



## MOVE 2016 celebrates the ‘Unsung’

*By Jessa Anderson, Administrative Coordinator, and Bryan Malley, Director of Communications*

On April 15-16, 200 students and youth workers from throughout the Northwest Conference converged on Minnehaha Academy’s south campus in Minneapolis for MOVE 2016—a weekend of teaching, worship, service and experiential learning.

This 2016 theme of “Unsung”

focused on the truth that God still uses the average person to do amazing things. With examples like kids in the Bible stepping out in faith to help feed over 5,000 people, or the ordinary people who risked their lives for their Christian faith, students were challenged to step out of their comfort zones

and allow God to show them how to be “unsung” followers of Christ.

The weekend kicked off with a session that featured the returning Blue Oaks Covenant Church worship team, led by Nicoshia Wynn. This multi-generational group brought high-energy worship that had students on their feet. ➡





**MOVE 2016 celebrates the ‘Unsung’ continued...**

➡ “We loved them last year, and we loved having them here again this year!” said one student, who was deeply impacted by the passion, excitement and spirit-filled worship.

The evening continued with a message from Hector Saucedo, a dynamic speaker out of Norwalk, CA, who was featured at CHIC and works with Urban Ops Music. He spent the weekend challenging students to think about obstacles, options, opportunities and obedience.

“If out of obedience you can give God a little of what you have, God is going to do great things

with it,” Saucedo said.

Messages throughout the week-end encouraged students to use their past, present and future to be a light for God and in their communities.

“God desires to do in your neighborhood what you allow Him to do in you,” Saucedo told students.

Friday night, churches were given time to talk and pray as a group and prepare themselves for the following day of service and learning experiences. Before the night ended, all of the churches joined in Minnehaha’s hockey arena (sans ice) playing games like Nine

Square in the Air and eating late night pizza.

On Saturday morning, youth groups spread out across the Twin Cities to serve at 11 different organizations. They played with children at a domestic abuse shelter, sorted donations at a thrift store, made and served breakfast at North High School in Minneapolis, helped sell shoes for a food shelter ministry and cleaned several churches. Each of these ministry sites is deeply grateful for the servant-hearted work that was put in by these students and leaders—the impact is long lasting.

After a morning of service,

students headed to the Boy Scout Base Camp at Fort Snelling to grab a quick lunch. Churches were then split into small groups and sent out on Light Rail trains for a community exploration tour addressing justice issues in the urban context.

Groups had a chance to travel through Minneapolis, making stops at places like Government Plaza Station, the new US Bank Stadium, the Cedar/Riverside neighborhood and Lake Street, to hear speakers talk about issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement, sex trafficking, immigration, Native American concerns and urban gentrification. Tour guides included

Mike Hotz and Marque Jensen of Sanctuary Covenant, Amy Long of Redeemer Covenant, Bob Klanderud of the Dakota Tribe, and Leya Copper of InterVarsity. Each guide offered a unique perspective on these major issues that surround the Twin Cities and beyond.

“I can’t think of a better way of engaging our Covenant students on issues of faith and justice than MOVE 2016,” said Hotz, who guided the session on Black Lives Matter. “It’s in struggling with complex issues like the ones we tackled that a vibrant and lasting faith is inspired!”

At the completion of the tour,

groups headed back to Minnehaha Academy for a time of worship and another powerful message from Saucedo.

“It was awesome to see students come together through teamwork,” said Tyler Menssen, the new director of Solid Rock Discipleship Program at Lake Beauty Bible Camp. Solid Rock students participated as leaders and volunteers throughout the weekend. “This event was truly a chance to see the fulfillment of the mission of Christ carried out in our youth. It was an incredible weekend and we are thankful for the opportunity we had to be there.”





# Covenant missionaries on home assignment helping to train CHET NWC students

By Greg Ellis, Coordinator of CHET NWC

CHET Northwest Conference is leveraging the resources of missionaries while they are in town to instruct our students. What used to be commonly referred to as “furlough” is now called “home assignment.”

Covenant missionary couples, Nils and Erika Clauson, and Julio and Katie Izasa, are on home assignment, but they’re certainly not on a break! Their expertise and knowledge have been a blessing to our Spanish-speaking students at CHET NWC.

A wonderful thing happened in March when Nils and Erika Clauson, who serve in Mexico, led a workshop for CHET entitled,

“Raising Children in Two Cultures.” A few students approached Erika during a break and asked questions about how to do Sunday school well in Spanish or bilingually. Erika’s quick response was, “That’s not my area of expertise, but there’s another missionary in town who knows!”

Since this interaction, we have been working to find time for Julio and Katie Izasa, who serve in Colombia, to teach these local Hispanic church leaders about children’s ministry before they leave town.

Each semester, CHET NWC conducts workshops to enhance students’ learning and ministry skills.

We have been blessed to have global missionaries ministering to our local students who represent several different countries of origin, and who now call the Twin Cities home.

CHET is committed to serving the unserved and the underserved. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, CHET serves to equip our Spanish-speaking sisters and brothers for pastoral and lay ministry, evangelism and discipleship, church planting and community transformation. CHET’s vision is to transform communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ through Latina and Latino leaders.



# Minnehaha Academy Cultural Field Experience prepares students to be ‘global citizens’

By Jessa Anderson, Administrative Coordinator

In March of each academic year, 9th to 11th grade students at Minnehaha Academy participate in a weeklong, on-site Cultural Field Experience. Throughout the week, students are exposed to people and communities that are different from their own. The goal of the CFE is to promote an understanding of other peoples’ life experiences and points of view, and to provide students opportunities to discover their God-given gifts.

This past March, students went all over the Twin Cities, country and world to be immersed in different communities and cultures. They dove into real-life learning opportunities in the hopes that they would gain increased wisdom, compassion, respect and understanding to prepare them to be global citizens.

**Ghana, West Africa**

As a part of these experiences, a group of students travelled to Ghana in West Africa. In Ghana, students spent two weeks—mostly in the rural village of Okurase—

assisting with soccer and recycling programs. The team visited local schools with soccer balls and pumps that were donated by MA advisor groups through a 2016 project called “Growing with Ghana.”

Students also had opportunities to talk with kids about the importance of picking up trash and keeping the environment clean. Throughout their time in Ghana, the MA team also learned about local culture by building relationships with the people they met and experiencing their way of living.

“We had such an amazing experience on this very unique school CFE trip,” said Julie Johnson, one of the leaders for the Ghana team. “We have all learned and seen things and met people in this beautiful country that have made profound impacts and changed our lives in more ways than one.”

**Roatan, Honduras**

Another group of students travelled to Roatan, Honduras, to work in a children’s home with their

community outreach programs.

“Whenever we had time with the kids, they would constantly ask if we wanted to play soccer. It was so much fun playing with them,” said Nathan Radtke, a sophomore at Minnehaha Academy.

The team brought down 12 suitcases full of donated supplies, Bibles and toys for the children’s home. The group spent time in local communities, praying for people and providing groceries for families that had little to no food in their homes.

A few days after the students returned, they had already written letters to be sent to the children with whom they had built relationships at the children’s home.

“Not only did the students learn a lot about the culture and history of the island,” said Sam Meyers, a teacher at MA and one of the leaders of the trip, “they also learned a lot about the loneliness of broken families and the magnitude of compassion that exists in the hearts of passionate followers of Christ.”



# Chance meeting leads to long-term mission partnership for Edina Covenant

By Jessa Anderson, Administrative Coordinator

One would not expect to walk past the doors of Edina Covenant Church and hear the strong and beautiful voices of an African choir echoing from its sanctuary. But what started with a spirit-led decision to host the Imuka Singers several years ago has evolved into an incredible relationship that has changed the hearts and lives of many people in Minnesota and Africa.

“It was serendipity,” said Ben Swanson, Pastor of Edina Covenant Church. The small Edina church was coming out of a hard season and just starting to feel a sense of stability again after engaging the Congregational Vitality Pathway. The leadership of the church and its members had begun asking, “How can we reach out?”

## Their strongest instrument

“One day a man walked through the doors of the church and asked if we would consider hosting a Tanzanian choir,” Swanson said. “I replied, ‘We’re a small church, we won’t be able to cover your costs and it is likely that less than 100 people will show up.’”

That man was Smart Baitani, Executive Director of COSAD (Community Solutions for African Development). Baitani, who grew up in Tanzania and moved to Minnesota on a college scholarship, started the Imuka Singers as a part of COSAD, which works to bring about the sustainable development of the Bukoba region of Tanzania.

Baitani was driving past Edina Covenant that day on his way to a bigger church to ask them the same question when he felt the Lord tell him to go inside. Despite uncertainty, Baitani suggested that he and Swanson pray about it, which led to Swanson agreeing to host the choir.

“There is nothing like African voices,” said Swanson, who was struck by the gifts of the people who came to sing. “Most have never had access to microphones so they use their voices as their strongest instrument.”

The choir performance was a huge success, filling the entire sanctuary to capacity.

## What would it look like to partner?

A friendship formed between Swanson and Baitani, and soon Swanson asked the question, “What would it look like for us to partner with you and COSAD?”

“Come to Tanzania,” Baitani responded.

Swanson, a self-proclaimed “homebody,” couldn’t believe that was the answer to the question.

“The farthest I had traveled was to the border of Mexico. Africa? I didn’t want to go,” Swanson said.

But after talking to church leadership and praying for continued guidance, Swanson—along with his wife, sister and one other member of the church—decided to make the trip to Bukoba to see the work of COSAD firsthand.

“It was a relationship building

trip... We were there to learn, to watch and to understand,” Swanson said.

## Giving dignity, not charity

The people of Edina Covenant raised almost \$10,000 for a COSAD medical clinic by having three relay teams and one individual train to run in the Minneapolis Marathon. Through hard work and dedication, the church and other COSAD partners raised enough money to fund the clinic opening 18 months ago. Swanson traveled to Tanzania for the grand opening.

The partnership between Edina Covenant and the Bukoba people has become more than just a mission. It is a relationship, a restoration of hope for both Edina and Bukoba. Through this relationship, Swanson has become chairman of the COSAD board in the United States. Edina Covenant has sent several groups of people to Bukoba, and a group of four high school students will be travelling to Tanzania in July to tour the COSAD programs, do a building project, and continue to build relationships with the people there.

“COSAD and Edina Covenant begins and ends with relationship,” Swanson said. “It is about giving dignity, not charity. Our ongoing relationship with the people of Bukoba will always be more valuable than anything we do together. People come first.”

For more information on COSAD, visit [cosad.org](http://cosad.org).



# Workshop with Dr. Mark Yarhouse offers practical ministry tools

By Mark Stromberg, Superintendent

On Feb. 27, 225 people from Northwest Conference churches gathered at Salem Covenant Church in New Brighton, MN, for a workshop entitled, “**Sexual Identity & the Christian: Positioning the Church to Be Both Faithful and Engaged in a Changing World.**”

Dr. Mark Yarhouse was the presenter. He is the Hughes Endowed Chair and Professor of Psychology at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA, and has written over 60 journal articles and book chapters. He is also co-author of several books on the topic of same sex attraction and homosexuality.

His presentation was well received, as he was able to clearly articulate relevant information based on years of personal research in this particular area of expertise. Throughout the day, Yarhouse addressed some of the most frequently asked questions relative to the topic. He also reflected on practical ministry tools for helping individuals and families.

Further, he provided strategies for positioning faith communities to engage and offer ministry in a dramatically-changing culture, addressing the different “lenses” people use; helping participants recognize the different perspectives people bring to any conversation on this matter.

Throughout the past year, the NWC has been pleased to offer several opportunities for learning and reflection on the topic of human sexuality and same sex attraction. Lord, help us to be both truthful and gracious as we seek to be faithful to Your Word and share the Gospel with those around us!



## WM NWC BUS TO KANSAS CITY, MO

Join the fun - ride the bus to Triennial XV!

<b>Bus Leaves:</b>	Wednesday, July 27, 2016
9:00 AM	Bus Departs Monticello Covenant Church 8585 MN-25, Monticello, MN
10:00 AM	Bus Departs Salem Covenant Church 2655 5th Street NW, New Brighton, MN 55112
11:30 AM	Bus Departs Cabela’s Retail Store 3900 Cabela Dr NW, Owatonna, MN 55060
<b>Bus Returns:</b>	Sunday, July 31, 2016
	1:00 PM Bus Departs Missouri and Returns to Minnesota in the evening 7/31 10-11PM

Contact to reserve a spot:  
**Marlys Wilson**  
763-682-4543  
[president@wmnwc.org](mailto:president@wmnwc.org)  
mail payment to Marlys at 2419  
58th St NE, Buffalo, MN 55313

**Sheraton Kansas City Hotel**  
2345 McGee Street  
Kansas City, MO  
816-841-1000  
[www.sheratonkansascityhotel.com](http://www.sheratonkansascityhotel.com)  
Cost: \$129 per night (plus taxes) -  
Two Double Beds or One King Bed

**Register at [www.covchurch.org/triennial](http://www.covchurch.org/triennial)**  
Cost: \$399 (January 16 - April 15th, 2016)  
Group rates available



TRIENNIAL XV  
July 28-31, 2016 • Kansas City, MO

# Christi Pease concludes service as Director of Women Ministries of the NWC

*By Marlys Wilson, President of Women Ministries of the Northwest Conference*



***“Well done good and faithful servant!”***

Christi Pease has a servant heart, a fact that has been

evident throughout her eight years of service as Director of Women Ministries of the Northwest Conference. Pease and her family moved to the NWC from the east coast when her husband, Ben, became youth pastor at Salem Covenant Church in New Brighton, MN.

As a busy wife and mother to three young children, Pease felt called to work part-time for WM NWC. Now, two of her children are teenagers and the youngest is nine.

As Director of WM NWC, she has represented the ministry by speaking at churches, connecting

with women all over the Conference, developing leaders and making sure all the ministry details were in order.

Along with the WM NWC board, Pease helped shape the annual Renewal Conference into what it is today—a large gathering with excellent speakers and breakout sessions where women of the NWC can connect and grow.

Working with Women Ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church, she created several leadership training modules still available for churches to use. Pease is proud of her work with Advocacy for Victims of Abuse (AVA) in re-launching this initiative with better pastoral oversight and church involvement.

Her attention to detail and her creative energies have also brought the WM NWC website and Facebook pages up to date.

Pease brought a professional look to ministry newsletters and publications, and fostered a good working relationships with the NWC board and staff members.

As President of WM NWC, I have especially enjoyed working in collaboration with Christi. I appreciate her deep devotional life and her heart for women in the NWC churches. May God bless Christi as she transitions into full-time work. Thank you, Christi, for your faithful ministry to the women of the Northwest Conference.

## NWC Calendar

**5.7 » Go: Serve** – First Covenant Church, St. Paul, MN

**6.18-25 » Adventures in Leadership** – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

**6.23-25 » Gather 2016** – Phoenix, AZ

**7.28-31 » Triennial XV** – Kansas City, MO

**8.4-6 » MUUUCE** – Crossroads Church, Woodbury, MN

**9.7-9 » CRIM Retreat** – Covenant Pines Bible Camp, McGregor, MN

**10.3-5 » Ministerial Association Retreat** – Chase on the Lake, Walker, MN

## NWC Staff

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Superintendent

**Jon Kramka**

Director of Congregational Vitality

**Mike Brown**

Director of Church Planting

**Ginny Olson**

Director of Youth Ministry

**Kara Stromberg**

Director of Children & Family Ministry

**Jeff Burton**

Director of Pastoral Care & Development

**Sandy Norris**

Director of Finance

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