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Arvada church's lofty goals

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Julianna Mitchell, 13, works her way across an obstacle course game during Vacation Bible School at the New Apostolic Church in Arvada. Since the church settled into its new flagship location, leaders plan to expand its outreach in the community with programs for youths and seniors.

*Anya Semenoff,
YourHub*

At its new location, New Apostolic Church provides food bank, Bible camp

By Joe Vaccarelli
Your Hub Reporter

The New Apostolic Church isn't exactly new per se, but it's new to Arvada and hoping to expand its outreach and service the community with a new food bank.

The church — which has an international history dating back to the 1800s — recently remodeled an old warehouse at 5290 Vance St., and moved its congregation in mid-April. It previously had three separate churches in Wheat Ridge, Northglenn and Littleton before combining at the Northglenn location a few years ago.

"It was the right size and it was in a bustling area," Sunday school coordinator for the church Beth McIlree said of the new building. "We wanted a space that was in more of a commercial district. This was very appealing."

With the new location comes new goals for the church, which hopes to become more service-oriented in Arvada. The location just off Wadsworth Boulevard near Interstate 70 will help them get started.

"It's given us opportunities to open up to the community more," said Peter Van Es, rector for the church. "Before, it was more of a neighborhood church."

They opened new food bank a few weeks ago, and church leadership is seeking partnerships to expand the program. People in need of food can pick it up from the back door of the church on Wednesdays.

Leadership hopes to partner with Food Bank of the Rockies in the near future and is receiving bread from a nearby Panera Bread to distribute. The rest of the food is provided by the congregation.

The church is next to Foster Elementary School, where more than 50 percent of students receive free and reduced-price lunches, so organizers know there is a need.

"We're just trying to make our-



Ellie Van Es, 11, right, leads Alexa Medina, 11, through a blind drawing exercise during Vacation Bible School at the New Apostolic Church's new location in Arvada. Anya Semenoff, Your Hub

selves known in the community," said Gertrude Gathe, who runs the food pantry at the church.

New Apostolic Church in Arvada has a congregation of about 130, and the church, which originated in Germany, has 8 to 10 million members worldwide. Its national office is in Chicago, and the Arvada location serves as a satellite hub and manages the Colorado Springs and Salt Lake City locations in addition to Arvada. All members of the church leadership locally are volunteers.

The new space is much larger than the last location in Northglenn and it is slightly more central

for those who travel long distances to attend services. McIlree said some members travel from as far as Parker and Fort Collins.

"It's allowed us to truly have fellowship afterward," McIlree said.

It's also opened up room to have a more successful Vacation Bible School camp in the summer that is open to all members of the community. The church hosted this year's camp the week of July 18.

McIlree said that to find the building, a volunteer search committee searched for a location suitable for the church's needs. It was a three-year process to find the spot

and renovate.

When the church moved in, it hosted a barbecue for the community and McIlree said Arvada has been very welcoming so far.

In the future, the church leadership hopes to build out beyond just the food pantry and Bible study camp in the summer. McIlree said she would like to see programs that include reading to young children in the community.

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