

THE REPORT CARD...

SCHOOL MINISTRIES' RELEASED TIME BIBLE EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



News from School Ministries, Inc.

Merry Christmas (a bit early!)

December 2011

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Share the good news! *The Report Card*. Please forward this issue to your volunteers and anyone else you think should know about RTBE (Released Time Bible Education). Anyone can sign up to be on the e-mail list for future copies by registering on the SMI website at www.schoolministries.org

Award Nominees Wanted

January 5, 2012, is the deadline for SMI Affiliates to nominate people to receive national awards that will be presented at the SMI Annual Conference on March 23rd. The awards were created to honor the critical role that individuals play in the creation, promotion and nurturing of current and expanding Released Time Bible Education (RTBE) programs.

Awards will be given to honor (1) a full or part-time staff member who has provided outstanding service to a local SMI program, and (2) a volunteer board member or other volunteer who has provided outstanding service to a local program. In addition, the SMI Board may give an award to honor a person who has made a national impact on RTBE in America.

Affiliates needing copies of the nomination forms, may contact the SMI office. For questions, contact Patricia at (803) 865-5665 or email patricia@schoolministries.org.

Register Now!

Partnering for Prayer & Power is the theme for the 2012 SMI Annual Conference that will be held on Friday the 23rd of March. The conference will be held at the Concord Baptist Church in Anderson, SC. For the registration form, [click here](#).



Conference Previews:

Partnering for Power

Starting or maintaining a successful Released Time program is not possible without the efforts of many people including school personnel, church leaders, parents, teachers volunteers

and staff members. How do you build strong relationships with all these groups? How do you get your foot in the door when people don't think teaching the Bible to public school children during the school day is legal? How do you build strong relationships with all these constituencies?

Partnering for Prayer

From the opening of the conference to the very end of the last session, prayer is a major focus and activity. The afternoon parallel sessions will both address issues of prayer: how teachers engage students in a growing prayer life; and how boards and staff build strong prayer foundations for their programs.

Also featured are sessions on classroom management challenges and worldview assessment.

For further details on the program, [click here](#) to see the registration form.

Special conference invitations:

Conference participants, who arrive on Thursday, are invited to be the guests of the Beaverdam Church for dinner that evening. Transportation from the motel will be provided. To be included, check the appropriate box on your registration form.

Pastors, who will be attending their first SMI conference and are planning to start a Released Time Bible Education program, may apply for a scholarship that covers the conference registration fee. Those receiving scholarships will be expected to attend the Early Bird Focus Group on how to start Released Time programs. For more information, email patricia@schoolministries.org

Measuring the Difference - Worldview Assessment Research

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During the fall 2011 semester, four South Carolina SMI Affiliates began participating in a pilot study to measure Biblical worldview development in their RTBE students. Those programs are: Clarendon Christian Learning Center, Christian Learning Center of Greenville County, Coastal School Ministries and Students in the Word (Georgetown) with a total of approximately 210 middle and high school students participating. While programs were given the option of a single



snapshot survey, all of them chose to do two surveys in an effort to measure potential before and after growth in students' worldviews at the beginning and end of the first semester. Most of the programs have already received the results of the first assessment and are able to share the results with their students and also use the results to evaluate their own programs. The pilot project is

scheduled to conclude in January with the second administration of the assessment. The second results will allow the programs to measure the growth of their students' worldview perceptions.

Erie Brown of the Clarendon Christian Learning Center reports this about CCLC's involvement.

*Originally our agreement to participate in the study was to further the research in a general way that would enhance the overall efforts of RTBE. Upon receipt of our first survey results, we realized that the information is very specific to our classroom efforts. By discussing with each student the results which reflect his/her unique self-observations (not the opinion of others), we hope to spark a deeper interest in personal growth and maturity. We also look forward to the semester end results and anticipate a positive measure of success as the Lord sees fit to bless His children through our use of every means available to encourage, exhort, and point them to the Savior. Over the long haul, the survey results will be a factor in improving our program to meet the specific needs of the students.*

If your program is interested in participating in the study, please contact the SMI office.

### **Moms In Touch International - A Marriage Made in Heaven**

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 From initial talks to the expansion of Released Time programs, one thing everyone appreciates is the importance of prayer. In keeping with this reality, growing numbers of School Ministries programs are linking arms with Moms In Touch International (MITI).



Moms In Touch International is an interdenominational, Christian prayer movement that impacts children and schools worldwide for Christ by gathering together mothers to pray for their children, their schools, their teachers and administrators. (Grandmothers and others willing to pray for a specific child are also welcome.)

Janet Mackert, USA Regional Director-Southeast, will be on the 2012 SMI Annual Conference program on March 23rd to help us explore how our organizations can better support each other as we jointly seek ways to bring public school children to Christ. (If you don't want to wait until the conference to find out what MITI groups are active in schools where there are Released Time programs, check out the MITI website at www.momsintouchinterntional.org .)

No Need to Reinvent the Wheel

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 Save time and work. RTBE programs that are affiliates of School

Ministries have access to the extensive resources of the Members' Zone on the SMI website. There are "Key Released Time Documents" that contain sample documents for every phase of your program; and there are "Helpful Articles, Books, DVDs, and Resources" where SMI has put together articles and papers designed to help you become more effective in running your program.



Each SMI Affiliate is given information to access Members' Zone. Usually that access information is given to the program director or a member of the Board and through that person information can be made available to teachers and volunteers as needed. If your program director doesn't have

access information, have him/her phone or email Cindy at the SMI office. (803-865-5665 or [cindy@nehemiahcommunications.com](mailto:cindy@nehemiahcommunications.com)). Don't waste your time reinventing the wheel. Take advantage of the good work done by others and build on that.

In addition, the School Ministries (SMI) website holds a wealth of information that is available free of charge to anyone who is interested in Released Time Bible Education. It includes guidance in getting a RTBE program started, a video that provides an overview of RTBE and SMI, legal information, and a list of helpful materials that can be purchased. But that is just the tip of the iceberg! You need access to the Members' Zone as well.

### Program Name Challenges

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 Years ago when School Ministries was just getting started, many of the programs chose names that included *Christian Learning Centers*. More recently a number of programs have been looking at issues of branding and have chosen to include *School Ministries* in their names. Three examples of this are:

- Macedonia Ministries is now School Ministries of Northeast Florida
- Spartanburg District 2 RT is now School Ministries of Spartanburg County
- The new efforts in North Carolina have been named School Ministries of Bladen County

There may be a number of reasons why programs may consider including School Ministries in their titles. First among these is that clear identification with an increasingly visible national organization adds credibility to local programs.

Statistics Corner

~~~~~ Reaching Families: A child shall lead them

Each year SMI Affiliates are encouraged to submit an annual report that can be shared with other Affiliates. It's a way to tell of God's faithfulness and to find ideas that may be useful in your own program.

By way of praise, many programs share information on the number of students who have made first time commitments to Jesus as their Lord and Savior and the number of recommitments students have made.

This year one program shared another cause for praise; it reported that, during the 2010/2011 school year, 96 family members of their students made decisions for Christ. Released Time Bible Education (RTBE) is, in fact, an effective evangelistic outreach to students' families which is of increasing importance as the number of unchurched families continues to grow. Just how serious such outreach is was recently documented by research done by the Barna Group that has been tracking 14 religious factors over 20 years. Earlier this year the Barna Group released a report, "State of the Church Series, 2011." While all of the report will be interesting to School Ministries leaders, a couple of the trends reported are of particular interest when considering the role that RTBE programs can play in reaching the families of RTBE students. These trends are the following.

Since 1991, adult church attendance has receded by nine percentage points, dropping from 49% in 1991 to 40% in 2011.

In 1991, just one-quarter of adults (24%) were unchurched. That figure has grown by more than 50%, to 37% today. (Unchurched is defined as adults who have not attended any religious events at a church other than special ceremonies such as a wedding or funeral during the prior six month period.)

Churches that support RTBE programs often see them as integral parts of their youth ministries. However, given SMI's continuing growth rate in reaching students AND the growing access that provides to reaching families without church affiliations, it would seem that RTBE should be seen as part of churches' adult missions outreach as well.

(To read more on this report and other research done by the Barna Group go to www.barna.org.)

Campus Alliance - Partnering for Success

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SMI Executive Director, Ken Breivik, represented School Ministries at the October Campus Alliance Summit in Kansas City. The Alliance is a network of Christian organizations that is made up of youth ministries as well as organizations that target groups that serve teachers, school administrators and/or parents. Its vision is to reach Every Student/Every School.

Having the other Campus Alliance organizations understand the role that RTBE can play in reaching youth for Christ, can open doors for



collaboration between them and SMI. For example, an after school program might see an opportunity to also get a Released Time program started or vice versa. One thought being explored among SMI and other Campus Alliance

agencies is: could working together in targeted areas be more effective than single ministry efforts?

See if you can spot Ken in this Alliance Summit photo!

**New Affiliate**

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School Ministries is pleased to welcome Weekday Religious Education of Logan County (Ohio) as its newest member. This program was founded in 1995 and has approximately 900 students enrolled.

Contact Information

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email: [newsletter@schoolministries.org](mailto:newsletter@schoolministries.org)  
web: <http://www.schoolministries.org>  
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