



Florida Conference sports ministry team members, coaches, and directors participated in outreach April 29, 2017, at the United Against Poverty facility. Jonathan Swan (second from left) is the sports director, and Yazmine Rivera (right) is the Community Outreach director.

“All to the Glory of God,” 1 Corinthians 10:31

LOVE GOD, LOVE BASKETBALL

BY GLADYS NEIGEL

The basketball courts lay empty, the final playoff game is a memory, but the event of the season is about to begin. It is Sabbath, April 29, in Altamonte Springs, Florida.

Under endless blue skies, with warm spring breezes blowing gently through the portico of the Florida Conference office, young athletes from around Central Florida embark from their means of transportation to prepare for the annual Community Outreach Day sponsored by Florida Conference Sports Ministry and the Conference Youth Department.

Teams, family, and friends entered into a praise and worship service. Romain Medley, a Forest Lake Academy faculty member, presented a homily and a special prayer of blessing.

In the afternoon, two locations were available for outreach: Unity Against Poverty and the Ronald McDonald House.

United Against Poverty

The purpose of this organization is to inspire and empower people living in poverty to lift themselves and their families to economic sufficiency. Team members pitched in where needed to stock produce and other grocery items on the shelves.

“Volunteering with United Against Pov-

erty was a rewarding experience. We had the opportunity to assist and interact with patrons who were grateful for the work we were doing. We were appreciative for the chance to contribute our time and efforts, and we look forward to the next opportunity for outreach.” —*Jasmine Jones, head coach for Message of Hope basketball team*

Ronald McDonald House

Volunteers took gift cards for the staff to present to the patients, and brought gifts and toys to be placed in a treasure room. A tour of the facility included a playroom for children three to 10, a game room mainly for teenagers, and room for families to gather.

“While in the kitchen, some of us were able to interact with patients, and helped



PHOTOS BY: GLORY TOKICS

Washing dishes at Ronald McDonald House in Orlando was part of helping others on Florida Conference Sports Ministry Outreach Day.

with dirty dishes and cleaning. Although we wish we had more interactions with the children, it was a great experience. We were pleased to represent the basketball ministry in the community and share the love of Christ with others.” —*Enosch Charles, Bethel French basketball team* 📍

SPORTS MINISTRY STATISTICS

Florida Conference Sports Ministries began in 2011 as an entity to encourage young people to stay in the Church as well as witness to their friends. Director Jonathan Swan further encourages his players with his signature line on every email: “Love God. Love Basketball. ‘All to the Glory of God,’ I Corinthians 10:31.”

During the 2016-2017 basketball season, 341 young people were involved in this program, representing:

- 16 Adult teams
- 9 Varsity (High School) teams
- 6 Youth teams
- 9 Florida Conference churches
- 8 Southeastern Conference churches