

# HealthWorks

A bi-monthly newsletter published by the Health Ministries Department of the North American Division

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## *Reaching People Through Van Ministry*

**D**id you know there are active van ministries all over North America? Nineteen large vehicles, converted and commissioned for health screening are rolling across states and urban metropolitan areas. In addition, many local Seventh-day Adventist churches operate van ministries serving many different needs in the community, like feeding the homeless etc. These unique stories will warm your heart and reveal what the power of prayer and a dedicated Van Ministry Network can do.

### *\$10,000 per year answers to prayer*

The Michigan State Fair is the largest fair in Michigan. It is nearly impossible to get a large space to lease for a mobile medical van ministry at a state fair because long time vendors occupy the leased spaces. In 1997, when the fair was first contacted the fair management practically laughed when the Michigan Conference Van Ministry Network (MCVMN) asked for a space. Then this issue was taken to the local van ministry church coordinators consisting of 17 lay leaders and congregations in the Detroit metropolitan area to make it a matter of prayer.

In 1998, the fair management informed us that a major health care provider was using the only large space available and that it cost \$10,000 to lease the space. The MCVMN Director requested to talk with those who were occupying the space to see if some sort of space sharing arrangement could be made. The management of the fair agreed to contact the health care provider, and then call back.

The MCVMN Director immediately again called the local van ministry church coordinators to pray for this important telephone response. Some time later the Director received a call from the manager saying "We would love to have you come to the fair and, by the way, the health care provider has paid the \$10,000 cost. Come and get all the free parking and admission passes that you need." As a result of that answer to prayer the MCVMN had the largest screening ever with 177 people being served in one day and over two-thirds took the Biblical guides Power to Cope or Powerful Promises. God answered their prayers in a marvelous way exceeding their expectations.

The MCVMN Director again contacted the fair manager during the year 1999 about a space being available but this time the manager obviously influenced by the previous year's success waived the \$10,000 space fee.

This year at Michigan State Fair 2000, MCVMN was asked to provide health screening at the fair for the entire 14-day duration of the fair. Volunteers from the local metro Detroit churches ministered to more than 1,500 people (250 in one day, a new record) and more than two-thirds took the Bible guides again.

The large response made it necessary to hold a special two-weekend training and deployment event (Discipleship Boot Camp) to follow-up the thousands of Van Ministry interests.

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# Boston Van Ministry Awarded Special Day By Mayor

**B**oston mayor Tom Menino declared October 22, 2000 “Boston Van Ministry Day” in honor of the 15th anniversary of the community outreach program. The van ministry, staffed by 300 volunteers, serves communities throughout northern New England and provides not only blood pressure screenings but clothes and food as well.

Greater Boston’s van ministry stemmed from two years of praying by a group in Boston for God’s wisdom in evangelizing the city, and by Rita Vital, then working on her MPH in Tennessee and seeking to learn where God wanted her to use her public-health training. This unplanned North-South prayer coalition saw their prayers answered as plans and funding came together, and an invitation was extended to Rita to direct van ministry in Boston.

In addition to hypertension screening, the van carries clothes and food for the needy, and offers free literature. Yearly permits allow screenings three days a week at locations with heavy pedestrian flow in the heart of Boston, and one day in busy Harvard Square in nearby Cambridge. Other regularly screenings are in surrounding suburbs of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

By God’s grace, the ministry has played a part in dozens of baptisms. Personal prayer has been offered with thousands and hundreds of thousands pieces of literature distributed.

Massachusetts governor Paul Cellucci also sent anniversary congratulations to Vital, who has retired from van ministry. Local Adventists John and Julie Ferraro will take over the day-to-day running of the van program.

Even God



Needs Human Hands

**A**ll good Adventist historians will immediately recognize October 22 as the day of the Great Adventist Disappointment of 1844. In the year 2000 however, October 22 marked the Boston area’s great disappointment. At a special banquet, the New England Memorial Hospital Church and the friends of Rita Vital, the director of the Boston Van Ministry, expressed their sadness that their leader of 15 years was retiring and moving to Tennessee.

Along with a special purse, they presented her with a green marble desk set which included a clock to let Rita know that in her retirement it is not time to get out of bed yet, and two pens to keep in touch with all of her friends and coworkers. The inscription on the brass plate of the clock read: *“To Rita Vital with great appreciation from your many Boston friends, October 22, 2000.”*

We all will miss Rita Vital. Rita had friends all over the world ... friends who received her newsletter and sent in checks to keep the Boston van ministry going. Friends came from around the world wanting to duplicate her ministry and to ask advice and help in starting theirs. Volunteers from as far away as Australia came to work with and be inspired by Rita.

“A significant characteristic of Rita is her true humility,” someone at the banquet wrote: “In the face of all the accolades and honors, including those from the Governor of Massachusetts, the State House, the Mayors of Boston and Stoneham, she willingly gives all of the credit to others, including God. But as many of us remind her, even God needs human hands.”

Yes, we also, pay special tribute to you, Rita. You and your volunteers and the Boston van ministry have been the hands of God for 15 years. We are hoping that others will be inspired by your ministry and that van ministries will sprout up all over North America. At one time there were scores of Adventist health vans circulating in our cities but today the number has diminished. It is my prayer that this issue will challenge each Health Ministry leader and let you know that you can make a difference with this ministry.

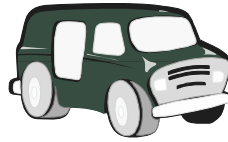


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# Reaching People Through Van Ministry

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## *A brutal death brings new life*

The MCVMN again ministered to a family when a family member was brutally murdered in Detroit. She was leaving the supermarket when a carjacker pulled her from her car, shot her in the chest, and then in the head. The carjacker then tossed her dead body by a dumpster. Arrangements were made to visit the family to help where appropriate. A meeting was scheduled before the funeral. During that meeting at the family's request several hours were spent talking about the Bible and what God is like. One of the family members said, "Why don't we study the Bible?"

Pastor Steve Veres and lay pastor Harry Tompkins started a small group Bible study with five family members. After the Sabbath was presented John said, "I am not going to work on the Sabbath any more." A letter was written and John has not worked a Sabbath since. He started attending church and volunteering on the health screening van. John asked at one of the small group meetings "How do you join this church anyway." John was baptized this spring. Two other family members are attending church regularly.

## *\$13,500.00 and a growing ministry*

The MCVMN has been continually adding new outreach ministries that are connected to or operated by lay people in the local churches. One of the fastest growing ministries is the food bank ministry. With the start of the first of six food banks in 1994 the Gleaners food bank system has been supplying the network food banks with commodities at a substantial discount. With this discount commodities can be distributed from the local churches to help the communities.

This system of distribution and administration (supermarket style) has been the object of discussions at the Gleaners administration meetings. The MCVMN has been asked to develop a video and training aids to be used as a model for the Gleaners food bank system. As a result Gleaners and the Kraft Corporation have donated a \$13,500 walk-in freezer to be used to store large amounts of frozen foods to be distributed to the Van Ministry Network food banks. As of this writing eight local churches are slated to be trained and setup to start community food banks. With this new capacity MCVMN can receive large shipments of frozen commodities (many are free) at a moment's notice and quickly distribute the commodities to the Van Ministry Network agencies.

## *Expanding new ministries*

Direct personal contact ministry is a return to the method that Christ used to touch the lives of people. When people are touched in an unselfish way with no expected gain or return their hearts are softened. Those who minister begin to realize that there are many needs in the lives of people that were not apparent before. As these needs become apparent through the direct contact with van ministry local churches and districts desire to develop new ministries to address the needs of their community.

Says Director Steve Veres, "We have available for the local church job descriptions, manual packets, videos, training sessions, and access to experienced leaders in the ministries being developed. Some of the ministries that are available are: Co-ops, food banks, soup kitchen development, smoking cessation, mall screening, and neighborhood health awareness. We also have a how to start a van ministry kit that includes all information and forms that are needed to start and maintain a van ministry. We want to work with local churches to train, empower and implement the various ministries that communities need.

"The Michigan Conference, Lake Union Conference, municipal grants, ingathering reversion and private donations sponsor van ministry. If you would like to start a van ministry, receive our newsletter, or give a tax-deductible donation." Call them at 1-888-D-VAN-MIN or visit <http://www.tagnet.org/Det-van-min/>

## 8 WEEKS Level 2 Seminars

February 2-4

Florida Hospital, Orlando

March 30-April 1

Washington, DC/Baltimore, MD

April 27-29

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas



Talk show host Sally Jesse Raphael thinks the realistic doll is a great idea for preventing the problem of "children having children."



Sally hands a troublesome "Tot" to a teenage girl who had mentioned to her mother that she might like to have a baby.

## Ready or Not Tot: *Interactive Baby Doll* *Teaches Teens Responsibility*

**T**alk show host Sally Jesse Raphael recently called on the Health Connection, our North American Division Health and Temperance Resource Center, for a special feature on teen pregnancy.

The episode featured the Health Connection's innovative teaching tool for teens, the *Ready-or-Not Tot*. This baby doll does more than just coo—it demands the attention and caretaking of a real infant. According to Raphael, a teenage girl gets pregnant in America every 26 seconds.

The *Ready-or-Not Tot* demonstrates how much time and responsibility caring for a baby requires. The doll cries for attention, and students must figure out why the baby is crying and insert the correct key.

The Tot gives both negative and positive feedback, cooing and burping when properly cared for. A teenage girl quoted on Raphael said, "Thanks for helping me see I'm not ready. I'm going to work on straightening my own life out so that when I'm older and ready I can have a baby and take care of it."

Features include three different programs, plus demo option; easy monitoring of performance; temper/panic indicator; and abuse indicator. Also included are student worksheets, parental permission forms, teacher correction template, battery, and instructions.

The *Ready-or-Not Tot* makes a strong impression in classes on pregnancy prevention and childcare. It is available in both genders and in white, brown, black and Asian versions.

For more information, visit [www.healthconnection.org](http://www.healthconnection.org), or call 1-800-548-8700 or 301-790-9735.

*Earn Level 2 and 3  
Certification!*

"STRESS: BEYOND COPING" training course  
Andrews University, March 4-7, 2001  
For more information or to register, contact Beth  
phone: 301-680-6719, e-mail: [PettitB@gc.adventist.org](mailto:PettitB@gc.adventist.org)

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