



West Virginia Annual Conference
Global Ministries-Division of Mission
Review and Evaluation of Heart and Hand House, Inc.
September 11 and 12, 2006



The Conference Board of Global Ministries, Division of Mission, conducted an on-site review and evaluation of the Heart and Hand House, Inc., in Philippi on September 11 and 12, 2006. Those on the Review Team included the Chair, Judy Nutter, Mac McGraw, Reverend Jim Malick, and Ruth Bailey who served as secretary.

Booklets with all the requested reports, forms, financial and budgetary information, and correspondence of interest concerning Heart and Hand House were mailed out in advance to each team member from Dr. Bob Wilkins.

The following individuals were interviewed by the team:

Sandy McLean, Thrift Store Manager

Mike Miller, Associate Director

Georgia Allen, Volunteer Coordinator and Garden Market Manager

Richard and Blanch McDaniel, Volunteers

Bill Keller, Client and recipient of new home built by HHH Summer Volunteers

Charlene Poling, Belington Thrift Store Clerk

Reverend David Jasper, District Superintendent

Reverend Alicia Rapping, Parish Coordinator and Board Member

Martha Rose Roy, Incoming Board President

Barb Smith, Chair of Nominations Committee

Karen Weaver, City Manager

Elaine Benson, Personnel Committee Chair

Linda McCarty, Emergency Services Coordinator

Phyllis Knight, Finance Committee Chair

Anne Rhule, Division of Missions Representative

Brenda Hunt, Administrative Assistant

Various clients and members of the community

On-site visits were made to the Heart and Hand Office Buildings, the Thrift Stores in Philippi and Belington, the Garden Market and adjoining properties, the recently built home of client Bill Keller, and Crim Memorial United Methodist Church.

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Observations

- The most impressive observation in this small community of 3,000 was that of Christ's loving presence through the workings of the Heart and Hand House. Through interviews, actual observations, and reviews of the records, Heart and Hand House provides a clear testimony of Christ's healing love to this part of the world. Prayer is the cornerstone to each staff person's relationship to the Mission and to the community they serve. A pastor reported that although she cannot report on the number of persons that have joined the church as a result of Heart and Hand House, she does often receive calls for pastoral counseling from "the un-churched" as a result of their awareness of the Heart and Hand House ministries. Youth are said to include volunteer hours with Heart and Hand House on their resumes for the status they might obtain by that.
- The UMC Cross and Flame emblem is highly visible throughout all the Heart and Hand House buildings, paperwork, and any other communications. Although there is a full ecumenical involvement, the UMC connection is an extremely strong and clearly respected link to the Mission. HHH is physically located between two unusually close United Methodist Churches.
- The Cooperative Parish is a working parish that is primarily in existence because of the Heart and Hand House. The pastors, each of who serve as ex-officio members on the Board, are all unified with this project. The Ministerial Association is also focused on services for HHH ministries.
- The offices and the thrift store are strategically located within the heart of town and are also situated between two United Methodist Churches (Crim Memorial UMC and 1st UMC) which are all within walking distance to each other. One pastor serves both of those churches and she is also on the Board of Directors. It would appear to be more feasible for the Conference to consider some type of consolidation of these three separate entities of the UMC. The Review and Evaluation Team discussed the power and impact for the Mission and the UMC churches for that type of reorganization.
- The makeup of the workers, volunteers, paid full-time and part-time staff and the Board is FULL Y ecumenical. Heart and Hand House is said to be the mission project of the whole community. The town and county appear to be completely invested in the workings of Heart and Hand House. A person from another denomination passionately expressed appreciation of HHH 's long standing value and services rendered within the community.
- Although what might have appeared as a problem with lack of volunteers in one area of the project, generally speaking there is a generously healthy amount of volunteer time donated each month. There is a very insightful understanding by the director as to the recruitment, nurturing, and caring of the volunteers. This is discerned through a deep understanding of each individual's age and interests and responding to each group in a specialized manner.
- A true and positive team concept surfaced through various conversations with the full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, clients, and commuting members. Each team member is focused on sharing roles to insure the clients are served. Teamwork is evident among the staff members to insure that the vision, mission,

and goals of the project are met. Teamwork is evident between the project and the community to insure that systems do not obstruct services from being delivered to those in need. A dialogue is always open between agencies, churches, community leadership and government. The team is dedicated to sacrificing individual needs for the benefit of the bigger vision. The team will stand up so the voice of those without a voice can be heard.

- The Director, Bob Wilkins, is highly visible in the Mission and within the church and community. Dr. Wilkins has empowered the HHH team by delegation, by vision casting, and by focusing on serving. This frees the staff and volunteers to lead, serve, listen, and vision without constantly seeking permission. Dr. Wilkins, who recently obtained his Doctor of Divinity degree, completed his dissertation on team-building. The benefits for his staff included the encouragement of a strong, long tenured leadership core. Throughout the core group the intent, vision, mission, and understanding of the project's purpose will remain regardless of who is the Director. This experience is beneficial in bringing new people on board to the HHH mission.
- What on the surface may appear as "churning leadership", on the Board (moving core leaders from role to role) is a way to cross-train the Board and bring about full understanding of the Board's varied responsibilities. The Board is actively involved. The monthly meeting held during lunch at Crim Memorial United Methodist Church is very well attended. Committees are actively involved.
- The financial status and budget reveals healthy stability and secure continuity. There are diversified funding streams. There is short-term and long-term cash availability. This is no hoarding of resources, yet a free, well organized plan of serving and giving. The finances are solvent. Strong ecumenical support is evident. The 2005 audit report was provided.
- There are intentional efforts to break the cycle of dependency within each service. From the first intake contact with the client, assessments and referrals are made to carefully guide and direct individuals through a cycle of dependency towards independence. Each staff member voiced a desire to giving a "hand-up" rather than a "hand-out". Clients are encouraged to have a vested interest within the assistance they receive. Creativity is evident in the provision of types of services provided. The Garden Market is an excellent example of directing clients towards some degree of self sufficiency.
- As a full elder in the UMC Conference, Dr. Wilkins helped with the Mon-Valley District Charge Conferences and in turn, received a special offering from each church. This was coordinated by the District Superintendent, David Jasper. The District Superintendent affirms the working of HHH as a valid, fruitful ministry of the UMC.
- HHH leadership is highly visible and respected within the daily life of the community. The Director is, in fact, on the city counsel. The City Manager, Karen Weaver, stated that she often calls the HHH Director or the Assistant Director, Mike Miller, for advice on various items concerning the town.
- All sales through the thrift stores and garden market are computerized to indicate possible sales trends or problems. Excellent organization is threaded throughout all the stores for maximum results.

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- There is strong staff tenure. There is limited turnover since the last review.
- HHH has volunteered to give their policies, procedures, and by-laws as examples and models for other mission projects. The Director recently helped in the restructuring of a struggling mission project. Through his guidance that mission project is now functioning more efficiently.
- HHH is on the cutting edge of technology with a website which includes their monthly calendar, pictures of collectible thrift store items, and daily-updated pictures of work teams and information.

Summary and Recommendation

The Review and Evaluation Team carefully reviewed the informational packet given out. The individual interviews and the tours also helped with the assessment process. The Team unanimously agreed that the Heart and Hand House is providing a very vital and critical Christ-centered service to the people of this community. Organizational patterns and clear foresight are evident throughout each element of their workings.

The Team recommends that the Heart and Hand House staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors continually strive for Christ's purpose in the life of this mission project. It is the prayer of the Review and Evaluation Team that the Heart and Hand House mission project will be abundantly blessed as they: "aim for perfection, be of one mind, and live in peace" (2 Corinthians 13: 11).