

SU News

An inside view of
Scripture Union

Building Community Together

"Let's Get Together!"

How often have you said or heard that little phrase? What is meant by getting together is not so obvious anymore. For some, it may now mean getting together outside, with masks or without them at a safe distance apart. Or it could mean a Zoom call with the friends with whom you used to gather in person or with relatives you can't visit safely.

The truth is that we are made for community and, in one way or another, we need to be together. This morning, our weekly SU prayer team reflected on the pandemic that has caused widespread restrictions and we discussed the implications for ourselves, our team, our ministry and our donors. Some members on the call acknowledged a deep sense of isolation, feeling out of sorts. Perhaps like many of you, we identified this time as a strange period where we are uncertain of how actually to be together. Please know that as we pray for our own team and ministry to overcome these new hurdles, we are praying for you too.

In this newsletter you will read how God answered some of our prayers for community over the summer. A beach mission that began over 50 years ago was able to meet again, this time with all the social distance rules in place.

Another program experienced grace and joy online.

Other ways that we are experiencing a sense of community are through our *Encounter with God* Together broadcasts. Each week, I have been joined by a guest who reflects on the coming week's readings in the *Encounter with God* Bible guide. Response to these has been encouraging.

However we can connect with one another, let's rejoice in these words from Ephesians and keep building ... together.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

With gratitude,

Gail A. Martin, President, Scripture Union



Begin each Monday with our SU President and a special featured guest as they discuss the selected *Encounter with God* and *Discovery* Bible Guide readings of the week. Join them as they share devotion, reflection and insights.

You can find our weekly-recorded broadcast at ScriptureUnion.org/EncounterTogether... you may also consider subscribing for a weekly Monday morning reminder email to ensure you start the week off right!

A History of CSSM

Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM), founded in 1867, was the original name for Scripture Union. Spearheaded by Josiah Spiers in London, England, the movement was less formal than the Sunday schools of the day, and attracted children who brought their unchurched friends.

It grew into the international movement that exists today in 120 countries. The beach mission has been a cornerstone of the ministry. When work began in the United States, CSSM was rebranded as Children's Surf and Sidewalk Mission and remains a key outreach of SU-USA.



Wide as the Ocean

Two Weeks of Children's Ministry on the Beach

SURF CITY, NJ BEACH MISSION

By Valerie Gauvain, Team Leader

I heard the familiar strain as the program began...*'Wide, wide as the ocean, high as the heavens above, deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Savior's love!'*, but the scene differed greatly from previous years since Surf City, NJ CSSM's inception in 1966. There were masked children sitting inside rainbow-colored hula hoops in the sand to keep their distance...some familiar faces who would not be deterred by extra space and a mask, and many new ones all about to hear of the love of Jesus Christ, some for the very first time!

We didn't know what to expect this summer and had been praying for many months that the program would be able to go on. When the township gave the approval, it appeared that the Lord had opened the door. We began to pray for all the children and families who would attend. The turn-out over the two weeks was larger than we could have hoped for! As one mom shared, it "shows how many families are searching for a greater spiritual connection in their lives. After several months of uncertainty, isolation and fear during this pandemic, it was comforting to have the kids sitting in the sun together enjoying your mission of hope and faith."

For two balmy August weeks, through sunny skies, clouds, some fog and occasional mists, nearly 90 children sang songs, watched puppets and skits, participated in games and adventures, won prizes, saw Bible stories come to life, and most importantly, heard that there is a Savior who loves them, forgives sin and saves souls for eternity!

Our large team of volunteers this year labored tirelessly and with joy as they prepared the dramas, memory verses and Bible stories for the program each morning, going above and beyond to sanitize items and keep safety protocols in place. They built friendship and trust with the children as they gathered with them by age group each evening to study God's Word and hold events like Fight the Tide, Sand Sculpture and Carnival. This love and commitment is not without reward as one young boy expressed, "Thank you for always remembering my name. I can pray and know Jesus is in my heart." These rewards are eternal! We could only feel humbled and grateful to be part of God's ministry when a mom wrote, "Thanks for making it happen this year MOST OF ALL! Your dedication reaches far and wide (wide as the ocean)."



Successful SuperKids Via Zoom

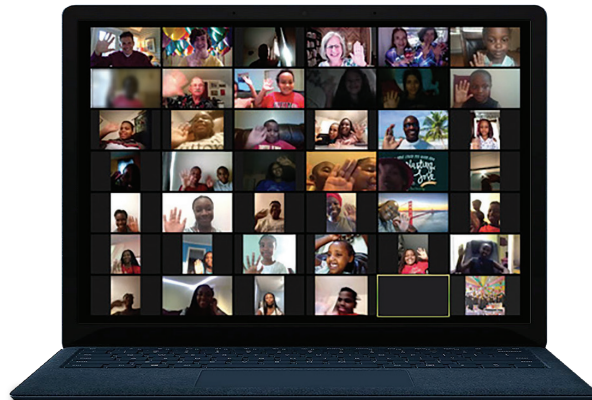
NOT DETERRED BY PANDEMIC

By Mary Sutton, SU New England Regional Field Representative

"We cannot leave our children behind. We must go to the next level in our children's ministry", proclaims Pastor Eliud Mwangi, rector of St. John's Anglican Church in Sutton, Massachusetts. Pastor Mwangi reached out early in 2020 to see if Scripture Union could help St. John's reach higher in strengthening their children in their knowledge of God and His Word. The teachers met with me, we developed a plan for teacher training, and then-COVID hit. Many churches decided to offer pre-recorded VBS programs however Pastor Mwangi, undeterred, encouraged the continuation of live children's programs.

St. John's was an ideal place to hold a SuperKids® program because they are committed to reaching out into the community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Given the restrictions of COVID, plans changed a number of times, including the dates and length of the program. As of late July we were still hopeful to have an in-person event, but ultimately the parents felt it was too risky. So we quickly prepared for live programming via Zoom. Our New York area field director had already held a successful virtual SuperKids® program so we knew we could too. God's provisions never cease to amaze us as the NYC technology volunteer was available and willing to assist us as well! Not only does this young man handle behind the scenes media, he also communicates the love of Jesus to the children and volunteers!

On the evenings of August 17-21, we had 53 children and 21 volunteers experiencing SU SuperKids® Guardians of Ancora curriculum via Zoom. True to our Scripture Union roots, we organized our SuperKids® to include our regular Bible Diggers groups enabling children to interact with each other, with their leaders, and most importantly with the Bible directly! The kids were overjoyed to see their church friends and learn Bible stories and offered up prayers of thanks for several weeks following it. On the last night we had a very special guest, Bishop Andrew Williams of the Anglican Diocese of New England.



It was such a blessing to be part of 2020 VBS! The Kids had so much fun while learning the word of God at the same time. During our Sunday youth service, several shared that they enjoyed VBS and learned a lot. I personally enjoyed working alongside the whole team and learning different ways of teaching the Word. The SU team was so well prepared; in them, I saw a lot of patience, understanding, flexibility and teamwork. Thank you!

- TK, St. John's Anglican Church

Ten-year-old Stevie lives in Brooklyn, New York with hard-working parents who are not regular churchgoers. He attended the SuperKids program last summer but was unable to attend this year because of COVID-19. He was joyful when he heard that he could participate in a SuperKids program by video as he could see kids from other Spanish-speaking countries. He even learned the Spanish chorus for "This little light of mine". He cannot wait for the next SuperKids video program.

Global Highlight



Last year more than **8.5 million** children and young people took part in **Scripture Union activities** across **120 countries** supported by more than **42,000 volunteers**. More than **18.5 million creative and Bible resources** were produced for distribution.

Gift Memberships

Gift memberships are a great way to make sure that your friends, family and loved ones can begin meeting with God every day. And the celebration of Christ's birth is a wonderful time to introduce them to God's written Word.



No matter their familiarity with the Bible, Scripture Union has a Bible Guide specifically designed to help them discover the joys of reading and living God's Word.

Newer Christians and young adults will especially appreciate the relevant, practical discussions of Scripture in *Discovery* Bible guide. Those with greater Bible experience and a more mature faith will be challenged by the more reflective daily readings in *Encounter with God*.

Gift memberships can be ordered using the enclosed form, or renew even faster at www.ScriptureUnion.org/membership

Helping You Impact the World for Christ Through Your Planned Giving

As stewards in God's kingdom, we want to harness as many resources as possible for the Lord's work and for our families. Taking advantage of available tax incentives helps us accomplish this goal. Through our Biblically-based stewardship ministry we can assist you in making a variety of non-cash gifts, such as:

- Giving Appreciated Stock
- Giving from your IRA

PLEASE CONTACT US if we can provide assistance or connect you with a knowledgeable advisor at no cost to you.

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"But just as you excel in everything...see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

2 CORINTHIANS 8:7