



History of AWANA¹

AWANA is a global, nonprofit ministry with fully integrated evangelism and long-term discipleship programs for ages 2 to 18 that actively involves parents and church leaders. Each week, more than 2 million children and youth, 330,000 volunteers and 260 field staff take part in AWANA in 30,000 churches around the world. Offered through local churches, AWANA reaches kids where they're at and walks alongside them in their faith journey.

How did the AWANA program begin?

In 1941, the children's program at the North Side Gospel Center in Chicago laid the foundation for the principles of AWANA. Lance Latham, North Side's senior pastor, collaborated with the church's youth director, Art Rorheim, to develop weekly clubs that would appeal to churched and non-churched kids. As a pioneer in children's ministry, Art created new and innovative ways to reach kids with the gospel and lead them to know, love and serve Jesus Christ.

Other churches learned about the success of the program and inquired about its availability. In 1950, Latham and Rorheim founded AWANA as a parachurch organization.

By 1960, 900 churches had started AWANA programs. By 1972, AWANA began its first international club in Bolivia. Today, children and youth in 104 countries participate in AWANA programs and millions of adults are alumni. AWANA serves churches from 100 different denominations.

Across the globe, AWANA gives kids from every background and cultural setting a place to belong, build confidence and grow in faith. AWANA continually expands to make disciples by pursuing new locations and partnerships. God is using the ministry of AWANA in prisons, refugee camps, slums and other hard to reach places around the world.

Under our President/CEO, Jack Eggar, the global reach of AWANA has grown at a rapid pace with the goal of reaching 10 million kids with the gospel by 2020. Art Rorheim serves as the Co-Founder/President Emeritus.

¹ <http://awana.org/about/history>