



**Central
District
Conference**

A conference of
Mennonite Church USA

focus

**KNOWING CHRIST'S LOVE
ANSWERING GOD'S CALL**

JUNE 2015

Bluffton student from Silverwood publishes children's book

BLUFFTON, Ohio—A trip to the Dominican Republic with her high school volleyball team four years ago was life-changing for Lauren Dickerson.

Traveling to the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo following her freshman year at Goshen, Ind.'s, Fairfield High School, she and her teammates combined sports with service, visiting orphanages where children were waiting for sponsors.

"I saw a whole lot of kids who nobody wanted, and I didn't know why," says Dickerson, who came back to the U.S. with an interest in international adoption that has continued. That interest manifested itself last fall in "After All," a children's book-like story that the first-year Bluffton student wrote for her Becoming a Scholar class.

The story tells how Addie, a little zebra who realizes she has fewer stripes than other zebras, learns that being different "isn't so bad after all." She reaches that conclusion with the help of a new friend, a cheetah named Bailey who,



with only two spots, doesn't look like other cheetahs, either.

Although the other zebras don't seem to notice that Addie looks different, and despite her mother's reassuring "I love you" whenever Addie mentions it, it takes a friend who is also different to convince her "that she was perfect the way she was," Dickerson writes in a note at the end of the story.

"Even if (adoptive) parents do everything right, it may take someone just like their international child to show them that different is OK," the social work major adds.

Dickerson, who attends Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, would eventually



**Watch for
reports and photos
from the
2015**

**Central District Conference
Annual Sessions
in the upcoming
July CDC Reporter.**

like to meld her social work major with her interest in international adoption, possibly by working with Compassion International. Based in Colorado Springs, the Christian child sponsorship organization operates Dominican orphanages that Dickerson visited, and her family sponsors a Compassion child.

*-Submitted by Bluffton University's
Public Relations Office*

Celebrations and events from around the CDC...

Eighty Quarts of Berries Enjoyed at Silverwood's Annual Strawberry Fest

Silverwood Mennonite Women raised around \$2,100 at their annual Strawberry Festival on Sunday, June 14, to go towards church projects at Silverwood and local missions.

The festival included sandwiches, salads, and strawberry shortcake made with 80 quarts of strawberries, all donated from Dale Yoder, a Goshen strawberry grower. Yoder has donated strawberries to the fundraiser for the past 39 years.

About 200 Silverwood attendees and guests enjoyed the Strawberry Fest. Dozens of volunteers helped prepare the food and the space for the festival.

CDC student graduates from Hesston College

The Hesston College community celebrated the academic accomplishments of 148 graduates during commencement May 10. Kevin King, director of Mennonite Disaster Service, presented the commencement address, "Abide in Me."

Caroline Kauffman earned an associate of general studies degree. She attends Covenant Mennonite Fellowship in Sarasota, Fla., and is the daughter of Susan Kauffman.

Five CDC Students Graduate from Bluffton

Five undergraduate students from Central District Conference congregations earned bachelor's degrees from Bluffton University this spring.

Those students, their hometowns, degree fields and churches are: Jeremy Amstutz, Cassopolis, Mich., business administration and marketing (Eighth Street Mennonite, Goshen, Ind.)

Hannah Johnson, Goshen, individually designed major—environmental interpretation (Eighth Street Mennonite, Goshen)

Isaac Schumacher, Bluffton, graphic design (First Mennonite, Bluffton)

Crosby Suter, Pandora, Ohio, accounting and business administration (Grace Mennonite, Pandora)

Raleigh Zickafoose, Lima, Ohio, child development (Lima Mennonite)

Atlanta Mennonite Hosts Annual Schmeckfest

On April 19 AMF hosted our annual "Schmeckfest" gathering of Atlanta-area friends, mostly with Mennonite connections. The potluck supper followed by a hymn sing was a joyous occasion. Again this year Schmeckfest also served as a fundraising event for next September's Peach Cobbler Mennonite Relief Auction.

Grace Mennonite and First Mennonite prepare for area Swiss Mennonite celebration

The first Mennonite church in the Pandora/Bluffton, Ohio, area was built 175 years ago. Four churches have grown from that beginning, including two Central District Conference churches: Grace Mennonite Church in Pandora and First Mennonite Church in Bluffton.

Grace and First Mennonite will join with St. John and Ebenezer Mennonite churches on Aug. 30 will come together for a celebration and worship service with lectures, displays, hymns, and a traditional Swiss meal under a tent on the historic site of the first church.

Perry Bush and Gerald Mast, Bluffton University professors and First Mennonite attendees, are writing a historical essay for the program booklet. Myron Augsburg, former president of Eastern Mennonite University, will be the featured speaker.