



# Community Connection

Potomac Conference  
Adventist Community  
Services (ACS)

## What is “ACS”?

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When our church members are asked, “What is ACS?”, many of them look puzzled.

It could mean “American Cancer Society”. It could mean “American Chemical Society”. In the military, it could mean “Army Community Services”. What about “Acute Coronary Syndrome”?

So—What does it mean to you? Hopefully, it means “Adventist Community Services”.

As with the various names above, our name gives a clear explanation of who we are: Adventists who are Serving their Community.

The overall ACS Ministry has six specialties, or special areas of ministry.

### Community Development

This specialty has been known by several names, most commonly “Dorcas”. The name was changed to better reflect its true purpose—that of developing a better community in which we live. This is the ministry that is based at, or near, the local Seventh-day Adventist Church, and offers programs that help develop a better community. While food boxes, cooking classes, and sometimes clothing are integral parts of this ministry, so are computer classes, parenting classes, and other skill-building programs.

A significant part of this ministry is working with the

same community members over weeks, months, and even years.

While “one-up” programs, like passing out sandwiches to the homeless, free vehicle maintenance checks, distributing gas cards, etc. are worthy projects, it is rare that the recipient really gets to know those who are doing the distribution. We need to develop a personal relationship with those we assist, if we expect to cultivate a more favorable view of our organization, and thus develop opportunities for more biblical discussions.

### Tutoring and Mentoring

This ministry mobilizes voluntary,

#### Training Opportunities: Location:

- *At your church?...Contact us.*

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charitable organizations to meet the learning needs of America's children and youth, particularly those living in low-income households, single-parent families and neighborhoods where violence and other factors not conducive for learning exist.

The ACS Tutoring & Mentoring ministry provides early intervention in the lives of disadvantaged children and youth who face learning challenges by supplying individual support, care and guidance that can help them achieve academic success. By cultivating trustworthy relationships, the tutor and/or mentor serves as a medium for the child to receive the resources necessary for their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth.

### Youth Empowered to Serve (YES!)

The YES! Ministry focuses on youth in age group of high school, college, and just beyond. The ministry endeavors are usually based in a local church, academy, or college. The projects they create are aimed at nearby communities, but may reach well beyond their home area. The projects include a variety of service projects, but always include sharing Jesus' love to the community members they reach.

### Elder Care

The ACS Elder Care Ministries program is a service for seniors and caregivers coordinated by Adventist Community Services in cooperation with other departments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This ministry promotes Christ-centered, practical and sustainable solutions to successful holistic aging. It coordinates education and services related to aging, health, finance and social issues for seniors in the church and community in collaboration with community-based elder care programs.

ACS Elder Care Ministries provides services to seniors and those who work with seniors that nurture body, mind and spirit. Its purpose is to encourage the active participation of leaders in thinking, dreaming and planning about programs by, with, for and to seniors.

### Crisis Care

Adventist Community Services' Crisis Intervention Ministry trains and deploys volunteers to provide emotional and spiritual care for traumatized survivors of disasters and other critical incidents. Because a disaster or other critical incident may have the potential to interfere with an individual's daily or normal functions, it is helpful to have the assistance of a crisis interventionist who has been trained to use the principles of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Crisis intervention is a temporary, but active and supportive entry into the life of individuals or groups during a period of extreme stress. Its goals are to mitigate the impact of the event, facilitate recovery processes in people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events and restoration to adaptive function. Crisis intervention in its basic form is psychological first aid and is not counseling or psychotherapy.

Crisis Interventionist are multi-disciplinary professionals including pastors, educators, nurses and other medical personnel, social workers, mental health workers, counselors, law enforcement officers, fire and rescue personnel, victim's advocates, and other professional volunteers who are trained in the principles of Critical Incident Stress Management. Prior mental health training or experience is especially advantageous.

Crisis Intervention training is presented in intensive 13-14 hour courses offered several times each year in various locations across the North American Division. Four courses are offered by Adventist Community Services: Individual Crisis Intervention, Group Crisis Intervention and Pastoral Crisis Intervention I and II. In addition, serious students may take other courses and earn specialty certificates by attending trainings offered at International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. (ICISF) conferences as listed on the ICISF website ([www.ICISF.org](http://www.ICISF.org)). Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, in collaboration with ACS, offers a Disaster Response Chaplaincy Credential for pastors who have taken all the required training and meet the other qualifications. ACS also offers the basic psychological first aid training in a six hour course especially for members who vol-

unteer at local church Community Services Centers.

## Disaster Preparedness and Response

Adventist Community Services volunteers provide disaster response services through the ACS Disaster Response Ministry to assist individuals, families and communities affected by natural disasters and unforeseen tragedies.

The ACS Disaster Response Ministry is comprised of volunteers who form local disaster response teams that are organized by state disaster response coordinators. These state coordinators and teams assist regional disaster response coordinators to respond to multi-state calamities. The national Disaster Response Director manages the national program.

ACS Disaster Response operates under a Statement of Understanding with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross and many state emergency management agencies. It is also a founding member of the inter-agency compact called [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#) (NVOAD). ACS is also a member of most state VOADs.

The following services are provided to assist disaster survivors and their families, disaster responders, and affected communities in cooperation with ACS Disaster Response partners:

- **Community Collection Centers** - locations where goods are collected to assist communities affected by disasters.
- **Warehouse Operations** - a service in which volunteers sort, package and store donated goods for distribution.
- **Emergency Distribution Centers offer relief and recovery supplies** - a service that provides goods to survivors and responders such as drinking water, groceries, clothing and much more.
- **Donations Management Consultants** - ACS subject matter experts in donations management provide assistance and input to other organizations in addition to local, state, and

federal agencies.

- **Crisis Care** - emotional and spiritual care is provided for disaster survivors, their relatives, neighbors, and responders.

In addition to the Response services listed above, the ACS Disaster Response (DR) ministry offers the **“Introduction to Disaster Preparedness”** class. This class focuses on you, your family, and your church, and then by extension, your community. It does not focus on Response activities. Rather, it focuses on how you, your family, and your church can be better prepared to deal with a local disaster. As you, and your family, are better prepared to deal with a local disaster, you will be less dependent on the emergency services of your community. When you are better prepared to deal with a local disaster, you may be able to assist your neighbors, thus further reducing the need for community-based emergency services.

Each of the preparedness and response functions listed above have specific training to prepare our members to serve. It is recommended that the “Introduction to Disaster Preparedness” class to the first class. The next class would be Donations Operations. Followed by the ACS Leadership class. For those seriously interested in becoming involved with the Disaster Response ministry, there are advanced classes available.

Each of the ministries offer training specific to their special ministry. Check the NAD ACS website, [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org), for more information and class schedules.

In our Potomac Conference, please contact Bob Mitchell, Potomac Conference ACS Coordinator, to bring training to your church area. Having members from several churches come together in one location helps keep training costs down.

## What are your ACS Activities?

Share with the Potomac Conference church families your ACS community outreach programs/projects by submitting to this ACS newsletter news articles, including pictures and a short narrative. These submissions will be reviewed and you will be contacted prior to publication.

If you have questions, see our contact information below.

### ACS MISSION STATEMENT

*Serving our communities  
in Christ's Name*

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**ACS on the Web!**  
[www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org)

## This Newsletter—Its Purpose

The purpose of this newsletter is to share information about the Adventist Community Services (ACS) ministry in Potomac Conference.

Many of our churches in Potomac are already involved in community outreach activities. All of these activities should be considered ACS ministry activities, and should be coordinated through the ACS Director and the local ACS leadership. The six logos at the right indicate the wide variety of ministry specialties that are a part of the overall ACS ministry. These provide opportunities for service by virtually everyone in the church.

The PowerPoint presentation, “Overview of the Six ACS Ministries”, (available only in Potomac) briefly explains each of these six ministries. All local church ACS Directors are encouraged to contact our conference ACS Coordinator to learn where the next training will be held. Will it be at your church?

In order to better share the wide variety of ACS activities already being done by our churches, a feature of this newsletter will be articles spotlighting our ACS centers and their activities. We want to feature your ministry to your community. Feel free to contact us with an invitation to visit your ACS center so your activities can be shared with your sister churches.

Other community organizations are involved. Are you aware of what they are doing?

