

THOMAS TRIBUNE

Spring 2016

Tim & Sherry Thomas



GRANPARENTING MATTERS

A few weeks ago, I was speaking to a group of clubbers from one of the southern Wisconsin churches. I was telling them about the 3 million children Awana is reaching around the world and about the various ministries and clubs Awana offers for children for ages 2-18. Then I told about brand new ministry designed for a different group of people. I asked them to try to guess who this new ministry was for. I called on a girl who look very excited to take a guess. Her guess. "Old people". After a round of laughter, she was very proud when I told her that she was right!

The new ministry is called the Legacy Coalition and is for grandparents. It is a coalition because Awana is partnering with several other ministries to help empower and mobilize grandparents to become more involved with the spiritual upbringing of their grandchildren. The Bible says in Deut. 4:9 that we are to teach our children AND our grandchildren about all the things that the Lord has done.

I am sure that from that little girl's point of view, we are "old people", but in fact, on average, in America, a person becomes a grandparent between the ages of 47-53. If you thought that is pretty young for a grandparent, you would be correct. One of the goals of the Legacy Coalition is to help change the current idea that grandparenting ministry is senior ministry. At 53 ourselves and having six grandchildren, we are certainly part of that demographic.

This past week, I attending a Legacy Coalition seminar that brought together people from Awana and people from the Christian Grandparenting Network. By joining forces, we hope to encourage authors, speak-

ers, and organizations to create resources on grandparenting and to encourage local churches to have a focus on the vital grandparent-grandchild relationship.

At the Legacy Coalition, we believe; 1) grandparents are incredibly important to their grandkids, 2) grandparents are uniquely positioned to spiritually influence their grandkids and 3) grandparents have a Biblical mandate to do so.



Over the next several months we will work on communicating both the vision and goals of the Coalition in advance of the first-ever national conference on grandparenting. The Legacy Grandparenting Summit will be held at Stonebriar

Community Church in Frisco, Texas, on November 15-17, 2016.

For more information about the Legacy Grandparent Summit go to www.legacygrandparentingsummit.com

To learn more about the Legacy Coalition, visit their website at www.grandparentingmatters.org

**LEGACY
GRAN
PARENTING
SUMMIT**

POWERED BY
THE LEGACY
COALITION

AWANA IN WISCONSIN

2016 is shaping up to be a busy, busy year.

This year we started off running hard as we continue our effort to visit with the pastor of every church we serve. So far this year we are at 30. The purpose of this initiative is to explore new ways to serve the church and communicate the *One Mission, Many Method* message that started last fall. January also included a trip to Chattanooga, TN for the Children's Pastor's Conference and six On Target Sessions; one each in Baraboo, Janesville, Lake Geneva, Madison, Milwaukee, and Racine.



In February, Awana missionaries gathered at the home office, in Streamwood, for additional training, including updates on the MOVE assessment. The assessment, based on the book of the same name, has been available on paper for two years but is now available as a digital product. The new process allows those participating in the 45 question survey to input their responses anonymously online. The new process also allows churches to assess up to five ministries at the same time, creating both a detailed and summary report. For more information about MOVE for your church, please contact us.

February, March, and April included four sets of AwanaGames and four Bible Quizzes, including Trek quizzing. We are so thankful for our event coordinators, who have taken over a majority of the work that allows us to continue serving churches. In years past, events consumed most of our time from February through Easter. April also included two additional trips to Streamwood: one to discuss upcoming training with the leadership development department and the other to attend the Vantage Conference.



Now in May, I just returned from the Legacy Coalition meetings in Colorado Springs (which also allowed us to spend time with Nick, Wendy, and our grandsons Evan and Forrest) and next week I will be in Minneapolis, for a regional Legacy conference. This will be followed by our spring round of On Targets, this time adding one in Chilton, WI.

Moving forward, we will be working with the ministry team volunteers begin to proactively serve the almost 90 churches in northern Wisconsin.



This summer we will begin training churches to implement the new updated Truth & Training program that debuts this fall. The first book is called *Mission: Grace in Action* and moves from the traditional self-paced method to a group-paced model. Also, leaders will need to be re-trained from being a section-signer to a much more relational role of small group leader and mentor.

As if we were not already operating at capacity, we are also working on creating updated training for Awana Ministry Directors (a.k.a. commanders) and will also be returning to the Awana Prairies Camp in Glendon, Alberta, Canada in July. This year Tim will be camp pastor and Sherry will be teaching Bible. I am sure there will also be *other duties as assigned*. We enjoyed our time there very much last year and were excited to be invited back.



So far this spring, we are working with four churches who are interested in starting Awana this fall. I am sure there will be more inquiries in the weeks to come. Also, this summer we want to take advantage of Sherry's summer off from teaching to take time to get away, visit more with family, and maybe take a short vacation.

As always, we covet your prayers. Our ministry is not possible without you praying for us.

Previous issues of the Thomas Tribune and other news are available from our website: awanaswi.org/newsletters.html
Please like our facebook page at www.fb.com/awanaswi

Tim & Sherry Thomas are missionaries with Awana serving in Wisconsin. Their sending Church is the Deltona Alliance Church of Deltona, Florida.

None of this would be possible without prayer and financial partners. Would you please pledge to pray for us during 2016? If so, please let us know by sending us a card, letter, or email. Would you also prayerfully consider becoming a financial partner by pledging a monthly or quarterly gift of any amount to help us stay on the field? If so, please visit the missionary support page of our website or contact us for more information. www.awanaswi.org

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