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New School Year, New Start

College is like a swimming pool. When you first arrive to either setting, it can be stressful and overwhelming. There are a lot of people, as well as new sights and sounds, and it can be very intimidating to join the flow. Once you step into the pool, the similarities continue. In both swimming and attending college, there are a lot of things to keep afloat, whether it's your arms and legs or your social calendar, classes, and grades. When you drop into bed after a long day attending classes, the exhausted feeling you experience is very similar to the one you feel after you've been enjoying the pool all day. Along with the others, there is one key similarity between the two things: when you first begin, whether it's swimming or going to college, you have to start in the shallow end.

Renita Klischies, First Year Experience Coordinator here at Southern Adventist University, has adopted this simile to help students and parents understand the importance of easing into college with SmartStart. This program was created with the intention of helping students start their higher education experience on the right foot. A free class is offered during the last month of summer to any freshman or transfer students attending Southern in the fall. They are only asked to pay for their room and board, food, and textbooks, but the savings of more than \$1,750 is just the beginning of the benefits. Students are able to learn to budget their time, create good study habits, make friends, learn the campus, and have first dibs at jobs, all while focusing on only one class rather than a full load.

For more than 15 years, SmartStart has been helping students ease their way into the “shallow end” of college and Klischies has noticed a big difference. During her advising, she found that ninety percent of the time, if a freshman was struggling, they hadn't attended SmartStart. She has a passion for encouraging new students to take advantage of this great opportunity, because she has seen how big of an impact it can make in their college experience. Students are seeing the benefit too, and each summer we have more than 500 new “swimmers” on our campus, learning

the ropes, getting used to the campus, and saving money.

Those that forego this opportunity have very little time to prepare for the shock of their first day on campus, and often feel overwhelmed by the amount of new things they are asked to experience. Each of these students jump into the “deep end” of college right off the bat, and though they learn to swim, it’s much more stressful than it would be beginning with SmartStart. All college students deserve the best college experience possible, just like each new swimmer deserves to learn to swim in a safe and fun environment. And how is that possible? In both cases, the answer is to start in the shallow end.

~by Cheryl Torres

Evangelism Trip to the Philippines

I arrived in the Philippines on May 8, 2013 with a group of 20 students from Southern Adventist University. We stayed at the North Central Mindanao Conference (NCMC) in Cagayan de Oro City. We thoroughly enjoyed learning about Filipino customs and culture.

We spent a lot of time preparing our sermons and the Lord blessed. I preached 19 ShareHim sermons ranging on topics from the 2300 day prophecy to what the Bible says about death. To assist me was Pastor Porferio Lagunday. He was my translator and he is also the Adventist Youth director for the NCMC.

The church that I preached at was the Canitoan SDA Church. The church is small, but they have a growing congregation of members that were devoted to helping to share God’s truth in their community and I believe God matched up with this group. Our meetings went well and we had about 45-55 in attendance on most nights. God blessed our efforts and at the end of our meetings, 17 people chose to be baptized at Canitoan. I also became friends with the head elder, Johnry Digal, the master of ceremony, Emmer Paglinawan, her sister, Edder, and Cristito Escoza, my young adult assistant and helper.

I also visited Mountain View College, a very successful Adventist college in the Philippines where many students pay their school bills mostly by working on the farms and industries at the school. It was incredible to see how self-sufficient their school was (they even generate their own power using hydro-power). However, the experience that was the most special was seeing over 500 people making the public commitment of baptism on Sabbath, May 25. Click [HERE](#) for a video of that amazing experience!

This was a life changing experience and I thank God so much for providing me with this opportunity.

~by Eric Davis

