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Robert K. Thomas

Restoring the Balance

Physical education is a vital component of a wholistic education because it promotes a lifetime of physical activity and healthy choices. We have been given good counsel by our early church leaders about the importance of being physically active, and current research bears witness to the benefits of our healthy Adventist lifestyle.

In this era, when academics, as measured by high-stakes tests, has received significant attention, school administrators and teachers may be tempted to shift from a balanced approach to one that invests less time in physical pursuits and more in intellectual activity. Ellen White condemned this misguided paradigm when she said, "something more is called for than the culture of the intellect. Education is not complete unless the body, the mind, and the heart are equally educated."¹ Her counsels have been supported by research showing that physically fit students perform better academically.²

This imbalanced approach to education has been recently recognized and addressed in the *Journey to Excellence Through Health* report written in June 2011 by the North American Division Physical Education and Health writing group. The report includes seven goals to foster a return to the principles upon which our educational system was founded.³

Giving further support for the importance of physical fitness for children, youth, and adults alike, Dr. John Ratey reveals that aerobic exercise prepares the brain to learn, improves mood and attention, lowers stress and anxiety, helps stave off addiction, controls the sometimes tumultuous effects of hormonal changes, and guards against and even reverses some of the effects of aging on the brain in his exciting book, *SPARK: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*.⁴

Although much of the world has moved from an agrarian to a technological model since Ellen White's day, the principles she espoused remain true today. More than ever, we must intentionally provide opportunities for our students to be physically active. The sedentary lifestyle of today's developed nations with their technologically based efficiencies and fast food is producing body temples (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) that

are getting too large and unhealthy. Ellen White would be appalled at this. Nearly a century before the obesity epidemic, she asserted that physical inactivity is "one of the greatest causes of debility of body and feebleness of mind."⁵

While peer-reviewed, grant-funded scholarly research has demonstrated that Adventists live seven to eight years longer and have a lower prevalence of many chronic diseases than the general population,⁶ we still need to ensure that our students become physically active and make other healthy lifestyle choices so that the next generations maintain these benefits.

Another element of school life that many associate with physical education relates to after-school sports programs. Contrary to some commonly held assumptions, Ellen White did not oppose the "simple exercise of playing ball";⁷ however, she cautioned against the excesses in time, money, and resources that were sometimes dedicated to ball games at the expense of other, more important things,⁸ and which could draw away attention from "eternal" values.⁹ Concerns about the detrimental effects of sports have been expressed throughout the history of Adventist education¹⁰ and are still valid today. The articles in this issue can help to guide decisions about how to prioritize our resources in order to best serve our students and communities.

In this issue on health and physical education, you will find articles that address a broad array of topics, ranging from the importance of physical activity in preserving the body temple to providing practical tips for teaching physical education; measuring physical activity in our schools and communities; principles for maintaining safe playgrounds and gyms; helping faculty manage their stress more effectively using NEWSTART principles; making sure we serve all of our students in a carefully planned manner; and guidelines for ensuring that when schools decide to offer a sports program, it is intentionally counter-cultural, mission-oriented, and grounded in a Christian philosophy.

We hope that this issue will provide new ideas and reinforce proven strategies for you as educational

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Physical Activity:

A Critical Component of a Complete Education

Long ago, Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.) advocated that people get adequate rest, exercise, fresh air, massages, baths, and eat a proper diet.¹

His work represented the culmination of decades of health teaching and a revolution in the practice of medicine. Often considered the father of medicine, Hippocrates was born and raised by a family of priests, physicians, and teachers. Seventh-day Adventists in these same professions today promote a similar health message.

BY BRIAN SATHER

Although physical educators in the 21st century advocate healthy living for all, and physical activity as an integral component of education, this campaign is widely ignored. Plato (427-347 B.C.) spawned the dualistic notion of a separate mind (good) and body (bad) that is still prevalent in religion and education. The main focus during the school day is the development of the mind through traditional subjects like mathematics, English, and science. Under this persisting model, children sit passively at their desks attempting to develop their minds and reasoning capacity while ignoring the needs of their bodies. This focus is unacceptable based on the modern (and very Adventist) idea of wholistic wellness, which views as imperative that each person should develop socially, physically, spiritually, environmentally, intellectually, emotionally, and occupationally throughout his or her lifetime.² A properly designed physical education curriculum emphasizes more of these dimensions than any other single subject, even though the physical activity elements are paramount.

In the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education, the role of physical activity has always had a vital place. Ellen White emphasized its importance in the opening paragraph of her book *Education*:

“True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”³

Furthermore, in *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen White recommended ex-

ercise along with other important health practices such as breathing fresh air, bathing frequently, eating a proper diet, and getting adequate rest.⁴ The concepts she espoused support the guidelines presented by Hippocrates as well as today's health professionals.

Seventh-day Adventists must continue to set a good example in health promotion and healthful practices. Research studies have shown that Adventists have longer-than-average life spans, which is attributable to lifestyle factors including regular physical activity.⁵ Adventist schools should continue to propagate these values, which not only increase longevity but also enhance quality of life. An emphasis on physical activity and health is increasingly important in light of ominous trends toward physical inactivity, especially in today's youth.

The Shape of Physical Education

Internationally, physical education programs have improved, with a substantial majority of countries now requiring 14 years of physical education in their schools.⁶ However, based on a review of literature, Polidoro found both positive and negative developments in physical education throughout the world.

In the United States, there have recently been both positive and negative trends. In 1866, California became the first state to pass a law requiring physical education in schools.⁷ Although many locations initially followed this trend, by the end of the 1990s, many states were eliminating this requirement—in large part because of the need to focus on subjects like reading and math that were being measured by state-mandated high-stakes tests. At one point, Illinois was the only state that required daily physical education for all students in grades K-12; yet even there, schools could obtain waivers en-

abling them to omit mandatory physical education from their program.⁸ Across the United States, educators have had to struggle to convince administrators to keep physical education in the curriculum, even as an elective.⁹

Recently, there has been a positive trend in this regard. The State of Oregon recently enacted a law that will require, by the 2017-2018 school year, a minimum number of hours of physical activity during physical education classes in grades K-8, citing the increase in childhood obesity as the impetus for the reform.¹⁰ Based on a similar rationale, most other U.S. states have adopted legislation requiring at least some physical activity in schools.¹¹

Obesity rates worldwide are reaching disturbing levels.¹² In a recent review of data for school-aged youth in 34 countries, researchers found overweight and obesity rates particularly high in North America, Great Britain, and southwestern Europe. A number of studies have found a link between obesity and lower physical activity levels and more television viewing time.¹³

A Call to Action

Internationally, professionals have made efforts to improve the quality of physical education. The International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport, and Dance (ICHPER-SD) was established in 1958 as an umbrella organization to advocate for physical education. In their “Advocacy Statement,” ICHPER-SD cites the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund statement regarding the right of children for a “standard of physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development essential to engage purposefully in life’s functions.”¹⁴ This sounds very much like Ellen White’s statement in *Education* from decades earlier. ICHPER-SD seeks to create a positive environment in which every child will be physically educated, to empower each one to achieve his or her full potential.

ICHPER-SD has teamed up with many other organizations to promote physical education worldwide, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1978, UNESCO adopted a charter that includes 11 statements promoting physical education (see Table 1).¹⁵ Note the different components of physical education that are highlighted in this statement and its assertion that lifelong physical education is everyone's fundamental right.

Over the years, the General Conference Department of Education has also issued many statements promoting physical education in schools. The Seventh-day Adventist "Philosophy of Education" statement issued in 2003 includes the following words: "Adventist education imparts more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially."¹⁶

Exercise the Brain

In *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen White wrote, "The relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate."¹⁷ In *Education*, she added that, "Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character."¹⁸

One of the most important reasons to include physical education in the curriculum is that *physical activity stimulates learning*. Carla Hannaford, in *Smart Moves*,¹⁹ discussed the positive link between physical activity and brain development, with reference to research dispelling the notion of a separate mind and body. Melvin Campbell, in an article in this journal, also highlighted the contribution of physical fitness to learning.²⁰ In recent studies by The California Endowment,²¹ researchers found that

higher levels of activity in physical education were associated with higher academic performance.

Choosing Well-Trained Physical Educators

Given the amount of research pointing to the importance of physical education, a major consideration is choosing qualified teachers to impart these ideals and to design well-balanced programs. The Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) recently issued a letter to church educational leaders in the North American

Division that stated, "We have noticed an increase in individuals being hired to teach physical education who have little professional training. This may be due in part to increased financial challenges our schools are facing. However, this practice can strain a school's ability to provide quality education and may pose risks to the school as well."²²

Quality physical education instruction should start with a commitment to this important component of true education. Whenever possible, Adventist schools should employ trained and properly licensed physical education teachers at all levels. Administrators

Table 1

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Charter

- The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all.
- Physical education and sport form an essential element of lifelong education in the overall education system.
 - Physical education and sport programmes must meet individual and social needs.
 - Teaching, coaching, and administration of physical education and sport should be performed by qualified personnel.
 - Adequate facilities and equipment are essential to physical education and sport.
 - Research and evaluation are indispensable components of the development of physical education and sport.
 - Protection of the ethical and moral values of physical education and sport must be a constant concern for all.
 - Information and documentation help to promote physical education and sport.
 - The mass media should exert a positive influence on physical education and sport.
 - National institutions play a major role in physical education and sport.
 - International co-operation is a prerequisite for the universal and well-balanced promotion of physical education and sport.²³

Table 2

NASPE National Standards & Guidelines for Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE)

Basic PETE Standards

Standard 1: Scientific and Theoretical Knowledge

Physical education teacher candidates know and apply discipline-specific scientific and theoretical concepts critical to the development of physically educated individuals.

Standard 2: Skill-Based and Fitness-Based Competence

Physical education teacher candidates are physically educated individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate competent movement performance and health-enhancing fitness as delineated in NASPE's K-12 Standards.

Standard 3: Planning and Implementation

Physical education teacher candidates plan and implement developmentally appropriate learning experiences aligned with local, state, and national standards to address the diverse needs of all students.

Standard 4: Instructional Delivery and Management

Physical education teacher candidates use effective communication and pedagogical skills and strategies to enhance student engagement and learning.

Standard 5: Impact on Student Learning

Physical education teacher candidates utilize assessments and reflection to foster student learning and to inform instructional decisions.

Standard 6: Professionalism

Physical education teacher candidates demonstrate dispositions essential to becoming effective professionals.

Advanced PETE Standards

Standard 1: Professional Knowledge

Advanced physical education teacher candidates come to understand disciplinary content knowledge, the application of content knowledge to teaching physical education, and modes of inquiry that form the bases for physical education programs and instruction.

Standard 2: Professional Practice

Advanced physical education teacher candidates use content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to design and conduct appropriate learning experiences that facilitate and enhance the growth of learners.

Standard 3: Professional Leadership

Advanced physical education teacher candidates are continuous, collaborative learners who further their own professional development and use their abilities to contribute to the profession.²⁴

must investigate candidates' academic backgrounds, and contact previous employers for information about each applicant. This is paramount in the dynamic, hands-on, and liability-prone realm of physical education.

Teacher training also needs attention. In designing their preservice programs, Adventist colleges and universities should understand and implement the professional preparation standards developed by both ICHPER-SD²⁵ and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). (See Table 2.) Summer and online courses will be helpful for teachers needing professional certification to teach physical education.

Hiring qualified physical education teachers is not always an option for small Adventist schools. However, because of liability issues, every teacher assigned to teach physical education must learn how to properly administer a physical education curriculum and appropriately manage risks. Teachers who lack appropriate training must be required to enroll in college-level or online physical education classes and work toward a teaching endorsement in the subject as quickly as possible. All physical education teachers must stay up to date on the latest guidelines in physical education and consult the most pertinent resources (see the next section). Also, many sports and activities have certifications that can be obtained through clinics and organizations. For example, in the United States, fitness certifications are available from leading organizations like the American Council on Education (ACE) or the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

How to Put Physical Education Into Action

Recognizing the important role of physical activity in the development of the whole person, what are the best

ways for Adventist schools to include movement experiences in the curriculum? Ellen White recommended the students obtain physical exercise by engaging in manual labor.²⁶ This is less of an option today due to mechanization and automation of work, and fewer jobs that require physical labor.²⁷ Whereas in Ellen White's era, most careers required manual labor, mechanization and automation in most developed countries have transformed the workplace so that most jobs are sedentary. This has also caused a decline in available manual labor opportunities and industries at Adventist schools. Accordingly, a wholistic education in 21st-century schools should lead students to enjoy appropriate physical activity and to choose to participate in an active lifestyle despite their sedentary nature of their careers.

The New Physical Education

Teachers should read widely to stay current on the "best practices" in physical education. The well-structured physical education program will incorporate a variety of approaches to ensure that all students engage in vigorous physical activity. The latest trend, referred to as the "new physical education," represents a significant departure from the traditional focus on team sports, which tend to be exclusive and to stigmatize less-athletic students.²⁸ Focusing on traditional sports such as basketball, soccer, and rugby means that highly skilled students—the individuals who least need the practice—monopolize the program's resources and time. When the less-skilled students do get to play, they are often mocked and derided, which can lead them to associate physical activity with embarrassment and failure.

The "new physical education" focuses instead on cooperative activities and small-group games that all stu-



dents enjoy and that promote maximum learning for everyone. Thus, students experience a variety of activities, and the courses foster enjoyment of physical activity that will last a lifetime. Some examples:

- Students are introduced to rock climbing with a bouldering wall (low height) that allows enough stations for most students to practice some different holds while working on balance, coordination, and strength development.
- Volleyball skills are taught to groups of three students each; the objective is to forearm pass the ball to each group member, and then with the final pass, toss it into a hoop target on the ground.
- Locomotor skills such as hopping and sliding can be practiced using a

parachute, having everyone hold the edge and move in the same direction.

The goal of each of these examples is to (1) introduce students to a variety of fun activities, (2) enhance personal skills through practice, and (3) teach students how to cooperate. Approaches such as the Sport Education Model²⁹ and Teaching Games for Understanding³⁰ are enjoyable ways for students to participate in activities and learn sport skills, socialization, and other important lessons in physical education.

Resources

The best way for teachers to stay current in the field is to take courses and to consult popular Websites such as PECentral.com and PElinks.com.

Another valuable resource is the NASPE Forum (<http://www.pelinks4u.org/naspeforum/cgi-bin/discus/discus.cgi>), an active online community of physical education teachers. The Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) holds yearly meetings and keeps its members updated through its Website (<http://www.lasierra.edu/sdahpera/>), which also features information about how to join its mem-

ber listserv. Other important resources are the Seventh-day Adventist physical education curriculum materials such as: *North American Division Curriculum Guide: Physical Education K-12*, *Teacher Resource Manual – Elementary Section (K-8)*, and *Teacher Resource Manual – Secondary Section (9-12)*.³¹ Free online resources for physical education can be downloaded from CIRCLE (<http://circle.adventist.org>).³² These materials have been carefully constructed and screened to provide

excellent resources for all Adventist physical education teachers.

Risk Management Issues

As alluded to previously, one important focus of physical education is risk management. Table 3 includes safety recommendations for the physical education teacher.

In the United States, the most prominent organization for physical

Table 3

Managing Risk: Safety Recommendations in Physical Education

Physical activity is a high-risk endeavor. The following are recommended ways to reduce risk:

Scan the environment: Look for any hazards that may cause injury, such as wet surfaces, standing equipment in the playing area (e.g., volleyball standards), loose clothing or bags on the floor, uneven surfaces, and weather hazards (e.g., heat, lightning).

High-risk sports: Identify the riskiest sports and take extra steps to manage risk or remove them from the curriculum. These include gymnastics, dodge ball, flag football, softball, and contact sports.

Playground safety: Ensure that the playground is free of debris or other unsafe conditions. The National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI) endorses Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) who can examine playgrounds. In addition, further safety resources are provided at <http://www.nrpa.org/playgroundsafety>.

Provide constant supervision: Direct supervision of students by the physical education teacher is paramount at all times. Even when giving individual instruction, the teacher should position himself or herself so that all students in the class are visible. The gym or playing field must never be left unsupervised.

Don't play with students: While it is good to model physical activity and students like to have teachers participate, instructors should avoid doing this. The maturity and skill level disparity between teacher and student creates a

potentially harmful situation, even if the teacher and student are of similar size and strength. In the event a student is injured by a teacher (e.g., colliding with a player or throwing a ball that strikes a student), the decision to participate will be difficult to defend, especially if a lawsuit ensues.

Attractive nuisances: These are equipment and facilities that attract people (outside of class use) and can cause personal injuries. Examples include soccer goals (young people like to swing on them), batting cages, gymnastic vaults, playground equipment, swimming pools, weight-lifting equipment, and treadmills.³³ Take steps to prevent unauthorized access to these items.

Transportation liability: Be sure to establish, in advance, clear policies for transporting students in official school vehicles. Contracting with transportation services is preferable to disburse liability. A teacher should never transport students in his or her own vehicle, since most personal vehicle insurance policies do not cover work-related accidents.

Building skills: Ensure that students master fundamental skills before progressing to activities requiring more-advanced skills, especially in high-risk sports.

Equipment inspection and replacement: Establish a regular schedule for inspecting and replacing or reconditioning equipment.

Match players appropriately: Match players for maturity, strength, and size during sports and games, especially those that involve contact.

education professionals is the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD), within which is the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). Both organizations provide excellent professional resources and annual conferences for physical educators (see <http://www.aahperd.org>).

Of particular importance are the NASPE physical education standards and ICHPER-SD's "International Standards for Physical Education and Sport for School Children" (see Table 4). These are very important guidelines for teachers to follow in structuring a proper physical education program.

Summary

Because of the importance of physical activity in a healthy lifestyle, physical education should receive more attention in Seventh-day Adventist schools. Implementing the new physical education paradigm lays the groundwork for lifelong fitness and enjoyment of physical activity, helps combat obesity and other diseases linked to a sedentary lifestyle, and will improve students' quality of life. ☺



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Table 4

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Standards

Physical activity is critical to the development and maintenance of good health. The goal of physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

A physically educated person:

Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Standard 2: Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as

they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Standard 4: Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.

Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.

Standard 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.³⁴

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Movement-Righ

The ABC's and 1, 2, 3's of Physical Activity for the Young Child

In today's technology-driven society, children often sit for hours in front of some type of screen (e.g., computer, TV, video game), exercising only their fingers as they manipulate the computer keyboard, remote control, or game controller. This sedentary lifestyle contributes to the growing problem of childhood obesity. Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that 17 percent of all children and adolescents in the United States are obese, which is nearly three times the rate of just a generation ago.¹ Specifically, the prevalence of obesity in the U.S. over the past three decades has increased from 5 percent to 10.4 percent for children aged 2 to 5 years, from 6.5 percent to 19.6 percent for youth aged 6 to 11 years, and from 5.0 percent to 18.1 percent in 12- to 19-year-olds.² Childhood obesity has been identified as an emerging worldwide public health concern in low- and middle-income countries as well, especially in urban environments. In 2010, more than 42 million children under 5 years of age were estimated to be overweight,³ with nearly 35 million living in developing countries. Children and adolescents who are obese are more likely to become obese adults and to have a host of health and psychological problems, including high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, asthma, and poor self-esteem.⁴

What can educators do to combat this childhood obesity epidemic? One of the most effective ways to address this serious health challenge is to ensure that youth receive adequate amounts of daily physical activity while at school. Current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services state that school-aged youth should participate *daily* in at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity that is developmentally appropriate, enjoyable, and features a variety

of activities that improve heart function and strengthen muscles and bones.⁵ Similar physical activity guidelines for children 5 to 17 years of age have been established by the World Health Organization.⁶

Physical Activity During the School Day

Activity time during the school day should combine unstructured free play (which could take place during recess) and structured physical activity, where the teacher leads children through planned movement sequences. On playgrounds at recess time, one sees a variety of different activity patterns. Groups of students run, play tag, or chase a ball, while others quietly engage in creative play with toys or other objects. This contrast in physical activity levels is a primary reason why at least half of the school-day activity time should be planned and led by the teacher. Weaving structured physical activity into the school day ensures that all students participate in activities that will increase their caloric expenditure, challenge their cardiovascular system, and improve their musculoskeletal function.

Movement Guidelines and Sample Activities

The majority of Seventh-day Adventist church schools in the North American Division (NAD) are small, with one- and two-teacher schools being quite common. Even schools with larger enrollments have multigrade classrooms, combining two or three grades. In more populated areas, schools may have a certified physical education teacher on staff, but this is often not the case. Consequently, classroom teachers have the primary responsibility for providing quality physical-education experiences for their students.

While the thought of preparing lesson plans may seem over-

BY DEBORAH H. MORGAN and DON W. MORGAN

From the Start

whelming for teachers with little or no background in physical education or sports, they can design quality programs and activity experiences for their students using the basic principles described in this article. Sample activities are also provided to help students develop fundamental movement skills and enhance their physical fitness.

Principle No. 1: Provide Frequent Opportunities for Young Children to Improve Basic Locomotor Skills

Rationale. With younger children, it is important to lay a solid foundation of basic locomotor capability before adding more complex motor skills to their movement repertoire. Most children are very comfortable walking and running and can perform these skills automatically. Consequently, the teacher should provide ample practice time to develop other locomotor skills (e.g., hopping, jumping, sliding, galloping, skipping, and leaping) so that children can perform all these motions correctly without concentrated effort. Since locomotor skills require the use of major muscle groups, these movements expend large amounts of calories, increase endurance, and strengthen muscles and bones.



Home Base Activity: Children "freeze" (hands on knees, eyes on the teacher) in their home bases while receiving instructions for the next series of locomotor movements.

Sample Activities

1. *Home Base Activities.* Provide a "home base" (hula hoop, softball base, cone, etc.) for each child from which he or she embarks to perform designated activities. Once a specific task is completed, the children hurry back to their individual home bases (e.g., "Gallop around the room and leap over five cones before returning to your home base").

2. *Secret Mission* (also called *Huddle and Go*). After the children gather around the teacher in a tight formation, he or she then issues a "secret mission," which must be accomplished be-

fore they return to the huddle (e.g., "When I say 'GO' run and touch two walls, jump in and out of two hula hoops, and hustle back to me as fast as you can").

3. *Flag Tag.* Each player has a flag tucked into the center back of his or her waistband (this may be an actual detached flagball flag or a sturdy 15-inch strip of cloth). At the teacher's signal, all children become "taggers" and try to pull out as many flags as possible without having their flags pulled. If a child's flag is pulled, he or she goes to a designated "Flag Aid" station, where the teacher replaces the flag so the child can rejoin the game, ensuring that play is continuous. The movements used while playing the game can be varied to enhance different aspects of locomotor skill development.

4. "Crossing the River"*
5. "Locomotor Movements and Freeze"*
6. "Galloping Lizzie"*

Principle No. 2: Include Physical Fitness Development Activities in Every Lesson

Rationale. As curricular requirements increase, school-age children spend more time sitting at their desks, with fewer opportunities to be physically active. Children also pursue more sedentary after-school activities than in the past. In order for children to meet minimum physical activity guidelines,⁷ schools must provide daily opportunities for students to engage in moderate and vigorous activities that elevate heart rate and breathing and strengthen large muscle groups. Activities in which all children are moving, with little or no standing or waiting time, are recommended.

Sample Activities That Increase Aerobic Fitness and Promote Muscular Development

1. *Animal Walks* (Pre-K through 2nd grade). Most of the common animal walks (e.g., crab walk, bunny hop, bear walk, seal walk, puppy dog walk) develop upper-body strength, since

they require the body weight to be partially supported by the arms.

2. *Wall-to-Wall or Line-to-Line Runs* (all ages). Interval-training runs (a set number of high-intensity sprints of a given distance or time, separated by short, timed rest periods) or continuous runs performed at a slower pace can help children improve cardiorespiratory function. Students who make gradual, systematic increases in the time spent running or distance covered over a nine-week period can achieve noticeable gains in aerobic fitness.



3. *Rope Jumping Techniques*. Jumping rope is another excellent way to develop cardiorespiratory endurance, and a skill that students of all ages can learn. For younger children (Pre-K through 1st grade), it is best to initially teach them to move forward while jumping.

This can be accomplished by instructing students to flip the rope overhead and then step through the rope after it hits the floor. For older children, success in stationary jumping will come relatively quickly; thus, the amount of time they can spend jumping without a rest can be increased more rapidly. An additional challenge for students in grades 3 through 8 is to see how many consecutive jumps they can perform without a miss. Children can be taught numerous footwork and rope-turning variations to help maintain their enthusiasm. The following are examples of "fancy footwork": hopscotch (alternating jumps with two feet and one foot), jumping jacks (alternating jumps with feet apart and together), downhill skier (side-to-side jumps with feet together), and the bell jump (alternating forward and backward jumps with the feet together while the rope continues to turn in the same direction). Various methods of turning the rope include: backwards, criss-cross, double turns with one jump, and the helicopter, where both handles are held in one hand and the rope is twirled with a stirring motion so it passes horizontally underfoot. Children also enjoy jumping rope while running.



Rope Jumping Techniques: Students of all ages enjoy jumping rope and can reap the benefits of improved cardiorespiratory function while having fun.



Parachute Activities: Children develop upper-body strength and endurance while shaking a parachute vigorously enough to send balls bouncing in the air.

4. *Parachute Activities* (Pre-K through 5th grade). Parachute play is an excellent way for children to develop upper-arm and shoulder-girdle strength. As they move in a circular pattern while gripping the parachute with one or both hands in an effort to keep the chute taut, the constant pulling motion strengthens the arms. Other parachute activities involve either shaking the chute to bounce balls or other light objects, or raising and lowering the parachute to various positions before releasing it into the air. These motions, performed for several minutes against the constant resistance provided by children executing similar movements on the opposite side of the chute, are great muscle builders for the upper body. Best of all, playing with the parachute is so much fun that children don't view the activities as being related to physical fitness development.

5. *Tag Games*. Children at every grade level enjoy variations of this popular game. It is important to select a tag game that engages as many children as possible in simultaneous movement. The younger children love tag games such as "Hill Dill" and "Skunk Tag," while all students enjoy "Everybody's It," "Hospital Tag," and "Chain Tag."*

Principle No. 3: Develop Hand-Eye Coordination Through the Use of Physical Activities That Employ Sport Manipulatives

Rationale. Sport manipulatives are objects like balls, hoops, Frisbees, bats, various types of paddles or racquets, and bean bags that can be held, caught, thrown, rolled, or used to strike an object, and are used in combination with fundamental locomotor activities to teach more complex motor skills. Once children are comfortable performing basic locomotor movements that require large muscle activity and can demonstrate that these skills have become nearly automatic, they are ready to start learning fine motor skills, which use smaller muscle groups and require the optical tracking

of an object as it leaves the hand or moves toward the body.

Typically, younger children will have difficulty performing some fine motor movements, and they may become discouraged by their inability to successfully accomplish a given task, especially ones that require catching or striking. Therefore, it is essential to integrate these movement patterns into the curriculum at the primary-grade levels. As young children practice a variety of activities using sport manipulatives, their level of expertise at simpler hand-eye motor tasks can rival that of older children. Exposure to a wide selection of activities requiring hand-eye coordination and ample quality practice time are key ingredients in ensuring success while playing with sport manipulatives.

Sample Activities That Incorporate Sport Manipulatives

1. *Beat-the-Clock Bowling*. In this cooperative continuous-action game, students work together to knock down a line of objects as quickly as possible. Preparation: Set up a line of 20 to 30 "bowling pins" (e.g., two-liter soda bottles partially filled with water) in the center of the playing area and station equal numbers of children behind restraining lines on both sides of

the pins. These lines may be marked with chalk or tape about 10 feet from either side of the pins (for older children, make the game more challenging by positioning the lines 15 to 20 feet away from the pins). Distribute an equal number of playground balls to both groups of children (some students will not begin the game holding a ball). As you start your timing device, give the students a signal to simultaneously roll their balls at the pins. Any student may retrieve a ball that ends up on his or her side of the playing area, but all students must stand behind their respective restraining lines while releasing the balls toward the pins. After the last pin has been knocked down, the total elapsed time is announced. If time permits, reposition the bottles and allow the children several more chances to better their collective elapsed time.

2. *Push Ball*. Use a large, lightweight ball. After dividing the class into two equal groups, have each team stand on “goal lines” about 30 to 40 feet apart. Select two or three children from each team to move to the center of the playing area, while the remaining children serve as goalies. The “middle” players from each team try to hit the ball across the opposing goal line to score a point. The ball may not be kicked, closely controlled, or dribbled—it can only be hit with the hand(s) while it is on the ground or in the air. At regular intervals, new children are rotated into the center area until everyone has had a chance to be an active player.

3. *Hot Foot (Beanbag Dodgeball)*. In a gymnasium or other room with a large open tile or wooden surface, divide the class into two equal teams. This game requires a center-dividing line and two restraining lines set at equal distances (10 to 15 feet) from the center line. Side boundaries may be necessary, depending on the size of the class and the available play space. An equal number of bean bags are laid out on each side of the center line while children stand on the restraining lines. At a designated signal, students run forward, grab a bean bag, retreat



Beat-the-Clock Bowling: Students work together to knock down all the “pins” as quickly as possible. This activity helps develop hand-eye coordination.

behind the restraining line, and throw the bag in such a manner that it slides along the floor. If the moving beanbag touches the foot of a child on the other team, that child must join the team that threw the beanbag. At a given stopping point, the team with the most children is declared the winner.

Conclusion

Quality physical education classes, in which all children actively participate and learn a variety of new skills, require careful forethought and planning. Classroom teachers with minimal prior knowledge of this subject area can learn how to create and implement a variety of physical activities for their students.

Lessons that incorporate the three basic principles discussed in this article can provide a solid foundation to teach movement skills to young children. When planning physical activities, teachers should also consider the following points:

A. *Keep activities simple*. Often, the simplest games are the most popular.

B. *Repetition, Repetition, Repetition!* Practice is the key to learning a new motor skill. To maintain the children’s interest, build on basic movement themes by including imaginative variations.

C. Whenever possible, provide one piece of equipment per child, especially when balls or jump ropes are being used. You can use several different types of balls (e.g., playground, soccer, basketball) as long as they are similar in size. Collect or make equipment out of "junk" (like the soda bottle bowling pins or the cloth strips for flag tag described earlier) to expand your school's physical education inventory.

D. Provide opportunities for every child to succeed. When the daily lesson plan contains several segments (e.g., warm-up activity, physical-fitness development, lesson focus, and culminating game), there is a greater chance that each child will be able to excel at one or more activities.

E. Emphasize physical fitness development in the daily program and make it FUN! You have an opportunity to make a positive impact on the current and future health of your students and to help them develop a love for physical activity.

F. Finish each physical education class on a happy note by ending with a game or group activity. This allows children to leave the class feeling good about themselves and their physical abilities.

A final reminder: Teachers should serve as role models for their students. Whether it's bringing a pair of tennis shoes to school so you can take a walk at the end of the day or telling your students about the bike ride you took with your family over the weekend, you can be a powerful promoter of a physically active lifestyle. Impromptu "study breaks," when students set aside their books long enough to take a walk or run around the gym or field, or even stand up in the classroom and stretch or walk in place, can also be very beneficial in releasing stress and preparing the mind for more learning.⁸

We live in a universe that is based on the principles of movement and activity. Without movement, life ceases to exist. As teachers, we can provide opportunities for students to experience the health benefits and intrinsic joy that come from living an active life by setting aside sufficient class time to engage in daily physical activity. By making physical activity an integral part of the classroom schedule, teachers can help their students live healthier lives, both now and in the future. ☺

* Descriptions of these games and other physical activities can be found in Dr. Deborah Morgan's *PE Lesson Plans for Small Schools*, which can be ordered by contacting the author at hawaiianspirit@msn.com. Dr. Morgan is also available to conduct conference- and union-wide physical education workshops and in-service training for classroom and physical education teachers.



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Using Pedometers

to Promote Physical Activity at School



Worldwide, at least 155 million school-age children are overweight or obese, according to estimates by the International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) of the World Health Organization (WHO).¹ Twenty-two million younger children are also affected, according to International Obesity Task Force global estimates based on WHO data for children less than 5 years of age.² In recent years, obesity levels have risen sharply around the globe.

The WHO defines "overweight" in adults as a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal to or more than 25, and "obesity" as a BMI equal to or more than 30.³ Body Mass Index is a simple ratio of weight to height, defined as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters.⁴ In children, measuring overweight and obesity is more difficult because there is no worldwide standard definition of childhood obesity. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established standards for age- and sex-specific percentiles for

BMI, based on the 2000 CDC Growth Charts and expert input.⁵ (See Figure 1 on page 19.)

Overweight and obesity can lead to serious health issues, including chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and some cancers,⁶ with the risk increasing as the BMI increases. Because overweight and obesity, as well as their related diseases, are largely preventable, childhood obesity issues should receive greater priority in schools.

BY ROBERT C. BENGE

Figure 1
Children's Body Mass Index (BMI)

<i>Percentiles</i>	<i>Classifications</i>
95th and above	Overweight
85th to 94th	At risk for overweight
6th to 84th	Normal
5th and below	Underweight

Well-researched data suggests that a lifestyle of regular daily physical activity and exercise may lessen and in some cases reverse obesity-related disease processes.⁷ Likewise, research suggests that physical inactivity in childhood can lead to a lifetime of health problems.

Because parents hear more warnings about the risks of their children's involvement in illegal behaviors, including ingestion of drugs and alcohol, they may not fully grasp the serious implications of overeating and a sedentary lifestyle. In the United States, obesity now rivals smoking as the nation's most expensive and deadly healthstyle-related problem. Each year, nearly 400,000 deaths are attributable to obesity, and the death toll is expected to rise.⁸ Virtually unknown in children and adolescents 10 years ago, Type 2 diabetes, an obesity-related illness, now accounts for almost 50 percent of new cases of the disease in some communities.⁹ Throughout the United States, physicians are noticing higher blood pressure levels for children and teenagers, and adolescents are increasingly suffering from health problems that were virtually nonexistent for that age level two decades ago.¹⁰

People are becoming fatter because of two factors—increased calorie intake and decreased physical activity.¹¹ Globally, people are consuming foods high in fat and sugar but low in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. Concurrently, there is a trend toward

decreased physical activity due to the sedentary nature of many types of work, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization.¹² In the United States and other developed countries, many children gain weight because they're spending too much time in front of the TV, computer, and video games and not enough time playing outdoors or being involved in physical education and sports. They are often surrounded by unhealthy eating choices at home, in the fast-food

restaurants in their communities, and even in school lunch programs.

Of the numerous studies of physical activity, almost all show a decline in activity levels as children progress to adulthood.¹³ The decline is so great that Rowland¹⁴ labeled adolescence as a risk factor for physical activity, and Sallis¹⁵ has estimated that during adolescence, girls' physical activity levels decline by 7.4 percent per year, while boys' decline by 2.7 percent.

Unfortunately, many school-aged children are not meeting the recommended physical-activity guidelines of at least 60 minutes or more per day engaged in appropriate activities, most of which should be spent in moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.¹⁶ Thus, the U.S. government has been urging more physical activity promotion programs for youth.¹⁷

The continued increase in overweight among children demands our attention and action. Because children

Things to Consider When Purchasing and Using a Pedometer¹⁸

1. Purchase a good-quality pedometer with a safety strap or leash so that if it becomes dislodged, it will not fall to the ground. Consult online evaluations to determine the best models.
2. Wear the pedometer in a horizontal position on the waistband or belt, directly above the center of your leg.
3. Treat the pedometer with care, as it is a sensitive instrument. It should not be shaken, thrown, dropped, or allowed to get wet.
4. Not all pedometers count steps accurately. If you suspect the pedometer is not measuring each footstep, reset it to "0," walk 100 steps, then check to see how close to that number of steps the pedometer displays.
5. A helpful feature is a reset button with a delay feature to prevent data from being inadvertently erased.¹⁹
6. More-expensive pedometers have added features like distance walked and calories burned, but studies have shown that pedometers are most accurate for counting steps, less accurate for measuring distance, and even less accurate for calculating calories burned.²⁰

spend most of their waking hours in school, if we want them to eat better and exercise more, that's the logical place to initiate change. The intervention described below reports on one physical educator's attempt to collaborate with classroom teachers in promoting physical activity.

Pedometer Monitoring

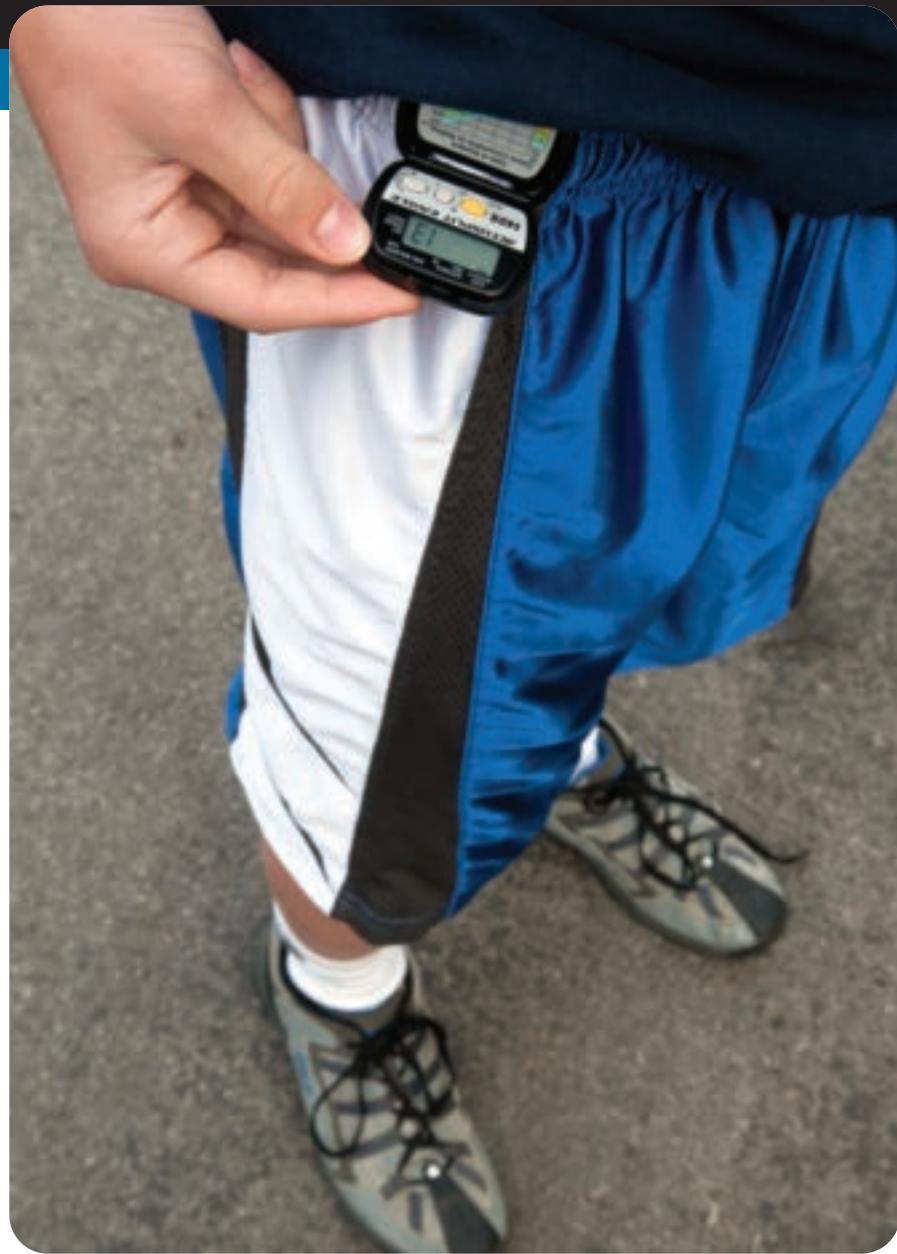
Recently, pedometers have become popular in promoting physical activity through daily step count monitoring.²¹ When the pedometer is attached to clothing near the hip, its internal mechanism moves up and down as the person walks, recording each step and calculating the distance walked.

Five teachers from four schools in the Gulf States Conference (which encompasses the states of Alabama and Mississippi as well as several counties in Florida) volunteered their classrooms to participate in a research study to determine the feasibility of classroom teachers using pedometers to promote student physical activity. The teachers were recruited to participate because they worked at schools that did not employ a physical-education specialist.

Forty-seven pupils in grades 4 to 9 at participating schools wore the Yamax Digi-Walker 140S pedometer²² for six weeks.

Because pedometers do not measure intensity of activity, students participating in the study were told to wear them during discretionary time (i.e., recess, free time, activity time, and physical education). The pedometers were collected and put away during the times when the children were doing seat work or were unlikely to be at least moderately active.

For the first week, to determine a baseline value for the daily average student step count, the children wore the pedometers without any teacher guidance regarding physical activity. The students were each given a one-page



form titled "School Step Count Log," on which they were asked to record their personal data each day.²³

For weeks two thru six, the students were encouraged to use strategies that the researchers had provided to the teachers to increase their physical activity above the baseline and then to calculate the daily average step count for the week. Finally, the pupils were asked to fill out a paper-and-pencil survey appraising their physical-activity habits.

Findings

The average step count during the baseline week was 3,993 ($sd = 1996$).

During subsequent weeks, the students' step count averages ranged between 3,859 ($sd = 2103.66$) and 5,171 ($sd = 2681.01$) steps. There was a significant increase in step counts for weeks four²⁴ and six²⁵ when compared with the baseline week. The data was also compared to the criterion value of 3,000 steps, which was chosen because it was possible for the 4th to 9th graders to complete this number of steps while at school. (Three thousand steps are equivalent to walking about 1.5 miles [2.41 km] and require about 20-25 minutes to accumulate.)²⁶

**Table 1
Favorite Spare Time Activities for Boys in Grades 7-9**

Percentage of Responses	Activity
22%	Computer/TV/video
22%	Team sport activities (i.e., basketball, football, baseball)
22%	Individual sports (i.e., bicycling, swimming, running)
18%	Extreme sports (i.e., skateboarding)
16%	Miscellaneous sedentary

**Table 2
Girls' Favorite Spare Time Activities (Grades 7-9)**

Percentage of Responses	Activity
56%	Miscellaneous sedentary activities (i.e., talking on the phone to friends, listening to music, practicing music, reading)
19%	TV/computer/video/movies
13%	Team sport activities (i.e., basketball, volleyball, softball)
7%	Individual sport activities
5%	Extreme sports

**Table 3
Students' Perceptions of Time Spent in Physical Activity**

Time Increment	Percentage Reported by Boys	Girls
More than 60 minutes	67%	10%
45-60 minutes	17%	30%
30-44 minutes	17%	40%
20-29 minutes	0%	10%
10-19 minutes	0%	10%
0-9 minutes	0%	0%

The results indicated a significant increase ($p < .01$) in the students' step counts for the baseline week and with each week of teacher intervention, when compared with the goal of 3,000 steps.

The researcher concluded that pedometers offer a unique, affordable, and practical way to teach, assess, and promote youth physical activity, and to help combat adolescent obesity.

Assessing Physical Activity

In addition to the pedometer study, students were asked to complete a survey pertaining to physical activity. Several of the responses were noteworthy. The survey revealed a huge difference between the genders in the types of favored free-time activities: For the boys in grades 7 to 9, 62 percent of the preferred activities involved physical activity (Table 1), in contrast with only 25 percent of the activities listed by the girls (Table 2).

Students were asked to indicate how much time they spent in strenuous physical pursuits (activities that made them breathe hard, get tired, or sweat) on most days of the week. Sixty-seven percent of the boys and 10 percent of the girls responded that they spent more than 60 minutes a day in physical activity (Table 3).

Students were also asked to indicate the things in their life that kept them from being physically active. The top three barriers to being physically active reported by these students were school-work (71 percent), lack of time (53 percent), and weather (40 percent).

Significance of the Study

The classroom teacher is in a key position to educate students on health issues and to encourage healthy behavior. This is especially true in many Adventist elementary schools, since few of them employ a physical education specialist. Unless classroom teachers take the initiative and schedule some type of organized activity, pupils will be left on their

own to plan activities and develop attitudes about physical activity. Working with resource people such as physical educators or allied-health professionals, classroom teachers can find ways to get their pupils involved in more physical activity during the school day.

Every school should deliver comprehensive health programs that provide and promote physical activity. The curricula should provide youngsters with enjoyable experiences that build exercise self-efficacy, provide significant amounts of physical activity, and promote the value of lifelong participation in active pursuits. The following items should be given careful attention by all those who come into contact with children in Adventist schools:

Classroom teachers in the Seventh-day Adventist school system need to get their pupils moving to prepare them for a lifetime of physical activity.

Females especially need to be encouraged to be physically active. Girls enjoy the social aspect of physical activity, so they are more likely to participate in group activities if their friends do so also. Because they are less attracted to competitive activities than their male peers, they can be encouraged to participate in group fitness activities such as aerobics, indoor cycling or spinning, pilates mat training, stability ball training, and group strength training. Both boys and girls will enjoy outdoor adventure activities such as walking, hiking and backpacking, rock climbing, canoeing, and kayaking.

The Body Mass Index (BMI) for Age should be calculated for each pupil at the beginning of each school year.²⁷ This ensures that positive and negative trends in children's body weight are measured and monitored.

Physical education specialists need to partner with the church's elementary schools to serve as physical activity coordinators, intervention organizers, and resource persons.²⁸



InStep for Life Program

Schools should consider adapting a walking program such as the "InStep for Life" physical-activity initiative of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The program promotes regular physical activity through walking and monitoring progress with a pedometer. Its updated Website, <http://www.adventistsinstepforlife.org>, offers free logging and tracking of step counts.

Teachers need to embed instruction relating topics of physical activity, nutrition, and weight control topics in the curriculum. They will find it helpful to invite experts like nutritionists and exercise coaches to make presentations to their classes.

Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity

Physical education specialists can partner with classroom teachers to encourage adoption of the following strategies to increase physical activity among pupils:

- Integrate walking into the school day. Ellen White states, “When the weather will permit all who can possibly do so ought to walk in the open air every day, summer and winter. . . . A walk, even in winter, would be more beneficial to the health than all the medicine the doctors may prescribe.”²⁹
- Organize extracurricular activities that engage pupils in sustained exercise.
- Use the school’s closed-circuit television system or DVD players to broadcast exercise videos.
- Develop partnerships with media, businesses, and civic organizations to conduct ongoing activities.
- Create new or develop existing physical activity spaces at school.
- Develop a coordinated school health model that emphasizes increased physical activity for students and staff.

Conclusion

The rationale for promoting physical activity in children and youth is well established. During childhood and adolescence, young people develop attitudes and habits relating to health-related behaviors, including physical activity, that can carry over into adulthood. Teaching and modeling an active lifestyle is a vital role for classroom teachers to play in enhancing the long-term health and well being of their students. ☺



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Safety First:

Creating a Safe Environment at School



When parents enroll their children in school, they are entrusting their most precious possessions to other people. They expect each child to be properly supervised and provided with an environment that is both safe and conducive to learning and development. Thus, every Adventist teacher and educational administrator must implement strategies that will enhance their students' safety at school.

Supervision at School

In my experience as a physical education teacher and coach,

many "accidents" and injuries could have been prevented by proper supervision of students. Too often, students are left with little or no supervision during recess, as well as before and after school. In his 2009 article, "Playground Supervision: A Big Responsibility,"¹ Matt Comai wrote that 45 percent of injuries to young children happen at school, and he cited the National Playground Safety Institute estimate that 44 percent of playground injuries occur because of improper use of equipment or lack of supervision.

During the entire time students are on school grounds, they are the responsibility of the institution and must be adequately

BY EVERTON M. SOUZA

supervised. This means that before school, during activity time and lunch, and after school, a responsible adult trained in first aid and knowledgeable about school policies must be present to monitor what students are doing. If the supervising adult cannot visually monitor all students present, additional supervision should be added. According to Kent P. Hymel and the Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, "The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that supervisory neglect occurs whenever a caregiver's supervisory decisions or behaviors place a child in his or her care at significant ongoing risk for physical, emotional, or psychological harm."² Although accidental injuries cannot always be prevented, their frequency may be significantly reduced by providing adequate supervision.

In the Classroom

Many schools have never been able to afford a full-time physical education teacher, and now during hard economic times, some schools are struggling to find funds to retain the ones they have. This is especially true at the elementary level. In these cases, classroom teachers must provide physical education activities. Unfortunately, because many classroom teachers have had inadequate or limited training in this area, physical education class turns into unstructured free time for students and a chance to do a little grading or prepare for another class for the teacher. The combination of lack of teacher training and no structured planning for physical education results in unnecessary injuries and an unbalanced education for students.

Students must be provided with appropriate age-based activities in a structured setting so they can develop better coordination and learn the necessary skills for fitness or sports activities in which they choose to engage. Allowing students to participate in activities without the necessary background, knowledge, and skills can create the potential for injuries.

In a controlled environment, using age-based and activity-specific drills, young students should be taught the rules and techniques required for each activity. For many activities like team sports, lead-up exercises and games can provide practice in the skills required to safely play the sport, and reduce the incidence and severity of injuries. Instructors should receive formal training in designing activities that require similar movements to those used in the sport, yet without the physical contact between opposing players. These activities should be led by a physical education teacher when available, or by the regular class teacher or a community volunteer who has had formal classwork in physical education and holds first-aid certification.

Having worked with high school-age and college students for more than a decade as a teacher and coach, I'm often amazed at the lack of physical skills possessed by many students enrolled in physical education classes. When students haven't acquired the proper skills to actively and safely engage in required activities, injuries can occur.

As attested to in physical education standards, skill development is gradual and progressive. Students learn a physical skill and gradually build on it to the point of mastery. If students fail to acquire necessary skills at an early age, mastery of physical education skills and concepts becomes more and more difficult to achieve. It is important for the instructor to identify students who lack such skills by assessing their prior knowledge and abilities, and providing activities that enable them to acquire the skills to engage in age-appropriate activities.

Many resources are available to help teachers assess students' physical skills and create lesson plans. National and state standards as well as physical education frameworks have been developed in the United States, and with a variety of resources, can be found online at <http://www.aahperd.org>.

Benefits of a Physical Fitness-Based Curriculum

In recent years, in order to give students more opportunities to achieve higher standards in physical fitness, I have changed from a sports-based to a physical fitness-based curriculum. A positive side-effect of this change has been a decrease in injuries.

In the physical fitness-based curriculum, students engage in mostly non-contact activities, which reduce the incidence of injuries that would likely occur during contact sports. The new policies have also enhanced student participation and significantly diminished off-task behavior. Students can perform most of these activities indoors when the gymnasium is available, so the program is not affected by weather.

Environment and Weather

The environment and weather play a significant role in determining the outdoor activities in which students can engage safely during recess or physical education classes. Where I live, in southern California, the two biggest environmental hazards that adversely affect our program's daily activities are pollution and heat. In other parts of the world, cold weather, wind, dust, ice, precipitation, and thunderstorms can also create a variety of safety problems.

When pollution levels are high enough to be considered unhealthy or other factors make it dangerous or impractical to exercise outdoors, it is wise to move recess and physical education classes indoors to the gymnasium/multi-purpose room. If indoor space is not available, the school may be able to work out an arrangement to use a nearby health club or exercise center.

Exposure to unhealthy levels of air pollution during participation in vigorous activity can lead to injury or disease. According to the study "Asthma in Exercising Children Exposed to Ozone: A Cohort Study" published by Rob McConnell, et al., the "incidence of new diagnoses of asthma is associated with heavy exercise in communities with high concentrations of ozone, thus, air pollution and outdoor exercise could contribute to the development of asthma in children."³ The study

Figure 1

Protective Gear for Sports⁶

- *Correct shoes for each sport*
- *Helmets that are appropriate to the sport for bicycling, football, hockey, baseball and softball, skating, skiing, and snowboarding*
- *Eye protection: facemasks or shields for football, ice hockey, and for catchers and batters in softball and baseball; goggles for soccer, basketball, racquet sports, snowboarding, and baseball and softball while fielding*
- *Pads/guards (shin, knee, elbow, wrist, chest, shoulder, hip, thigh) as needed for many types of sports but particularly ones involving contact, such as hockey, inline skating, skateboarding, etc.*
- *Mouth guards for contact sports or where head injury is a risk, such as football, basketball, hockey, and volleyball*
- *Athletic supporter/cup for males engaged in contact sports and running*

led to a warning about participation in sports in smoggy areas.

Other factors that can adversely affect physical activities are heat and cold. Possible extremes in temperature must be considered when planning daily activities. When temperatures rise above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius), students should abstain from outdoor activities that would make it difficult for them to maintain proper body core temperature. Hyperthermia and loss of hydration through sweat can lead to heat exhaustion.

Cold weather and conditions such as rain, ice, snow, and wind can also adversely affect students' ability to exercise safely. In the article

"Know How to Keep Safe, Healthy in Cold Weather," Teddi Dineley Johnson wrote that "About 600 people die each year in the United States from hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Symptoms include shivering, confusion, memory loss, drowsiness and slurred speech."⁴

Based on figures gathered by the National Safety Council, frostbite is the most common injury caused by exposure to extreme cold.⁵ Because children lose heat from their skin at a faster rate than adults, they are at greater risk for frostbite, especially when cold temperatures are exacerbated by high winds. Wearing a hat, gloves, and appropriate footwear will reduce the incidence of frostbite.

Even when temperatures are less extreme but factors such as high humidity and wind gusts exist, it is better to err on the side of caution and abstain from outdoor activity. If a gymnasium or classroom is available, the lesson plan can be modified for that environment. Bad weather days can provide a great time to review rules and techniques, or to schedule quizzes.

Facilities and Equipment

The school's facilities and equipment will determine, in large part, the activities in which students can participate. Buildings, playgrounds, and playing fields should be inspected and updated systematically to ensure a safe environment for users. Meagan Francis wrote, "According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), each year more than 200,000 children visit hospital emergency rooms with injuries sustained

while playing on playground equipment."⁷ In light of these horrifying statistics, schools should make every effort to provide students with a safe and age-appropriate playing area. Information about safe surfaces for play areas can be found at <http://AAHPERD.com>. Young children need an area or structure whose surface will adequately absorb the impact of falls that occur, thereby preventing many fractures and sprains.

When indoor facilities are used for recess, sports, and physical education activities, the safety of the area and the equipment being used must be constantly monitored. Gymnasium floors can pose many risks

for students because the facilities are often used for multiple purposes, and the floors can get quite dirty. It is essential that the surface be cleaned at least daily and checked for moisture prior to each use. Whether the floor is wood, tile, concrete, or carpet, it should be inspected periodically to ensure that it is free of hazards. If hazards are discovered that cannot be immediately repaired, they must be clearly marked and the immediate area blocked off.

When students engage in high-impact activities such as gymnastics and acrobatics, mats should be used to provide proper padding and to absorb the impact of falls. Each mat should be a minimum of 1½ inches or thicker for tumbling and high-impact activities, with additional landing cushions strategically placed.

In addition, any obstacle that students might run into without being able to quickly slow down or stop should be padded. Examples include equipment poles, walls, and areas directly below goals and baskets. By not assigning running activities where a child is required to stop close to a wall or an unpadded object, teachers can reduce the occurrence of injuries.

Many schools lack the funds to build a gymnasium and must rely on outdoor areas for play, physical education, and sports activities. Thorough inspection of facilities and equipment should be a priority and should be performed regularly prior to use, and a report should be filed for future reference. After inspecting the playing fields, track, and concrete areas for a variety of potential hazards such as debris, damage caused by vandalism, and holes created by rodents and weather, make

sure that repairs and clean-up are done promptly.

In addition, during equipment inspection, attention must be given to structural integrity and to metal corrosion that could render the equipment unsafe to use. Wood structures, such as bleacher seats, benches, tables, poles, and posts, should be inspected for rot, termite damage, and loose parts. Damaged equipment should be replaced or removed to avoid possible injury.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities

Having coached team sports from elementary through college level, I cannot stress enough the need for proper training and equipment in schools. So often I see student athletes suffering from injuries caused from burnout, improper training techniques, and lack of protective equipment.

Because of the competitive nature of various sports, many students choose to sign up for multiple seasons during the school year. They may play for one or more teams at the school and community, or in multiple sports. This raises the question: "How much is too much?" When our school concluded its most recent volleyball season, many seniors who had been a part of the program for four years immediately dropped from the sport.

At the exit interviews, I heard one common theme from many of the seniors. They were burned out from the demands that sports participation had put on their bodies. A few mentioned they had lost interest in pursuing the sport any further after playing for so many years. As a coach, I'm saddened to see athletes lose their passion for playing a sport they have enjoyed, but in such cases this is understandable. In the same way God created the Sabbath to give us a day of rest, athletes need the off season to give their bodies a chance to recover and to regain their desire to play.

Burnout can also be reduced and even prevented through proper training and coaching during the playing season. It is also important for parents to have an understanding of the physical and psychological strains that young athletes face when participating in sports programs. Participation in sports should be fun and have a positive impact on their overall experience.

As a coach, my ultimate goal is to push student athletes to their physical limits, hoping to help them grow and improve. But I also have a clear understanding of how and when to train, and when to rest. In the article "Avoid Overtraining in Young Athletes," Matt Rearick, John Creasy, and Jim Buriak describe overtraining as a physiological and/or psychological state that may occur in response to insufficient recovery following overload.⁸ When training regimens consistently exceed what athletes can handle, participants begin to experience the physiological and psychological effects of overtraining.

In our school's program, we work on physical conditioning daily, but also attempt to alternate the workouts so as not to stress

the same muscle groups two days in a row. God created our bodies in such a way that they can heal themselves if given the chance, and the workouts should be designed for that to happen.

Equipment—Safety and Proper Use

Acquiring the appropriate equipment and using it correctly and consistently are also extremely important for safe participation in sports. Using proper age-appropriate equipment can reduce injuries and significantly temper their severity when they do occur. I cannot stress enough the importance of using helmets for sports and other high-risk activities. According to statistics from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, helmet use has been estimated to reduce head injury risk by 85 percent for bicycle riders.⁹

Erik Brady wrote in *USA Today* that athletes "suffered one concussion for every 10,000 times they got on a playing field in 1997; that number rose to five per 10,000 chances in 2008, according to research published in the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*."¹⁰ These numbers include only sports-related injuries.

Protective equipment should always be used in activities that involve the use of equipment such as, but not limited to, bicycles, skateboards, scooters, skates, and their variations. Schools should purchase and provide students with recommended safety equipment for physical education classes and school-sponsored games and activities. (See Figure 1.) Examples include the use of soccer shin guards, baseball helmets as well as gloves, and appropriate face masks for goalies and catchers.

Also, instructors should constantly take safety into consideration in their planning and teach children how to safely engage in a variety of activities. Keeping fans off playing fields and encouraging children to stand behind backstops to prevent being hit by stray balls or bats when playing baseball are examples of a safety strategy. The use of proper safety equipment and strategies can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of sports-related injuries.

Closing Comments

Children are a gift from God. As Christian educators, our goal should be to keep safe the children God and parents have entrusted to us. Adventist schools must provide a safe and appropriate environment for students to grow and develop into active members of God's church and society. This involves providing proper supervision and making sure teachers are trained to offer lesson plans that take into account all aspects of safety, including facilities and environmental conditions. Schools should also provide safety gear for physical education and sports, and offer extracurricular opportunities with appropriate training and equipment. By stressing "safety first," many injuries can be avoided, and even when they do occur, their severity will be significantly reduced. ☩



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Helpful Resources for Physical Education & Health

Websites:

AISFL	Adventists InStep for Life: http://www.adventistsinstepforlife.org
AEF	Adventist Education Forum: http://edforum.adventist.org
AAHPERD	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance: http://www.aahperd.org
CIRCLE	Curriculum and Instruction Resource Center Linking Educators: http://circle.adventist.org
Healthy People 2020	http://www.healthypeople.gov
NFSHA	National Federation of State High School Associations: http://www.nfhs.org
NIRSA	National Intramural-Recreational Sport Association: http://www.nirsa.org
NSCA	National Strength and Conditioning Association: http://nsca-lift.org
PE Central	http://www.pecentral.org
PE Links 4 U	http://www.pelinks4u.org
SDA-HPERA	Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association: http://www.lasierra.edu/sdahpera

Safety:

Dougherty, Neil J. *Principles of Safety in Physical Education and Sport* (Reston, Va.: National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2009). ISBN: 978-0-88314-934-8

Movement and the Brain:

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Stressed-Out Faculty May Need a NEWSTART!



No other group has as great an opportunity to influence the future of the world as teachers, who have the honor and privilege of motivating and preparing the future leaders of society and the church. This is an awesome responsibility!

Teachers are expected to possess exceptional knowledge and skills in the areas they teach; to motivate students to learn the subject matter (sometimes with very limited resources); to work extended hours outside of the traditional nine-to-five day; to persevere despite lack of respect from students and

A study finds that Seventh-day Adventist faculty who regularly practice NEWSTART healthy lifestyle principles have decreased levels of work-related stress.

the public, low salaries, and lack of recognition; and to balance professional roles and personal responsibilities competently (e.g., teaching, advising students, serving on academic committees, scholarly research, publishing, and community service).

Christian educators have the additional responsibility of being spiritual role models for their students. Consequently, their dispositions and characters are continuously being evaluated by students, parents, and constituents.¹

A life filled with pressures such as those described above can lead to excessive stress, and ultimately burnout.² Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.³ It may occur when teachers have not taken the time and effort necessary to insulate themselves from the excessive demands of their profession. Consequently, educators must strive to maintain balance

BY GEORGE ASHLEY AND MALCOLM CORT

(homeostasis) in order to relieve or cope with job-related stress.⁴ With an abundance of literature supporting the relentless pressures that educators face, the authors of this article made the decision to explore potential strategies that might help reduce faculty stress.

For the purpose of this article, stress is defined as “an adaptive response that is a consequence of any action, situation, and/or event that places special demands upon the individual.”⁵

Types of Stressors Faced by Faculty

Literature dealing with stress in academia suggests that faculty must contend with six basic categories of stress: time restraints, inadequate rewards and recognition, lack of influence with administrative leadership or departmental chairs, unpleasant student interaction, conflicts relating to professional identity (acceptance and productivity within the profession), and increasing expectations without additional resources or compensation.⁶

How Faculty Tend to Deal With Stress

Walter Gmelch's study of faculty from all disciplines found that “... 60 percent of the total stress in their lives came from their work.”⁷ His study also suggested that it is the faculty members' perceptions of their own ability to perform efficiently in different work situations (e.g., low demand, optimum demand, high demand) that will determine their degree of stress.⁸ These perceptions are based on the faculty members' personal strategies and the filtering systems they use to manage stress (e.g., teaching experience, ability to multitask, support from family and friends). The greater the proficiency of the filtering system, the less stress the teachers were likely to experience.⁹ In other words, when evaluating stressors, if people believe they have the necessary resources to cope, they actually experience less stress.

For more than 100 years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has advocated the adoption of specific health principles as a means for living a healthy, wholistic, reduced stress lifestyle.

Seventh-day Adventists and Stress Management

Selye argues that no specific stress-reduction formula can be applied to everyone.¹⁰ However, for more than 100 years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has advocated the adoption of specific health principles as a means for living a healthy, wholistic, reduced stress lifestyle.¹¹ These health principles can be summarized using the acronym NEW-START (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in divine power).¹² Studies of various aspects of the Adventist lifestyle have revealed that members who practice the church's health principles live longer and have a lower risk of chronic diseases (e.g., cancer, heart disease, and lung disease).¹³ Can this regimen also help Adventist teachers and educational administrators to prevent stress and deal with it more effectively?

The NEWSTART Adventist Faculty Study

For many years, Adventists have believed that following the tenets of the NEWSTART lifestyle will help to improve one's overall health.¹⁴ Do these principles also provide a coping mechanism for stress? This article is based on the primary author's (Ashley's) original exploratory study,¹⁵ which examined the association between application of some of the key Seventh-day Adventist healthy lifestyle tenets and faculty stress.

Significance of the Study

Adventists are known for embracing a healthy lifestyle, which is part of the church's doctrinal beliefs. However, there is a dearth of research assessing the effects of these practices on the stress levels of church members.

The study's findings are significant for a number of reasons:

- They provide baseline information on health practices used by faculty at the participating institutions;
- They reveal baseline information on the effectiveness of this model as a means of faculty stress reduction;
- They provide information about health strategies that educators can use to create and maintain a healthy faculty team;
- Being able to reduce the cost of subsidizing health care for employees due to improved health among faculty will benefit school budgets.

Methodology

Ashley's original study utilized a survey research design. A three-part survey was used to collect the data. This instrument consisted of the Faculty Stress Index (FSI),¹⁶ a validated stress measurement tool; the self-reporting NEWSTART questionnaire, which was designed with the assistance of authoritative informants¹⁷ and a demographic questionnaire. The study sample was drawn from full-time faculty at three of the 14 Adventist institutions of higher

learning in North America: Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan), Oakwood University (Huntsville, Alabama), and Southern Adventist University (Collegedale, Tennessee). Of the 382 surveys administered, 124 (32.4 percent) were returned and subjected to multiple regression analyses to assess the effects of faculty members' practice of the NEWSTART health principles on their stress levels. All variables were coded so that higher scores accurately represent positive practices within the NEWSTART regimen.

Findings of the Research

Statistical analysis revealed that the practice of NEWSTART had a significant effect on two of the five subscales of the FSI: reward and recognition; and time constraints. (Departmental influence, professional identity, and student interaction were the three other subscales in the FSI instrument.)¹⁸ The reward and recognition dimension of stress includes: (1) not feeling valued by academic colleagues and administrators; (2) the effect of salary decreases and lack of pay raises, or not receiving funds for research; and (3) the fear of inadequate retirement benefits.¹⁹ The time constraints category addressed the stress levels produced by the need to incorporate multiple tasks or activities within the teachers' professional lives, such as meetings, clerical work, counseling students, telephone calls, and visitor interruptions.²⁰

Faculty members who practiced NEWSTART health principles reported as much as two-thirds less stress in the areas of reward and recognition (62 percent) and time constraints (66 percent), when compared to their survey counterparts who did not apply the principles.

While the mechanisms by which this health regimen influences the stress categories of reward and recognition, and time constraints among fac-

ulty are unclear, the results were unequivocal. Faculty who practiced the components of the NEWSTART regimen (e.g., eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, enjoying the sunshine and fresh outdoor air, obtaining adequate amounts of rest, and maintaining an active devotional life) reported lower levels of stress in the areas of reward and recognition needs, and the pressures of time constraints.

How Can Adventist Institutions Apply the Principles Learned From This Study?

While the subjects of this sample were higher education faculty, the authors believe the principles are applicable to teachers at the elementary and secondary levels as well. The time has come for our educational institutions to take a more proactive approach in im-

plementing an Adventist lifestyle by providing practical avenues through which faculty, staff, and students can actively participate in healthful practices.

One Seventh-day Adventist institution²¹ in North America created a health and wellness program for the faculty and staff in 2003. The process was launched with the appointment of a Health and Wellness Committee by the institution's administrator, who is an avid health and wellness supporter. The committee was made up of faculty and staff with experience and training in the health-care field (e.g., nursing, health management). The group was assigned to develop a coordinated program that would encourage faculty and staff to engage in the principles of NEWSTART.

The committee developed a comprehensive health program that would not negatively affect the school's daily



The Eight Basic NEWSTART Principles

routine, while at the same time providing a realistic health regime in which all employees could participate. The program included periodic risk assessments by health professionals at no charge to the participants, as well as monthly nutrition and wellness workshops. Participants were required to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical exercise four times per week (written documentation was required).

All participants were rewarded with discounts in their individual or family health-insurance premiums. Anecdotal data indicate that the results of the program have been very successful: From 2003 to 2011, faculty participants who were interviewed indicated that they had improved overall health, felt better about their jobs, and had a noticeable reduction in their annual health-care costs, which in turn helped to reduce the university's health-care expenditures for these employees.

The administrators at this university have also played a major role in this initiative by providing annual discounted health premiums to employees who successfully complete the program.

The school's Health and Wellness Committee continues to seek creative ways to increase participation, such as special prizes for attendance and participation in health fairs or sponsored programs, increasing health-care premium discounts, and providing workshops on topics of interest. This is just one example of a growing number of Adventist academic institutions that are recognizing the importance of taking the initiative to implement their own health and wellness programs.

Why Faculty Members Need to Get Involved in NEWSTART

Living a longer, healthier life is an important goal for every faculty member and administrator in Adventist schools. Ellen G. White contends that the taxing nature of teachers' responsibilities requires them to make a

Due to the length limitations of this article, an in-depth discussion of NEWSTART has not been provided. However, a great deal of information is available to explain each concept (see suggestions at the conclusion of this article). The following illustrations provide a short description of each of the NEWSTART principles:

- *Nutrition* – Taking time to understand what constitutes a balanced and nutritious diet and implementing this plan on a consistent basis.
- *Exercise* – Implementing a regular program that ideally includes exercising for at least 30 minutes three or four times per week.
- *Water* – Drinking a generous amount of water each day (six to eight glasses).
- *Sunshine* – Ensuring that the body receives a moderate amount of sunshine (at least 15 minutes per day).
- *Temperance* – Abstaining from substances/behaviors that are harmful to one's health (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs), and moderate use of anything that is considered beneficial to health (e.g., eating, work, rest).
- *Air* – Ensuring that one is constantly exposed to an abundant supply of fresh, pure air (oxygen).
- *Rest* – Obtaining adequate rest and sleep each day (six to seven hours minimum), and taking time to rest from secular work one day per week (Sabbath).
- *Trust in Divine Power* – Maintaining a daily personal relationship with God and trusting in His ability to provide help in coping with life's challenges.²²

special effort "to preserve vigor and freshness."²³ Thus, when educators are dealing with academic-related stressors, if they cannot avoid the stressors, they should do everything possible to control them. Vernon Foster suggests that people can realize a six-year increase in life expectancy as well as a reduction in their health-care costs by simply following the NEWSTART lifestyle regime.²⁴

The study revealed that knowledge and belief in the NEWSTART health principles do not necessarily equate to integration by Adventist educators. The purpose of this article is not just to help Adventist teachers understand key faculty stressors, but more importantly, to encourage them to put their beliefs into practice by adopting attitudes and

habits that positively affect their body, mind, and soul. Here are some key principles that can be used as motivation to kick start a NEWSTART healthy lifestyle regime.

1. *Don't Feel Guilty About Spending Time on Yourself* – Educators sacrifice countless hours outside of the traditional work day to ensure that their work responsibilities are completed. Keep in mind that you are a valuable component of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:28). Therefore, investing time to recharge your physical, mental, and spiritual batteries is vital in order for you to function optimally on the job. Even Jesus, the Master Teacher, often took time to re-energize Himself after a long day of toil and labor (Matthew 14:13, 23; John 6:15).
2. *Recommit Yourself Each Day* – When planning your daily list of tasks, make

NEWSTART implementation a top priority.

3. *Always Be Conscious of Your Inactivity* – It can be easy to sit or stand in the same position for extended periods of time. Make a concerted effort to stretch and walk around intermittently. Rather than sitting through your entire lunch break, go for a short walk after eating.

4. *Turn Off Your Television and Limit Computer Time* – Television and the Internet are the biggest obstacles to lifestyle adjustment success. Practice temperance by limiting television and computer time, using the hours gained to refresh your body and soul.

5. *Get Other Faculty Involved* – Put health and wellness topics on the agenda for discussion in faculty meetings as part of team building and self-nurture. Discuss creative ways that teachers and staff can encourage one another to maintain a healthy lifestyle (e.g., taking time to walk with a partner before or after school). Join a fitness club or mutual activity that you all enjoy. The fact that you are doing it as a group will serve as a motivating influence for you to continue your participation. Don't forget to celebrate and reward yourselves for individual and group achievements (e.g., weight-loss and fitness goals).

6. *Get Regular Health Check-ups* – Visit your doctor and dentist periodically to ensure that you are maintaining optimum health.

7. *Start TODAY* – Make a conscious decision to begin implementing the principles of NEWSTART *today!*

For more detailed information on NEWSTART and other healthy lifestyle resources, please consult the following Websites and resources:

<http://www.newstart.com/>
<http://www.drnedley.com/>
<http://creationhealthbreakthrough.com/>
<http://www.floridahospital.com/AboutUs/Mission/CreationHealth.aspx>



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The Seventh- day Adventist **PHYSICAL EDUCATION PYRAMID**

Currently, far too many people worldwide choose a sedentary lifestyle and have unhealthful eating habits. These two behaviors have produced substantial increases in the obesity rates in many parts of the world.¹ It used to be assumed that obesity was a problem only for wealthy countries, but today, obesity rates are increasing more rapidly in some developing nations than in more affluent areas.²

Throughout the world, the most significant factor driving increased levels of obesity has been reductions in the amount of daily physical activity. For adults, predisposing factors include the increased incidence of sedentary jobs, the use of motorized methods of transportation, use of labor-saving devices in the home, and reduced physical exertion due to leisure-time activities such as television watching and computer use.³

This trend is not limited to adults. Childhood obesity has also become an international public health concern.⁴ Obesity in children and youth is occurring in many nations, particularly in urban areas, where the prevalence of energy-dense cheap food and inactivity contribute to this trend.⁵

This increase in obesity within the younger segments of the population is particularly troubling because it exacerbates young people's susceptibility to chronic health-related problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and possibly cancer.⁶ This is one of the reasons that researchers

in the *New England Journal of Medicine* projected that for the first time in nearly a century, the younger generation may have a lower life expectancy than their parents.⁷

Public health officials recognize the importance of interventions in school settings because educating young people can prevent health problems in adulthood. Quality physical education classes can provide students with regular opportunities to experience physical activity while helping them to develop skill sets, aptitudes, and appreciation for a wide array of activities that they may continue to enjoy throughout their lives.

However, these desirable outcomes do not occur magically. Teachers must *intentionally* plan developmentally appropriate activities for their students using the principles of readiness⁸ and progression⁹; and administrators must make the commitment to hire people with formal training in physical education or ensure that teachers complete the appropriate collegiate courses during the summer or online. Providing students with "free time" or an extra recess period, or simply overseeing some

BY ROBERT K. THOMAS

games or exercises in an informal “toss out the ball” approach to physical education will not effectively meet this serious challenge to society at large, nor will it ensure that the needs of individual students are met, whether of the physically gifted or young people in need of help in the areas of fitness, coordination, and motor skills.

A Shift of Focus

Students who are particularly gifted in psychomotor skills often take advantage of the opportunity to further develop their abilities by joining gymnastic and/or sports teams. These groups receive public acclaim through exhibitions and officiated events where spectators come to cheer



Figure 1. The Seventh-day Adventist Physical Education Pyramid

them on. Even in informal games, they are the first picked and most likely to enhance their skills through practice and exercise.

It is understandable that at times the physical education teacher's focus may shift toward the school's “elite” gymnastic or sport teams. After all, the community sees and appreciates these types of programs, and they are believed to build school spirit. Unfortunately, this reorientation of priorities usually results in the teacher's investing less thought, effort, and planning in regular physical education classes, thereby depriving those students of the full focus of their instructor.

This “shift of focus” from classes that enroll every student to programs that focus on after-school team sports for elite student athletes was a topic of concern and discussion for attendees at three recent national Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) conventions. The resulting consensus: *It is the primary duty of all*

physical education teachers to ensure that each of their students has ample opportunity to engage in planned, healthy, physical activity; and that instructors should investigate a variety of methods for accomplishing this goal.

Another outcome of these convention discussions was the formalization of the *Seventh-day Adventist Physical Education Pyramid*¹⁰ that was presented in 2008 at the national SDA-HPERA convention in Texas.

Historical Context

The first physical education majors to graduate from a Seventh-day Adventist college were Robert Monti Reynolds and Helen Ward at Walla Walla College (College Place, Washington)

in 1949.¹¹ Many other Adventist colleges added physical education and health majors over the next few years, and over time, the number of physical education professionals in the church continued to grow.

Professional growth opportunities for college physical educators were sponsored by the North American Division (NAD) at the summer sessions for Adventist college teachers in 1957, 1961, 1965, 1968, and 1976. By the mid-1970s, most Adventist college teachers were attending discipline-specific national conventions, so the summer sessions were discontinued. Whenever possible, Adventist physical education teachers met informally in the evenings when they attended the national convention for the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. While the AAHPERD meetings provided good information and networking opportunities during the day, attendees desired presentations specifically related to the values of the Ad-



uality physical education classes . . .

should equip students with skill sets and provide positive experiences to foster higher levels of physical activity while they are in school, in order for this to become a lifelong habit.

ventist educational system.

In the fall of 1980, Rudolf (Rudy) Klimes, the NAD's health and temperance director, visited the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University (Riverside, California) to discuss with Walt Hamerslough, then

chair of the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Department of the college, Klimes' goals to promote healthy lifestyle education. Upon learning that physical educators from many Adventist colleges attended the national AAHPERD convention each spring, Klimes offered to have his office sponsor a dinner meeting for convention attendees at the next meeting in Boston.

Thus, on April 14, 1981, 31 Adventist elementary, secondary, and college-level physical educators from across the U.S. met with Klimes to discuss issues relating to health and physical education and to explore the possibility of forming a professional organization.¹² During these meetings, attendees voted to organize the Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA).

While there are several professional organizations in the fields of health and physical education, it is the integration of a spiritual dimension in its professional efforts that makes the SDA-HPERA distinctive.¹³ The mission statement for the SDA-HPERA provides a sense of what the organization deems important:

"Our mission is to promote: health and physical education in the context of contemporary Seventh-day Adventism; the role that regular physical activity plays in the pursuit of lifelong health and well-being; athletics in a Christ-centered lifestyle; the integration of faith and learning; and the development of the whole person—mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially."¹⁴

The SDA-HPERA mission provides context for the development of the *Seventh-day Adventist Physical Education Pyramid*, which provides a visual characterization of the priorities of the organization (see Figure 1 on page 35).

Quality physical education classes comprise the foundational tier of the Seventh-day Adventist Physical Education Pyramid for elementary and secondary schools. Providing quality physical education within the K-12 curriculum means offering developmentally appropriate classes for all students. These classes should equip students with skill sets and provide positive experiences to foster higher levels of physical activity while they are in school, in order for this to become a lifelong habit.

The second tier involves offering a quality intramural pro-

gram as a part of the school's extracurricular activities for all students who elect to participate. Intramural activities provide opportunities for students to participate with their schoolmates in organized sports activities at a recreational level.

These activities, which are scheduled at lunchtime or after school and are supervised by the physical education teacher, help students develop friendships and social skills that will serve them in a wide array of life situations and encourage them to be physically active.

Once these two foundational levels have been solidly established and are effectively functioning, the next tier provides a third opportunity. Tier 3 is where the physical education teacher serves as facilitator for the school, local churches, and the community to promote physical activity opportunities outside school hours. Examples may be as simple as opening the gym once per week for community basketball games, sponsoring physical activities for "family time," or promoting healthy eating patterns by holding nutrition seminars. The school may also partner with other health-related organizations in the community for more extensive programming if desired.

If the school has the necessary financial, facility, and personnel resources *and* believes an athletic program would contribute to its mission, then it may wish to add the fourth tier of the pyramid; interscholastic sports programs or gymnastics activities to help physically gifted students develop their talents. These programs have the potential for significant positive outcomes but must be intentionally counter-cultural and consistent with the mission and values of the school and its constituents in order to ensure that the program is distinctive and effective. An important resource that schools may utilize to help facilitate these goals is the *Guidelines for Seventh-day Adventist Athletics*¹⁵ published by the SDA-HPERA in 2003.

Challenges

Regrettably, in some schools, the "pyramid" may actually be upside down—athletics have become the primary focus in the physical portion of the body/mind/spirit triad. Concern about this trend was voiced again at the March 2011 SDA-HPERA national convention.

Some administrators and community members have thought that in the era of tight school budgets, athletics programs will generate constituent enthusiasm and support more effectively than physical education classes, which are part of the

regular curriculum. As a result, quality physical education for all of their students has been sacrificed on the altar of athletics.

Another challenge is the occasional practice by Adventist K-12 schools of hiring uncertified persons rather than trained professionals to teach physical education. This concern was recognized by the SDA-HPERA by a formal action at their national convention in Kettering, Ohio, in 2001¹⁶ and by a letter¹⁷ sent to union directors of education in the North American Division offering suggestions for providing quality physical education to students in K-12 schools.

Unfortunately, the general education curriculum within Adventist higher education demonstrates a body-mind-spirit triangle that is more accurately depicted by a very narrow isosceles triangle with the narrow side representing the “body” portion rather than an equilateral triangle with each side the same length. We need to increase the opportunities for all college students to be more physically fit and active to help ensure that their body temple supports rather than detracts from their mental and spiritual faculties. Here, too, Adventist schools have the opportunity to “turn students on” to lifelong fitness activities.

Opportunity

Following the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Physical Education Pyramid will ensure that Adventist physical education programs effectively help students to reduce their susceptibility to the obesity epidemic that is sweeping our world and equip them for a lifestyle that includes a variety of sports and fitness activities. The Pyramid provides both a philosophical foundation for and practical assistance in designing Adventist school curricula by ensuring that ALL students are enrolled in high-quality physical education classes.

If the school has met the basic goals (the bottom three pyramid tiers) and has the additional financial and human resources; and if it has leaders who subscribe to the principles outlined in the *Guidelines for Seventh-day Adventist Athletics*, the board and principal may elect to begin or to continue a sports program as a value-added extracurricular activity. However, if the three foundational levels are not in place, the school administration must choose the good of the many over the enhancement of the few and not offer after-school varsity and team sports until they are able to provide the foundational levels of the pyramid to their students and community. ☺



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Is There a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Sport?

On Planet Earth, competition is an inescapable fact of life. From the nursery to the nursing home, in politics, business, school, sports, and everyday conversation, human beings compete with one another. We compete for grades, jobs, social position, friendship, money, and power—and we compete to win in a variety of sports. The virtues and vices of competition have been debated for centuries, and even today, people find experts to support their conclusions about whether competition is beneficial or detrimental.

The numerous benefits derived from athletics have been well documented—physical skills development, lessons of virtue, character development, self-discipline, teamwork, self-confidence, cooperation, etc. When participated in correctly, sports can provide an enjoyable and beneficial experience. The joy of collaborating with other players toward a shared goal, during which everyone has to give of him-

self or herself, the camaraderie that develops when people work together, the deep friendships that result—these things cannot be explained to someone who has never been a member of a team. They must be experienced.

A majority of Adventist academies and colleges/universities, at least in the North American Division, engage in interschool sports. No doubt their sponsors and participants believe that players and fans are receiving a positive experience from their participation, and that the program is beneficial to the institution.

Unfortunately, there are numerous problems with sports as practiced in many educational programs. The standard model of sports, with its philosophy of “winning at all costs,” “our team

is the greatest,” “nobody remembers a loser,” “cheating is wrong only if you get caught,” and boorish behavior by spectators, combined with unethical inducements and payments to players, granting academic credit for “fluff” courses and work done by others so that athletes can retain their eligibility, which one sees in high school, college, and university programs, must not be the model for our schools. Adventist sports programs must adhere to a higher standard, or they have no excuse to exist.¹

A Looking Glass

While certainly not the norm when the church’s schools were first established, sports have become commonplace today. Church members are influenced by the culture of the general population in which they live, so it should not come as a surprise that in nations that are obsessed with football, soccer, baseball, and/or hockey, church members will desire sports programs. While we say we want our schools to be

BY WALTER S. HAMERSLOUGH

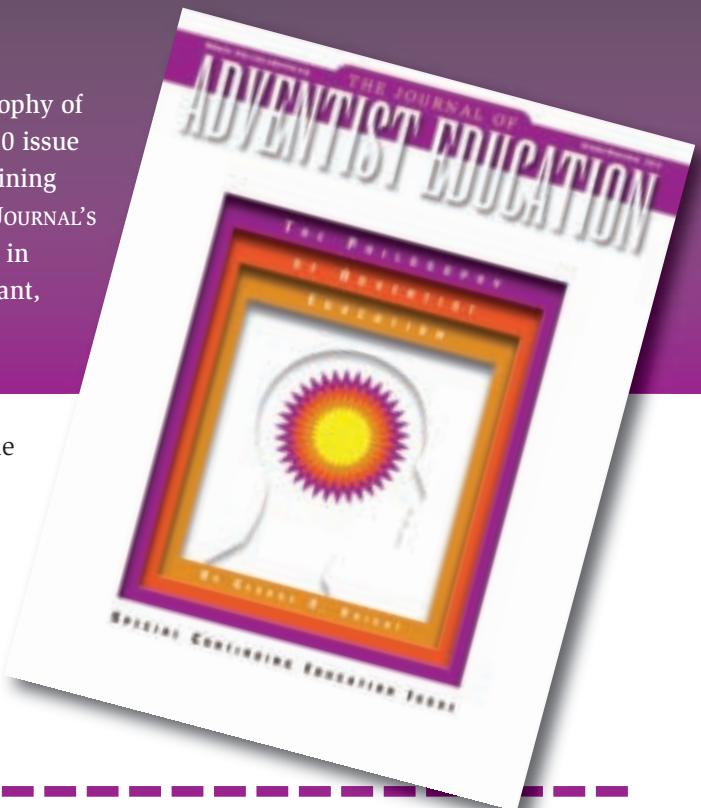
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different from other schools, we also want them to be like other schools. Quite a dichotomy!

Sport provides a looking glass into the souls of individuals and of societies.² Plato observed that you can discover more about a person during one hour of play than a year of conversation.³ Many sport philosophers suggest that sport is a suspension of the real—that is, we enter another world when the whistle blows, and we exit from it when the last play ends.⁴ On the contrary, I believe that sport is an extension and integral component of life itself. We work, we eat, we shop, we recreate, we worship, we play sports. These are all part of the fabric of our lives.

But for Christians, the motivating force, the behavior, and the place these things have in one's life are all the same. Some require more energy and evoke more emotion than others, but they all should be governed by one guiding principle—the life and example of Jesus Christ. If we are who we say we are, *Adventist*—those looking forward to the soon return of our Lord—then our lives must reflect this keen anticipation, and we should, with the help of the Holy Spirit, be perfecting our temperament so that we may more fully reflect Christ's character. I do not think that in the judgment God will say, "Oh, that unchristian behavior was just part of a game, so We won't count that." No! Every act and thought will be taken into consideration. What will be revealed where the events in our lives are displayed, including athletic contests? I believe we will long to hit the erase button for a number of these.

Bad behavior in sports events is in the news on an almost daily basis. For instance, there are riots in soccer matches throughout the world, recruiting violations in college basketball, brawls breaking out during football and hockey games, Little League parents beating up coaches and umpires, and athletes cheating or taking illegal

drugs to enhance their performance. Fortunately, we rarely have any such episodes in Adventist sports programs. Should we feel smug that such actions don't usually occur at our sporting events?

Fundamental Questions

The real questions we should be asking are more fundamental: *What should Seventh-day Adventist Christian sport be like? What should motivate our programs? How should our programs be conducted? What is their rationale? How do they fit into the mission of our institutions?*

Aristotle defined good character as the life of right conduct—in relation to other persons and to one's self.⁵ Virtuous behavior and caring about others is something that is learned and cultivated. The church's prophetic voice has defined the purpose of Adventist education thus: "To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul that the divine purpose in His creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life."⁶

Most people think that teaching algebra, English, and physical fitness is the object of education! While these things are important, as Christian educators, our task extends far beyond merely ensuring that students acquire job skills. "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one."⁷ "Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today."⁸ These words were penned around 1900. Surely their application is even more urgent and compelling today.

Cooperating in Character Development

God has ordained three primary institutions for the development and fostering of moral character—the church, the home, and the school.⁹ With regard to moral reasoning in sport, the church says little, except to advise that we not engage in it. In my mind, this is an unrealistic stance to take in the modern world, as sporting events occur everywhere, from small-town parks to huge stadiums. Sport is ubiquitous in society. It pervades newspapers, radio, and television. Adventists are spectators, fans, and players. To say that we should be celibate with regard to sport is unrealistic.

The second institution for the development of character is the home. As I observe the behavior of young men and women, I fear that most Adventist homes offer little advice on moral behavior in sports. Watching parents at games or listening to them talk about sports contests and then comparing their behavior with the teachings of Christ often makes me wonder: How can anyone who is waiting for the Lord's soon return act like that? Oh, people say, "That's OK because it's just a game." If that's true, we are in trouble. Who will train the youth about moral behavior in this area of life? It appears that the church's last hope for the development of moral behavior in regard to athletics lies with the school. If teachers fail in this regard, the same and worse moral transgressions will be perpetuated. We must not fall into the trap of saying, "I'm not paid to teach character; I'm just the physical education teacher/coach."

Higher Expectations

So what should we expect from players and spectators at school sporting events and professional games? Of course, we expect students to strive for excellence. We want our teams to be the best they can be and to perform well. But do our practice sessions look any

Significant Questions Relating to Sports Programs:

different from those at public schools? Do we pray with our teams? Do we have worship and read the Bible with them? Do we talk to our players about their relationship with Christ? Do we let them know that their salvation is more important than victories? Is their behavior and character becoming more Christlike? Are we helping them become better human beings? Can we say at the end of a season that they, and we, have a closer relationship with God?

Or . . . do we pace up and down the sidelines and yell at the officials when they make a poor call? Do we promote rough play and “pushing the limits” of the rules? Do our players help the opponents up when they are knocked down? What do we do when one of our players commits a flagrant foul? In general, is the behavior of our coaches, teachers, and athletes such that we would be happy to invite Christ to attend our schools’ games?

And what about the spectators? Generally, this is the area with the biggest problem. Of course, we want fans to cheer enthusiastically and have a good time. But does this occur in a positive manner? Do the spectators heckle and throw items onto the field when the other team scores? Do they yell at the official when they do not agree with a call? Do fans respond in a derogatory manner to an unfair act by the opposition? Do they attempt to distract an opponent shooting a free throw or up at bat? (For suggestions on dealing with spectators, see the article by Andrew Adams and Ruth Brand on page 44 of this issue.)

I dream of the time when opponents and officials will say: “At Seventh-day

- Is the spirit of Christ manifest in our games?
- Is God glorified by this activity and by my actions?
- What impressions are we making on our players, our school family, and our community—and on our opponents?
- Do others see our players and spectators as people who represent Christ—or do they see a spirit of antagonism, strife, anger, backbiting, and self-superiority?
- Do the school’s sports-related activities make a positive difference in the lives of our young people?
- Do these programs advance the mission of our institution?

Adventist schools, games are different. The athletes play hard, but they are really well-mannered. They never put down their opponents; they even compliment outstanding plays. The crowd does not jeer when a player from the visiting team is shooting a free throw. And even if the official makes a poor call, they don’t yell at him. It’s really a pleasure to play or to officiate there. They are good people. Maybe there is something to their religion.”

How to Change Behavior

Changing the behavior of athletes and spectators is difficult. After all, for years they have seen what goes on in the professional sports on TV. It takes a dedicated coaching staff, a committed athletic director, and an administration consistently working together to bring about change. Chapels, worship talks, articles in the school newspaper, and debriefing after games—all these can provide reminders of the ideal to which we aspire. And we must have supervision at games to remind us when we forget. The process is called—*education!*

I have had the responsibility for subduing unacceptable spectator noise

in our school’s gymnasium. It is not a popular or pleasant task. In fact, I abhor it. But I detest the behavior even more.

I have wondered at times if I am living in a fantasy world with regard to my philosophy of Christian sports behavior. Is it really possible to expect this kind of conduct? When I have explained what I think should occur, so many people say, “Oh, that’s just the way basketball is played; you can’t change that.” If it is not possible to expect courteous Christian behavior from players, coaches, and spectators, then the only option left is to remove varsity sports from our schools. If they do not contribute toward the development of character and preparing students and spectators for Christ’s soon coming, then they have no place in our institutions. They are nothing but one of Satan’s clever tools to distract us from our mission.

In everything we do, the question must be asked, “Can Christ be in this activity? Can this be a positive, growing experience for students, the school, and for the community?” Each institution will have to examine this carefully.

The Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) supports the inclusion of athletics in church schools. Because sport holds such a prominent place in our world, we have a responsibility to examine its role and to educate our youth concerning the proper place of sport in our lives. What an awesome responsibility!

The SDA-HPERA, in its document, *Guidelines for Athletics in Seventh-day Adventist Institutions*,¹⁰ has articulated what this professional organization believes Seventh-day Adventist athletics should look like. It is not inevitable

that sport resemble what occurs in popular venues. The next few paragraphs are taken from the *Guidelines* to provide a summary of the thoughts and principles found therein.

"There is a Christian model of sport, and we have not totally fulfilled the mission of Seventh-day Adventist education unless we teach this model to administrators, players, parents, and spectators" (p. 2).

"Sport can result in a growing, maturing, and self-actualizing experience. However, Christian ethics must control sport. We have a responsibility to help build noble characters in students, to educate their minds, and to motivate their spirits to make our society better by applying core values to real-life situations. It is far more important to develop the whole person than to win such a comparatively insignificant thing as a game. The greatest value of sport can be its ability to enhance the character and elevate the ethics of participants and spectators" (p. 2).

"The mandate of Seventh-day Adventist schools is to educate the whole person academically, spiritually, physically, and socially A liberal education helps one become more fully human and better able to integrate religious principles into life There is no dichotomy between what is secular and what is sacred.

"Playing a musical instrument, repairing an automobile, playing a game, or preaching a sermon are all religious activities. God does not ask us only to honor Him on the Sabbath but to reflect His image everyday in whatever we do" (p. 2).

"We should weave biblical principles into all we say and do. We must cooperate with God in our acts of play as well as in our acts of Christian work" (p. 3).

"A Christian athlete should be a better-behaved athlete for being Christian. While Christians do not necessarily perform better or win more games, they are motivated by different principles and

approach activities differently from non-Christians. A Christian should be truer to the spirit of sport and to the fulfilling of its essence" (p. 3).

"The Christian spectator should also be better. Christians should be different from typical fans. They should relate to opponents and officials in the same way they would wish to be treated. Christian institutions include sport to help their graduates participate better in the culture of their society while honoring God" (p. 3).

Mission Statement

"The mission of the athletic program is to provide a setting in which students can experience the joy of movement through the medium of sport in a Seventh-day

Adventist, Christ-centered environment as they engage in activities that promote the development of the whole person physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and socially" (p. 3).

Teacher-Coaches

"The success of the entire athletic program hinges on the proper selection of qualified, dedicated, and committed teacher-coaches. Above all else, the teacher-coach must be a person who values and supports the philosophy of the organization that will mold

young athletes into players who emulate Christ on and off the court or field. Coaches must teach players by both word and example and must convince them that the philosophy of winning at



La Sierra University Sportsmanship Code¹¹

(For Coaches, Athletes & Spectators)

(Basketball)

- At La Sierra University, we consider all athletic opponents as *invited guests* and treat them with the courtesy due our friends and guests.
- We show respect for officials and their decisions. We do not hiss or boo a player or official.
- We applaud opponents who make good plays or show good sportsmanship. We do not utter abusive or irritating remarks from the sidelines or bleachers.
- We seek to win by fair, lawful means, according to the *spirit* of the rules. We do not attempt to rattle an opposing player, such as a player preparing to shoot a free throw.
- We follow the Golden Rule.
- We ask every *player* and *fan* to do their very best throughout this event to help us in living up to this code.

Thank you!

all cost or by sacrificing principle is not honorable or desirable" (p. 5).

The *Guidelines* have sections on (1) Administration: recruiting, Sabbath travel, and game policy; (2) Teacher-Coaches: qualifications, responsibilities, and behavior; (3) Student-Athletes: expectations for behavior on and off the court/field and spiritual growth opportunities; (4) Spectators: code of conduct and behavior, education; (5) Hospitality for the Visiting Team; and (6) Assessment of the Program.

Shirl Hoffman, emeritus professor at the University of North Carolina, has written an excellent article discussing steps that Christians might take to change their approach to sport. He says: "If sport played by Christians is to have a distinctive slant—especially sport sponsored by Christian institutions—it won't simply be sport done well or played without egregious violations of the sporting code. It will be sport creatively structured and specifically crafted to express the joy of the faith."¹²

It has been said that sportsmanship is a journey rather than a destination. Likewise, our job in a Christian school is to help students advance on their journey in spiritual living. First, we must have a personal relationship with God. We must be closely connected with the Source in order to be proper role models and promote Christlike behavior.

Assessing What's Important

The end of all things is near. Christ is coming soon. We need to think about it, we need to pray for it, we need to plan for it. "There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity."¹³ All that we do is recorded in heaven. We must account for all our words and actions in the judgment. At that time, will it be important that you had a winning record or that you won the league champi-

onship? Will God ask you about these things in the judgment? I think not. He will ask: "Have you brought your players closer to Me? Have you taught them how to be a follower of the Master?"

Yes, there is a Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of sport. It's unique, stringent, and difficult to follow. However, to create the right climate in our schools, it is mandatory that it be followed. The *Guidelines* must be studied and pursued along with a diligent study of God's Word and the works of His messenger as we seek to develop a deeper understanding of our role in hastening His soon return.

It is my prayer that coaches will provide leadership in the task of helping the church reflect Christ and to reveal His love through our athletic programs. ☩



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- Even though the church proclaimed in its widely circulated 24-page pamphlet, *Guidelines for Activities With Elements of Competition* (1976), that Seventh-day Adventists oppose an organized program of inter-organizational athletics for their schools, institutions, and churches, interschool sports have existed at least since the early 1960s. As interschool sports became more widespread, the Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association

(SDA-HPERA) asked church leaders to study the issue to: (1) determine if, with carefully articulated guidelines and controls set in place, interschool sports could be sanctioned by the church; or (2) to develop a policy prohibiting interschool sports and establish means to enforce the policy. Two committees (North American Division Committee on the Role of Interschool Sports in Seventh-day Adventist Academies and Colleges and an international committee) both voted to reaffirm the 1976 *Guidelines* and to raise them to the level of policy, but included a statement that allowed exceptions for schools to engage in interschool sports. The Executive Committee of the General Conference accepted the committees' first recommendation but rejected the exception statement and recommended that interschool sports not be permitted in Adventist educational institutions. This note became policy at the 1989 Annual Council. To date, based on my long-time involvement with SDA-HPERA, I am not aware of any school that has dropped its program due to directives from the General Conference.

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11. Courtesy of La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

12. Shirl J. Hoffman, "Sports Fanatics," *Christianity Today* 54:2 (February 2010):24.

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Promoting Positive

SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR



How can Adventist schools teach and enforce appropriate spectator behavior at athletic events when bad behavior seems to be the norm for professional and amateur sports?

On March 31, 2011, San Francisco Giants fan Bryan Stow, a 42-year-old paramedic and father of two, suffered brain injuries from a savage beating in a parking lot outside Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles by two men in Dodgers gear, following a baseball game between the rival teams.

Six spectators were wounded when a gunman opened fire during half-time at an adult basketball league playoff game in Philadelphia on August 22, 2011.

When traveling with his team, Barry Bonds, a high-scoring professional baseball player, was accused of steroid use and faced booing crowds, some of them throwing syringes.

Football (soccer) hooliganism, or unruly behavior by association football club fans, ranges from shouts and small-scale fistfights and disturbances to brawls, vandalism, and intimida-

tion, and even huge riots that result in hooligans, police, and bystanders being killed, and riot police having to intervene with tear gas, armored vehicles, and water cannons. Wikipedia has documented football hooliganism in 45 countries in Europe, Great Britain, Asia, North and South America, and Australia.¹

Media reports and the sports pages of national and regional newspapers regularly feature headlines that describe out-of-control fans causing injuries and even death. It takes just one enraged fan's reckless or violent act to start a stampede or a riot that results in others being injured or killed. These tragedies occur throughout the world during baseball, cricket, soccer, and hockey games—and even children's sports events.

Every sport has rules and regulations governing play, but appropriate behaviors, attitudes, and manners are more difficult to codify. Yet some standards of behavior are universally assumed. "Following the rules" probably tops the list. Fair play is expected. Teamwork is valued. Generally, coaches encourage players to behave civilly in both victory and defeat, though

BY ANDREW ADAMS with RUTH REDDING BRAND

some have failed to model these principles themselves. Certainly within the Christian community, these values should be embraced and practiced, for they parallel the Golden Rule.

Unfortunately, most of these principles and guidelines have been developed for the *players* of various sports. Despite recurring reports of wild, dangerous, and occasionally deadly behavior by spectators, little is said or written concerning appropriate spectator behavior. The subject needs to be addressed by sports enthusiasts in general, and by Seventh-day Adventists in particular. Our educational administrators and boards must develop and maintain guidelines outlining the type of day-to-day behavior expected by those who represent Christ. Kindness, self-control, and courtesy should mark the behavior of Christians whether at a sporting event or in church.

Because sport plays a significant role in modern society, it should be discussed in Adventist classrooms, gymnasiums, and playing fields. The wholistic philosophy of Adventist education, which encompasses the entire school program—both curricular and co-curricular—challenges young people to embrace and embody high standards throughout their lives, so it is imperative that students learn that the same principles apply on the sporting field as in all other areas of life. Coaches and athletic directors must endeavor to instill the highest standards and demand appropriate behavior in class and on the playing field. But what can they do about spectators?

Answers to that question become increasingly important as one considers recent spectator behavior like that described at the beginning of this article. It is small wonder that children growing up watching televised accounts of unbecoming spectator behavior (and the above incidents are beyond “unbecoming”) unconsciously absorb the same careless attitude toward their own behavior. Boiling seems like the normal thing to do, and throwing objects at opponents seems excusable. Children watching this sort of behavior grow up to become tomorrow’s spectators; and it falls to Seventh-day Adventist educators, particularly coaches and athletic directors, to counteract today’s tolerance of offensive, often dangerous, spectator conduct.

Codifying Good Sportsmanship

So how do we define proper behavior for Seventh-day Adventist spectators, and how can our institutions promote and ensure acceptable behavior at sporting events? (Similar policies would be applicable to cultural events, programs, and lectures.) Several schools have developed comprehensive statements addressing this and similar questions for coaches, athletes, and spectators through sportsmanship codes. Basic to such documents is respect for every human being. Visiting teams and officials deserve to be treated as guests. One does not verbally irritate or abuse guests, much less attack them physically—either directly or indirectly. Guests, too, are to behave civilly and are affirmed for their good behavior. In sports, this means that fans should applaud a good play and good sportsmanship and, with the players, demonstrate

grace and courtesy under pressure.

One does expect that spectators will cheer for their favorite team. That has always been an integral part of sports. But favoring one team does not entitle spectators to insult the competing team or its players and coach. Certainly the denigration of any person or group is inconsistent with Christ’s words to “do to others as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12, NRSV)² within the context of the event. In fact, those words define the ideal behavior of Christian athletes and spectators in every area of life.

As a student athlete, I enjoyed playing at home and with my school basketball team. I loved to hear the songs, chants of “Defense, Defense,” and the whole student body, parents, and other fans cheering for our team. Their enthusiasm gave me great doses of adrenaline and inspired me to do my best individually and as a member of the team. The better we played, the louder the cheers.

Away games, however, were different. I had a hard time concentrating because each time we played our biggest rival, fans for both schools would try to outdo one another by distracting the opposing players during free throws. Sometimes verbal altercations or even physical fights broke out during or after the game. Instead of healthy competitive relationships, the encounters produced active and mutual disdain.

As I look back on these experiences, I cannot recall that, as students, we were ever addressed regarding proper spectator behavior. Now, as an athletic coach myself, I have become acutely aware of the need for this kind of training.

Rules for Acceptable Spectator Behavior

Acceptable spectator behavior does vary from sport to sport. For example, spectators are expected to cheer throughout a basketball game, as are those attending hockey games. Hockey fans even throw their hats onto the ice after a player scores three goals in one game in celebration of the “hat trick.” The rules for spectator behavior in golf, however, are quite different. Spectators are required to maintain absolute silence while the golfer tees off. And during tennis matches, spectators are supposed to cheer only between rallies. During some sporting events, if patrons are too loud, they are addressed publicly, and if they continue their rowdiness, they are asked to leave the stadium.

Perhaps at this point it’s useful to remember that spectators are usually referred to as “fans,” a word derived from *fanatic*, which describes someone whose devotion to a cause, person, or issue is uncritical and marked by frenzied enthusiasm. That description hardly fits the Christian ideal of a person who, even in times of excitement, is rational, fair, and self-controlled. Yet sadly, one can often observe spectator behavior at games between parochial schools that could more aptly be termed “fanatical” than “Christian.”

The following scenario is far too typical: Bitter rivals square off on the basketball court. The game seesaws back and forth. The home crowd is waving banners, cheering for their team,

and booing the opponents. The visiting team steals the ball. A lone player runs down the court for a lay-up. Suddenly, a hand flies out of nowhere to block the shot. The crowd erupts in cheers and laughter. The referee blows his whistle and declares a foul. Then the crowd begins to boo the referee. The coach is upset and argues the call. The fouled opponent is sent to the free-throw line, and the first shot goes up amid screams and attempts by fans to distract the shooter. The ball circles the rim, then falls to the floor. The home crowd cheers.

As an adult and athletic director, I recognize the importance of cheering, but only in a way that is fair and wholesome. During a recent home basketball game against a local Christian school, someone in the crowd yelled inappropriate comments about our opponents. It offended the parents of the players and maligned our school's reputation. A letter of apology was written to the other school by our school's principal, and the basketball coach and athletic director addressed the student body at a general assembly, where he emphasized the importance of Christlike behavior, invoking the Golden Rule. He provided this useful guideline: It's appropriate to cheer and exhibit school spirit, but not to use foul language or to insult one's opponents.

Communicating Expectations

Prior to sporting events, athletic directors, coaches, and principals need to communicate with their students, athletes, and spectators about what behavior is expected. A concise list of rules should also be posted in the gymnasium or near the stadium entrances.

As athletic director, I want to promote a healthy and safe environment for both teams—and the referees and spectators! In too many incidents, "winning at all costs" comes first. The grace and beauty of the game are lost. I want our athletes and spectators to encourage one another and both teams—honoring excellent play whenever it occurs. The challenge is ongoing, but the repetition of principles and guidelines are the tools that make the task achievable.

The Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) in its *Guidelines for Seventh-day Adventist Athletics* has provided this statement regarding spectator conduct:

"Athletic competition is an important part of school life. Spectators participate in the movement experience vicariously, promote school spirit, and help to demonstrate the philosophy and dignity of their school. Spectators may positively contribute by helping to build the character of student-athletes and promote the reputation of the school. Spectators must reflect Christ-centered behavior in their conduct at all times."³

Guidelines for Spectators

Obviously, educating spectators is the key to ensuring positive behavior at games and other events. If appropriate rules have been established and disseminated to help spectators un-

derstand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, they will be aware of the expectations, and officials can enforce the rules to ensure safety and appropriate conduct.

Athletic directors and coaches can teach these guidelines in several ways. One way is to read or distribute a brief and positive statement of appropriate behavior before each game. Another way is to post signs around the spectator seating areas displaying the code of conduct for both players and fans. The code could include the following:

- Support the team in a positive way.
- Do not engage in negative or demeaning outbursts.
- Do not use noisemakers during a contest.
- Treat officials with respect at all times. Do not complain or argue about their calls during or after an athletic contest, or jeer or verbally attack their decisions.
- Cheer appropriately, but do not attempt to distract opposing players when, for example, they are shooting free throws in basketball or serving in volleyball.
- Treat all participants, officials, coaches, and spectators with respect.
- Be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat.
- Exhibit Christian behavior at all times.

Spectator behavior is influenced, usually subconsciously, by many components. The game itself, music, cheering squads, the announcer's commentary, and the behavior of athletes and coaches all play a role. And as has been noted, it can take just one unruly spectator to turn a game into a disaster, or a crowd into a mob. Conversely, if spectators applaud the efforts of both teams, cheering for the home team but recognizing the efforts of the opponent, the beauty of sports can be discerned, as well as the spirit of Christ who never indulged in derisive behavior.

Effects of Chants, Cheers, and Music

Thus, the athletic director or coach in a Seventh-day Adventist school must explain that organized cheers affect crowd behavior. They are meant to get fans excited and to energize the team. Chants of "Defense, Defense" and similar slogans can have either a positive or negative effect; they can encourage the home team or interfere with the opposing team's play. Thus, spectators need to be sensitive regarding the effect such chants may have and act with the same generosity of spirit they would wish to encounter were they playing.

The athletic director or coach must also explain that energy levels of crowds are affected by music, which is often used to "pump up" fans and players. Music that motivates the crowd is appropriate; music that distracts or seeks to humiliate or make it impossible for members of the other team to hear their coach's instructions is not appropriate or acceptable in a Christian setting.

The school administration or athletic director should also help students understand that the behavior and attitudes of athletes and coaches can greatly influence crowd behavior. If a coach is upset and argues a call with the officials, the crowd will

also get upset and frustrated with the officials. If players taunt the opposing team and "showboat" on the court, fans are more likely to sense this negative attitude and begin to heckle the opposing team. Appropriate penalties for inappropriate student behaviors, whether by fans or players at school-sponsored events, should be included in the student handbook.

Dealing With Crowd Noise

The athletic director or coach needs to make clear to students and spectators the effect of noise on players. It is common to see athletes attempting to raise the noise level at a game by turning to the spectators and pumping their arms up and down. The resulting racket may cause spectators to engage in hoots and boos if they have not made a commitment to demonstrate Christian courtesy at the event.

Not only can the principles of appropriate behavior be taught, but they can and should be modeled by athletic directors, coaches, teachers, parents, and school administrators. Self-control, courtesy, and generosity of spirit are fruits of the Spirit and thus expected behavior for all Christians, including players and fans at Seventh-day Adventist sports events. With careful attention to these principles, in time, it could actually be that student athletes and spectators will demonstrate through their behavior that Christianity and good sportsmanship are harmonious, not only in principle, but also in practice. Written guidelines, such as those created by the SDA-HPERA, can help everyone involved with sporting events to apply the Golden Rule. ☺

Guest Editorial continued from page 3

leaders of our church. Thank you for your service!

Robert K. Thomas, Ed.D., the Coordinator for this special issue on physical education and fitness, is the Chair of Health and Exercise Science at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, and has served as the Executive Director for the Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association since 2002. He is currently working on a book about the history and development of Adventist physical education in the church's North American Division colleges and universities. The editorial staff of the Journal express heartfelt gratitude for his assistance and commitment to shepherding the issue from concept to finished product.

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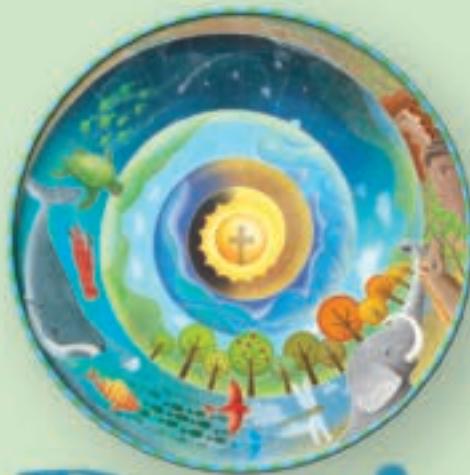
Ruth Redding Brand, M.A., is a retired educator, professional writer, and speaker for women's ministries events. She is the author of *The Family Bible Story series: Adam and Eve; Abraham; Jacob; and Joseph; as well as numerous articles*.

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