

## Report to Western District Mennonite Conference – June 2024

Helping Mennonite Church USA fulfill its educational mission

### TWO STUDENTS FROM WESTERN DISTRICT CHURCHES AWARDED MEA SCHOLARSHIP

MEA recently awarded the 2024-25 Scholarships for BIPOC Students to 13 students from five schools partnered with MEA. **Thanks to the generosity of donors, we granted \$28,000 in scholarships – more than double the awards of the 2023-24 academic year!** Awards are based on an applicant's connection with an MEA-partner school, an MC USA congregation, and their leadership on campus and at church. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage the next generation of church leaders to complete their education and continue serving the church. **The award winners from Western District congregations are:**



**Josué Coy Dick**, Bethel College, Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., (\$3,500). Josué was born in Guatemala and grew up in North Newton. He has roots in the Mennonite community in Kansas and in the Maya

Q'eqchi community in Alta Verapaz, Coban, Guatemala. He is studying Bible and Religion, Peace and Conflict, and Music Performance at Bethel College. He is co-president of the Bethel College Community for Justice and Peace and is also an accomplished violinist. He is a two-time winner of the annual Dwight Beckham Young Soloist competition. He attends Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton.



**Samuel Hernández**, Bethel College, Iglesia Camino de Santidad, Liberal, Kan., (\$1,500). Samuel is entering his third year of studying elementary education at Bethel College. He wants to be able to reach out to kids

and teach them about life and how to overcome challenges. Samuel was raised to follow Jesus and

serve out his calling. He is grateful to his pastor Moises Romero, who has always pushed Samuel and believed in him. His home church is Iglesia Camino de Santidad in Liberal.

**The other scholarship recipients are from** Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University, and Goshen College. (There were no applicants from Hesston College.) To learn about the other recipients, read the article from MEA at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/news-events/news](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/news-events/news). You can learn more about the scholarship at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/schools/MEA-scholarship-for-bipoc-students](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/schools/MEA-scholarship-for-bipoc-students). If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, you can do so at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/donate](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/donate). Applications for the 2025-26 academic year are due by April 1, 2025.

### BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY MERGER

Bluffton University recently announced their intention to merge with the University of Findlay in Ohio. You can find more information about this merger at [www.FindlayBlufftonFuture.com](http://www.FindlayBlufftonFuture.com). If you have questions or concerns, please contact [www.FindlayBlufftonFuture.com/contact-us/](http://www.FindlayBlufftonFuture.com/contact-us/) or email MEA at [info@MennoniteEducation.org](mailto:info@MennoniteEducation.org). **MEA is committed to promoting Anabaptist values in education and strengthening the relationships between Mennonite schools and Mennonite Church USA.**



**MEA'S HISPANIC MINISTRIES** programs are growing and thriving. The first cohort of the **Certificado de Posgrado en Estudios Teológicos** (Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies), in partnership with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), is completing their second semester of study. This historic program is the first graduate certificate program taught in Spanish at

an Anabaptist seminary in the United States. We are proud of the vision of our staff to bring this dream to fruition – and in partnership with an MC USA seminary!

Four students of the **Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano** (SeBAH – Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary) will be graduating in this summer. We uplift these determined students as the next leaders of the Hispanic Mennonite Church!

The **Instituto Bíblico Anabautista** (IBA – Anabaptist Bible Institute) program now has 13 study centers across the U.S., with a **new center at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.**, in partnership with Prairie Street Mennonite Church. IBA is also expanding beyond physical centers with **one hybrid center** and **one online center**.

### FAITH FORMATION AT HOME



MEA publishes the **Advent-and Lent at Home** worship guides, available for free download in English and Spanish from the MEA website. The At-Home series is designed to be an accompaniment through the seasons of Advent and Lent. They are intergenerational and can be used by individuals, families, and congregations of Mennonite Church USA and

Mennonite Church Canada. With daily Scriptures, worship rituals, prayers, activities, and background information, these resources enhance the experience of these holy times. **The At Home series is the most downloaded resource of all Mennonite Church USA materials!**

### FAITH FORMATION: MENNONITE EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK



**Building Faith** is the online ministry of the **Mennonite Early Childhood Network (MECN)**, a partner ministry of MEA. Each month, Building Faith creates simple, accessible resources for families to help their children grow in their faith. Families can

sign up to receive an email with the month's faith practice, including a verse, activity, and prayer. Each lesson is written in English and Spanish. Talashia Keim Yoder, an alum of Goshen College and AMBS and the Pastor for Christian Formation & Worship at College Mennonite Church, writes each lesson with contributions from her mother, Tamra Keim. Visit [www.BuildingFaithFamily.com](http://www.BuildingFaithFamily.com) to learn more about this ministry or to subscribe. **Whether at home or in the classroom, MEA is committed to equipping teachers and parents as they impact children and young people.**

### 2023-24 ENROLLMENT REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

MEA produces the Enrollment Report annually to create a snapshot of enrollment trends across all schools that partner with MEA: from early childhood programs through graduate schools and seminaries. Based on headcount in the fall of 2023, **Mennonite schools are impacting the lives of 8,971 students**, a decrease of 3.4% since the 2022-23 academic year. To view the 23-24 report and previous reports, visit [www.MennoniteEducation.org/about-us](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/about-us).

### SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATORS

The **Mennonite Public Educators** group was formed by teachers to give faculty and staff in public schools a place to talk about some of the unique challenges Mennonites face in public education: what to do about the Pledge of Allegiance, how to respond to wars and violence, and how to (whether to) be a peace witness. The group has met virtually several times this academic year. MEA is helping to promote the group and broaden its reach. **The next virtual meeting is July 25 at 7 pm Eastern.** Participation is free but registration is required. Contact [info@MennoniteEducation.org](mailto:info@MennoniteEducation.org) for more information.

**On behalf of the staff and board of directors, thank you for supporting Anabaptist Mennonite education.**

Grace & peace,

**Michael Danner**  
Executive Director