

# CONFERENCE

## Connections

### SECC Difference-Makers



**The excitement for the upcoming 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming, is undeniable.**

Churches in the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) have eagerly awaited this special event for the last five years. We expect 2,500 people from 64 of our churches to gather at the Camporee this month.

Pathfinders got its start in SECC and is a testament to our conference's rich history. Back in 1927, the first Pathfinder club was started in Anaheim, California. Several clubs began to sprout up, and now there are around two million Pathfinders in 60,000 clubs in over 180 countries around the world. What started out as a local initiative has now become a global phenomenon, touching communities worldwide.

This happens not only with Pathfinders but with many church ministries. When the church starts a ministry that impacts its community, it ignites a ripple effect, inspiring others to take action.

There is a transformative power that helps to bring about profound changes in the church and society. When our churches make an

intentional effort to touch our communities with God's love, it sparks innovation, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose, driving people to work together toward solutions that are on the heart of Jesus.

I recently attended a special event held by the city of Riverside at the Vista de La Sierra affordable housing community. This project is a partnership with the Pacific Union Conference and National CORE to provide homes for families and individuals struggling to find housing. In 2014, President Obama challenged U.S. mayors to end veterans' homelessness by the end of the year. The City of Riverside was among the first to meet this challenge. They also wanted to end homelessness for all individuals in the city by 2025. This collaboration with National CORE and the Pacific Union Conference, led by the La Sierra University church, is the largest of its kind and was completed in the City of Riverside through a partnership with a faith community.

This was another example of harnessing the collective wisdom, passion, and ingenuity of our members and leaders. As a result, communities can overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and create a brighter future for generations to come. It is a reminder of the immense potential within each of us to make a difference and a testament to the transformative power of human compassion and solidarity.

I continue to pray that the Pathfinders and parishioners of SECC will be difference-makers in our territory and beyond.



**Jonathan Park**  
SECC President

*Pastors dive deeper into the topics of the presentations.*



## Pastors Learn the Art of Leadership

**In March, a group of 65 pastors gathered on Crosswalk's main campus in Redlands.** The event, planned by the Ministerial Department of Southeastern California Conference (SECC) and entitled "The Art of Leadership," was designed as an optional learning community for pastors. Instead of inviting guest speakers to come and lecture, a platform was created for pastors to share with each other. There were three segments of seven-minute Ted Talk-style presentations from 10 pastors from diverse backgrounds. Pastors were able to take the conversation deeper and discuss questions about the presentations at their round tables.

Many of the pastors asked to present felt they weren't experts on what they were asked to share. They felt capable but still very much a work in progress. This was exactly what the ministerial department wanted to showcase—a view of leadership in pastoral ministry that borrowed from Max DePree's classic, *Leadership is an Art*. They wanted to highlight a relational understanding of leadership that is empowering and shared.

Hearing from peers in this unique setting shifted the conversations around the table. Costa Mesa Pastor Christine Pitt shared how she organizes and prepares her sermons around the Growing Together curriculum so that the children in the church can easily follow the sermon and respond. Joey Oh, Loma Linda church executive pastor, discussed taking small steps each day to problem-solve and handle responsibilities instead of falling prey to the temptation to look for the perfect solution.

Pastors cheered as Didier Noriega, pastor at Escondido Spanish church, worked through his first public presentation in English, reminding pastors how love must be at the heart of everything they do in evangelism. Many were so captivated they couldn't leave because each presentation was so meaningful. There will be more Art of Leadership events. The intention is to continue to highlight the many talents and gifts SECC pastors and churches have that God wants to unleash and shine into the world!

*By Will Penick*



*Christine Pitt shares her "Ted Talk."*



*LEFT: Pastor Steven Sigamani (left) baptizes La Vida student Talise Mescal, a senior.*

*BELOW: Sophomore Emmanuel Cueva works in the La Vida greenhouse.*



## San Diego SHIFT Youth Group Goes to La Vida Mission for Mission Trip

In late March, the San Diego SHIFT youth ministry program offered the opportunity to go on a mission trip to La Vida Mission in New Mexico, a self-supporting Adventist boarding school dedicated to serving Navajo Nation youth. Organized by Steven Sigamani, Paradise Valley church's youth and young adult pastor, the trip was a collaborative effort to bring youth to serve during their spring break. Twelve students and five chaperones represented six churches on this trip.

The youth group led a week of prayer every morning. "My favorite part about the mission trip was the week of prayer because I got to see my friends give sermons," said Paula Hernández, who joined the mission trip for her first time this year. "Seeing how genuinely the kids loved what we prepared for them and getting to feel the Spirit was such an awesome experience."

The other service activity was working at the greenhouses on campus. After the week of prayer meeting, the group split into a few teams to work on different projects. Josue Flores, a student who has been going on the mission trips for a few years, said, "I loved the hands-on activities because I was using my skills and my talents to help make other people's lives better and easier, and I honestly just enjoyed doing the work."

"The mission trip was really fun. I had a lot of bonding experiences with the people that went, I met new people, got to preach, and got closer to God, which was all really impactful," said Kenny Carrillo, a first-timer to the mission trip.

On the last day, there were two week of prayer services, and the second one ended in the baptism of La Vida student Talise Mescal. After the service, the San Diego group had a debrief in which they went over the day and what they liked. Multiple kids described how impactful the ending service had been for them. Two youth volunteers from the mission trip even decided to get baptized: Savanna Samatua and Katie Barry. "The baptism was really impactful and powerful for me and that, along with the week of prayer, really helped me make my decision to get baptized," said Barry.

*By Savanna Samatua*



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# kids konnect

## The Real Treasure



**Miss Glenda was the neighborhood's most loved neighbor.**

Sure, she didn't always hear you right, but she made the best cookies. So when she posted a \$100 reward to find her lost pearl necklace, Jacob began immediately hunting the front yards of every house on the street. He was going to win that money AND become Glenda's favorite neighbor. Jacob wasn't the only one after that reward though. He saw plenty of other kids—and even grown-ups!—outside with their heads bent toward the ground.

*No matter, thought Jacob. I'll find that necklace first!*

But after hours of searching, the precious pearl necklace had still not turned up. Jacob sat on the curb, his back aching. A kid he didn't know sat next to him in similar exhaustion, his skateboard clattering to the ground. "I don't even know what this necklace looks like," he huffed. Jacob was surprised. "Miss Glenda is always wearing that necklace. How do you not know what it looks like?" The boy shrugged. "I just moved here a few days ago." Jacob perked up. "Have you been to the skate park yet? It's the best in town." The boy's eyes lit up. "No! Do you

skate too?" Jacob jumped up. "Yes! Let me run home and grab my board, and I'll take you!"

It turned out that Miss Glenda's pearl necklace had been in her jewelry box the entire time. But even though Jacob didn't get \$100 that day, he did get something even better—a friend!

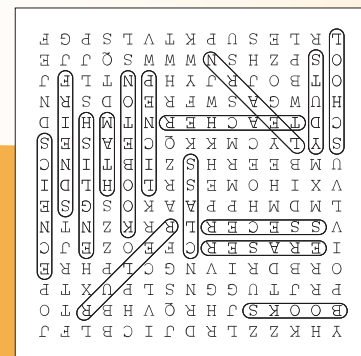
*By Megan Jacobs*

## Back to School Word Search

Can you find all 15 words?

1. school
2. study
3. teacher
4. learn
5. eraser
6. pencil
7. notebook
8. ruler
9. math
10. science
11. English
12. recess
13. class
14. books
15. friends

Y	H	K	Z	Z	L	R	D	J	I	C	B	L	F	J
B	O	O	K	S	J	H	R	Q	V	H	B	R	T	O
P	R	J	T	U	G	G	N	S	L	P	U	X	T	P
O	R	B	D	R	I	V	N	G	C	L	P	H	R	E
I	E	R	A	S	E	R	C	F	E	O	Z	E	J	C
V	S	S	E	C	E	R	L	R	R	K	Z	N	T	N
L	M	D	M	H	P	P	A	A	K	O	S	G	S	E
V	X	I	H	O	M	E	S	R	L	O	H	L	D	I
U	M	B	E	E	R	H	S	Z	I	B	T	I	N	C
S	Y	L	Y	C	M	K	K	Q	C	E	A	S	E	S
C	D	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	N	T	M	H	I	D
H	U	W	G	A	S	W	F	R	E	O	D	S	R	N
O	T	B	O	J	R	J	Y	H	P	N	T	L	F	J
O	S	P	Z	H	S	N	W	W	S	Q	J	J	E	
L	R	L	E	S	U	P	K	T	V	L	S	P	G	F



Answers