

Heart and Hand Ministries



Serving Barbour County, West Virginia

Fall/Christmas 2008



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*Heart and Hand
Ministries*

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A Unique Partnership

"I want to remind us one more time that the Mission of the United Methodist Church is making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To this end, I want to remind us that a critical issue facing this conference, as we strive to launch into a future with hope, is the representative ministry that we do together as we support ministries like mission projects and campus ministries."

Bishop Ernest S. Lyght
West Virginia Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church



Heart and Hand is a mission project affiliated with the United Methodist Church, with several binding denominational ties that have deep roots and long histories. Since the Ministry was established in 1965 this is to be expected. Some summer work teams from western Pennsylvania United Methodist churches have been coming to do home repairs for over twenty-five years. There are many United Methodist women's units that have been supporting our Layette Program (newborn items) since its inception back in the 1970s. The focus of this article, however, is to highlight and praise the West Virginia Annual Conference (WVAC) for its continued support and encouragement.

Our connection to the WVAC is monitored by the Division of Missions. This is the committee responsible for evaluating our operations and making budget requests on our behalf to the WVAC. The response of the WVAC is

overwhelming and shows a sincere commitment on behalf of all United Methodists in West Virginia to alleviate hunger and the causes of poverty.

The director's salary, housing allowance, workers compensation, and pension are a major part the money provided. This has two additional benefits. First, it is a big relief to the ministry budget. Since the salary is guaranteed, the Board of Directors can concentrate on funding our programs. Second, money donated to the Ministry can be put into programs and not salaries. In addition to salary support, the Division of Missions also supports our programs. They have another line in their budget identified as "Work Funds." This is money they provide to help us do what has to be done. The WV Conference Board of Trustees pays our vehicle and building insurance. Having a commitment from the WVAC allows us to start each year with substantial

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A Unique Partnership (cont'd)

funding in place. Our finance team and Board are better able to plan and implement a realistic budget and array of programs.

This paragraph is directed to WVAC members. Please pay your Apportionment—Fair Share Giving! This is the source of the conference budget funds. The WVAC can't give us what they don't have, regardless of whether it's in the budget or not. Whatever percent the churches pay is the same percent that the Ministry gets funded. Simple enough.

In addition, there are Boards and Divisions within the WVAC that often help us fund specific programs for continuation and expansion of services. Our nutrition efforts, youth tutors and Native American activities all have benefited from conference support.

The money that is pledged to us each year by the WVAC averages \$60,000. This is a major commitment and needs to not only be recognized but celebrated. We have no other single source donor whose funding comes close to matching these dollars. Because the West Virginia Annual Conference has been a special partner, our ministry has survived some very tough times. Heart and Hand is very fortunate to have mission-oriented people serving and directing our annual conference. Their prayerful insights have contributed to the successful ministries that we are able to provide to our community.

So it is with a grateful heart that we give tribute to the West Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

New Warehouse Facility

Our Community Garden Market has a companion building that was erected this summer. The structure is our new warehouse, and it is almost twice the size of the old building. It is not totally finished yet, but we are very close. Several work teams took on the project this summer, and the shell went up in no time. Our old warehouse was in need of some serious repairs and rather than just fix it, we were able to trade the old building for foundation work on a completely new and improved one. On one side the building will house our home repair supplies, portable generators and will have a small heated paint room. The other side



will be for larger overflow inventory items from our thrift stores, such as furniture and appliances.

The building was designed not only to match the outside of the existing market that sits next to it, but in case the market needs to be expanded, the build-

ing can be compartmentalized and ready for consignment vendors during the market season. Next summer, depending on prices of oil, we hope to pave the parking area. The improvements come as we try to meet the growing needs in the area with practical solutions.

More than Toys

The phone call from the sheriff's deputy was short but upsetting. A grandmother out in the country had her home broken into and among the items stolen were the toys she had bought for her three grandchildren that stayed with her. It was two days before Christmas and she was out of time, money and hope. The deputy, having worked with us before, was sure Heart and Hand would be able to help out and restore some Christmas spirit to this family.

Our staff loves a challenge, and when it comes to restoring hope for a family they will rise to the occasion. Because of the generosity of our Toy Store contributors we had several items for the grandmother to choose from to replace those that were taken. We also had underwear, hats and gloves available for the children. Wrapping paper and tape were included, as well. Everything was provided at no cost.

The woman confided in us that when she discovered the extent of the break-in she was devastated and couldn't think clearly. She wasn't sure how she would tell the grandchildren and even worse, she didn't want to disappoint them. Knowing that Heart and Hand would assist her changed her whole composure. As she talked with our staff they were able to assess other needs resulting from the robbery and talk about ways to feel and be safe and secure in her home. Spending a little time with her and listening to her situation made all the difference in her outlook. She said she was

more than relieved; she was blest.

All through November we have shoppers scouring the stores for best buys on toys. Many are designated by their church or Sunday School class to buy toys that will be delivered to us. Others are from offices and businesses that have opted to get toys for our program rather than do a gift exchange among employees. There are several days and evenings that volunteers get together and set up the toy store in our Community Center building. During the first two weeks in December we open the store to eligible families and let them shop at their own pace. They can select up to five new toys per child, along with stuffed animals, coloring books and reading books.

There are several sections of the store designated for specialty items. Hats, gloves and underwear are in one area, while wrapping paper, tape and batteries are in another section. Christmas decorations are also available. As shoppers leave the building there is another section of good condition used toys to supplement what was already selected. We try very hard to make the experience a pleasurable one that will not only help families be able to provide suitable Christmas toys for their children, but also preserve parental self esteem. Toys are priced at 50% of retail cost and all items are priced under \$8. If a customer is unable to pay there is no charge for the toys.

Our Christmas Toy Store this year is gearing up to help provide toys and winter wear for over 300 children. This means we will need at least 1,500 new toys and many gently used ones. Games, which are nice items for older children, are always in short supply. If you would like to support our Toy Store by shopping for gifts or volunteering when the store is open or just underwriting the project with a gift, please call the office at 304.457.1295 for information. We hope there is no repeat of the incident that the grandmother experienced, but if there is another incident in the community our staff and volunteers will be ready to help. At Heart and Hand—We are more than toys!



Christmas Gift Idea



How about a puzzle? Heart and Hand has a 500+ piece puzzle, featuring a photo of the Philippi covered bridge spanning the Tygart River, available for gift giving. Prices are \$10 if picked up at the office and \$15 if mailed (includes postage). What a nice way to support our ministry and have some fun at the same time!

Heart and Hand Ministries
P.O. Box 128
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Address Service Requested



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Comments from the Director **A Busy Season**

There is constant activity around the buildings that comprise the ministry of Heart and Hand. The Community Center is having activities for middle school children on the lower level, while we set up the upper floor (old worship center) for the Christmas Toy Store. The Community Garden Market, now closed, is being used for temporary storage while our new storage facility is completed. A couple more work team weekends and the building should be ready to use. The Thrift Stores are having more requests for

warmer clothing as the cold weather is here to stay. Between sorting, displaying, and selling, the clerks and volunteers handle over 15,000 items per month. Requests for assistance always increase during this time of year, too. Flue fires and kerosene stove fires leave several families homeless every fall/winter, keeping our assistance crew busy helping with food, clothing, furniture and other necessary items. Regardless of the season people need help, and because you care we are able to be there.

Thank you,
Bob Wilkins

