associated group was started in Benediktbeuern. New projects evolved and in 1998, the project received recognition as a family center by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Since then it has been called FAN. Four years later it was possible to open a kindergarten. In addition, the concept of parent-child support (FenKid) was introduced. Counseling and therapy by trained therapists is available. Over the years, contacts were also established with the Benediktbeuern University of Applied Sciences, which regularly accompanies the family center and sends students on their semester internship. Eight bachelor theses have already been written on the FAN.

Another initiative is the student project "Pack's an!" It aims to help students with learning difficulties and is led by the qualified educator and mediator Petra Zott-Endres. She and Melinda Veres also launched the career orientation project PASSGENAU. These include a professional café, biographical workshop, online consultation, counseling and coaching sessions, and a series of workshops where teens can discover their strengths.

With 23 permanent employees, two kindergarten groups, thirteen different offers in the areas of education, upbringing, care, counseling, therapy, creative offers and as a "social meeting place", the family center Noah's Ark is a fixture in the city of Penzberg. It is sponsored by the Advent Wohlfahrtswerk (AWW), the social branch of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Even the daily vegetarian lunch, which is prepared together with the children, is part of the concept. Further information: www.familienzentrum-arche-noah.de

According to a report by Stephan G. Brass Photo: Stephan G. Brass

Pastors' Meeting in Freudenstadt, Germany, May 22, 2019



Bin ich meiner Schwester Hüterin?

Am I my Sister's Keeper?

At the ministerial meeting this year I had the opportunity to present the material "I am my sister's keeper?" This is something that is designed to help former and inactive church members to return to the church by being loved back. I had pondered how to introduce the

subject, but finally I decided to simply start with the story of my youngest sister, who left the church many years ago and without whom I cannot imagine spending eternity. I had not expected my feelings to overwhelm me, but maybe it was due to the tears in my eyes that I had everybody's attention. Starting with the story of Cain, I led them to the lost sheep from

the parable of Jesus, which in God's eyes is just as worth investing in as any woman and man who turns his back on God and the church for whatever reason. After the presentation, I got a lot of hints on how valuable my part was - because many people feel the same way: they have to "do without" sisters and brothers who are close to their hearts and with whom they would like to be together with Jesus.

Even more wonderful was the experience I had when I started my computer after lunch: many pastors requested the material which I was happy to pass on. The material is available in various forms: for women's groups, so that the women in their communities can train other women in this subject (with pictures that appeal to women) and one more neutral version, if women's leaders or even they themselves wanted to speak in front of the entire church family about this issue. How nice that we as men and women can work together for God to seek and find the lost sheep of the house of God. What joy there is in heaven when people stand up together to help others. Reported by Jasmin Stanoschefskey, Women's Ministries Director, Baden-Württemberg Conference

Girls4Christ Day in Ostfildern, Germany



Girls are Friends

May 19, 2019. It was not my first Girls4Christ meeting - but I still had butterflies in my belly. The reason was that this time I took not only my own daughter Naemi to the event, but also her school friend Eva. I was a little nervous - would she like it, would she feel good? What if she does not like the topic or she does not feel involved by the girls she did not know? It turned out that all my fears were unnecessary. From the very beginning, Eva was fully involved, whether in the introductory game (designing buttons with the name of the girl sitting on the next seat), on the topic or during the subsequent discussion group on the subject of friendships. Eva participated actively in the conversation as if she had always been part of the group. I was amazed. What a blessing! While I was preparing the workshop materials, I kept hearing scraps of conversation from the small groups where the topic was being discussed in depth. How profound were the contributions of the girls, how benevolent their dealings with each other! I must say that I was touched when I heard them encouraging each other, being

there for each other, giving loving advice on the subject of friendship (regardless of their age). How much wisdom there is in such little ladies! Later in the various workshops there was still plenty of time to get to know each other even better, whether in the various creative activities (crafting cards, hand-lettering, making friendship gifts, board games).

The big hit was the supper: the incredible kitchen team from Ostfildern had made several different noodle casseroles - one especially for Eva, who suffers from a gluten intolerance. Eva was flabbergasted - and absolutely wants to come again. Next time, she says, she will also bring another friend, if there is space in the car. I'm amazed at how great God is! If things continue like this, I'll probably have to rent a bus soon.

Reported by Jasmin Stanoschefskey, Women's Ministries Director, Baden-Württemberg Conference Photos: WM BW

Women's Sabbath in Bietigheim, Germany



"BeYOUtiful" - a call to value ourselves and to see what God sees in us

At the latest when the self-built minibus decorated with terms like "valuable" "unique" and "beyoutiful" drove to the stop on the church stage I realized: these sisters are unbelievable! The event was a special Sabbath for women. But what I experienced was more than that. It was a wonderful service for the whole congregation, in an atmosphere of celebration, prepared and performed with love.

The motto of this special Sabbath on May 18, 2019, was "BeYOUtiful" - a call to value ourselves and to see what God sees in us: His precious child. Valuable not because we are especially beautiful or have special gifts, but because we mean so much to God, our Heavenly Father. A subject that appealed to all ages and genders. After a moving sketch, wonderful group discussions and an encouraging sermon, the congregation and many guests had the opportunity to eat their fill at a large buffet. At around 2:00 pm, only the women and girls and their friends stayed behind for various creative workshops. Those who had no interest in the workshop offers sat together enjoying refreshments. The community hall had been transformed to a beautifully decorated Café Creatif where about 40 or 50 women bustled

about.

The highlight of the afternoon was when several girls and women of different ages spoke about how they deal with the topic of "self-esteem" and what has helped them in difficult situations. What a blessing when we can share our experiences and encourage each other.

Incidentally, in Bietigheim-Bissingen, this women's Sabbath is integrated in an annual plan in which different groups of the community (children, men, women, senior citizens, etc.) are targeted with a special program including a church service and afternoon program. How enriching it would be if even more churches would take up such a concept in their annual plans for the many groups in the church and the community.

Reported by Jasmin Stanoschefskey, Women's Ministries Director, Baden-Württemberg Conference Photos: WM BW

Annual Advisory of Women's Ministries Directors



German-speaking areas continue co-operation

On May 7 and 8, 2019, the Women's Ministries Directors for the German-speaking areas (D-A-CH), Heidi Albisser, Switzerland, Jeanine Rollgaiser, Austria and Angelika Pfaller, Germany, met in Innsbruck for their annual advisory. Since the change in leadership in Austria (2018), this was the first personal meeting with Jeanine Rollgaiser. Among other things, the possibilities of future cooperation were discussed in a pleasant atmosphere. Other topics included advertising and attending the upcoming EUD congress People 7.0 in Lignano, Italy, and creating new material for Girls4Christ. In addition, the DACH team decided in the near future to release documents that cover the entire life of a woman and her environment. Information was shared, e.g. the current development of Boys4Christ groups in Germany. Women's Ministries at the conference level is involved in part, helping to develop the project.

First plans for a fifth DACH Women's Congress were also discussed. It is good to see how Women's Ministries leaders are constructively planning their further co-operation.

According to a report by Angelika Pfaller, WM Director, German Unions Photo: WM DACH

Women's Ministries Meeting in Portugal



There is a work to be done for Jesus

Women's Ministries Director for the Portuguese Union, Paula Amorim, organized a retreat for women in Santa Cruz, a village near Lisbon, from May 10 to 12, 2019. The peaceful venue near the ocean was an ideal place to address the topic of living happily in spite of moments of violence and suffering that we have to go through in our lives. It was a privilege to have Pastor Roberto Badenas and Dagmar Dom (EUD Women's Ministries Director) as keynote speakers. Pastor Badenas spoke on interesting subjects like how to develop resilience in the crises of life, the equality of men and women in the Bible, domestic violence, the importance of being assertive, and many others.

Dagmar Dorn presented biblical reflections and also showed some projects that are being done in Europe (eg. girls4Christ) and Pastor Paula Amorim, was responsible for our prayer walks every morning before breakfast.

On Saturday, after sunset, some women shared strong testimonials about physical and mental suffering and how the experiences helped them become stronger.

There were also times of relaxation that allowed us to exchange experiences, to laugh and to bond with each other.

Hopefully this weekend will be a starting point that will help the churches in Portugal to get to know more about Women's Ministries. The women returned to their homes feeling that there is still work to be done with the help of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

According to a report by Emilia Leitão Photos: WM Portugal

Adventists at the Prevention Congress in Berlin



"Prevention & Democracy Promotion"

"Prevention & Democracy Promotion", was the main topic of the 24th German Prevention Day on May 20 and 21 in Berlin. In the exhibition accompanying the congress the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was again represented with an information stand among the 171 participating organizations.

Break the silence about violence

The Women's Ministries Department of the church informed about the worldwide project enditnow - Stop silence about violence", which is an ongoing project since 2009 together with Adventist Development and Disaster Relief ADRA. The Theological College of the Seventh-day Adventists in Friedensau near Magdeburg is also committed to the topics of prevention and intervention in the various social manifestations of violence in the departments of Christian Welfare and Theology, said Angelika Pfaller, head of the Women's Ministries department in Germany. Each individual is called to awareness, to condemn all forms of violence, to break the silence, to seek solutions, and to work to end physical, mental and sexual violence.

Advisory Board

In 2010, the Seventh-day Adventist Church founded the advisory board "Facing Sexual Violence". According to Angelika Pfaller, this board deals with all occurring cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence in connection with minors within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany. The Advisory Board and the Religious Education Institute of the Church have also published a leaflet with information for children.

Help for victims of female genital mutilation

A leaflet exhibited at the booth gave an insight into the "Desert Flower Center" at the Adventist Hospital "Waldfriede" in Berlin-Zehlendorf. Victims of genital mutilation (FGM) have received medical and psychosocial help and care since 2013 (information at www.dfc-waldfriede.de). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 8,000 girls a day are mutilated by the so-called ritual circumcision of female genitalia. Worldwide, there are 150 million victims of FGM. FGM is not practiced only in certain countries of Africa or Asia. Even in Germany there are 50,000 victims of genital mutilation. In Kenya, ADRA Germany supports the "Kajiado Rescue Center" to protect underage girls from forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Democracy needs prevention

The German prevention day (DTP) is the world's largest annual congress specifically for the field of crime prevention and related prevention areas, explained DTP CEO Erich Marks. The congress offers an international platform for the interdisciplinary exchange of information and experience in prevention. This is how participants from 46 other countries came to Berlin, Marks reported in his speech at the opening of the DTP 2019. Based on statements made by experts from different institutions the "Berlin Declaration 2019" was written:

www.praeventionstag.de/dokumentation/download.cms

The statement made it clear that all those responsible for politics must deal more intensively and sustainably than before with the relationship between democratic social order and the prevention of extremism and crimes.

Photo: Holger Teubert

Women in Entroncamento, Portugal, study and pray



God can use small groups to bless others

About two years ago the women of the Seventh-Day Adventist group in Entroncamento, a city 100 kilometers from Lisbon, were speaking about their difficulties and how they were struggling to invite their friends to come to visit their church. They also felt the need of having more moments of prayer and meditation and study of God's word. They started to pray about what to do to fulfil this need as they did not have an organized Women's Ministries Group. They decided to start having monthly meetings in their own homes where they would study the Bible together. They started with Proverbs 31 "A wife of noble character who can find?" During these meetings they share moments of prayer and meditation about one woman of the Bible, not only the good examples, but also the negatives ones, from which there is much to be learned, too. They believe that people in the Bible can be role models for women, even in the 21st century.



At the end of their meetings they have a special snack where they can share a message about health, eating sweet but also healthy food. Often they do prayer walks.

The group consists of a total of ten women, including some non-SDA visitors who are very thankful to have the opportunity to share these special moments. The group is convinced that women need prayer groups because there are things that only other women can understand.

During her recent visit to Portugal, Dagmar Dorn, EUD Women's Ministries Director, was able to meet with this small but vibrant group.

Reported by Emilia Leitão Photos: WM Portugal

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<http://women.euroafrica.org/calendar>

Homepage Women's Ministries:
www.women.eud.adventist.org

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