

MLM VISIONS

Bible Verses Make for Extraordinary Connection

A recent series of coincidences at Metro Lutheran Ministry illustrated how “little” things can have dramatic impact.

Shirley Sword is a member of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Overland Park. A dedicated volunteer, her efforts are sometimes limited because of transportation. While she serves regularly at the Blessings Abound Thrift Store and other locations, she also stays alert for opportunities she can do on her own. That’s why she recalled a tradition from her hometown church in Illinois.

“They would put Bible verses on little cards and keep them by the church door,” she explained. “You take one on your way out and, even though it was just random, it was like God talking to you. It was amazing how often the verse you picked would speak to a concern that you had that day. They are simple, but uplifting.”

Shirley decided she could make a contribution by creating similar cards here. Although at first she shared them only at her church, pretty soon they were being passed out at other locations. When she met MLM Outreach Ministries Director Suzanne Bartling, they decided the cards would be a good addition to MLM as well.

“They are very popular with the clients,” Suzanne noted. “We have them in all our wait-



MLM client Richard Nash and volunteer Shirley Sword: connected by verses from the Bible, and hope.

ing areas.”

That’s where Richard Nash entered the picture. Formerly homeless, Richard utilizes MLM services and is currently enrolled in classes to earn his general equivalency diploma as part of his goal of landing a job. His inspirational turnaround featured in a video about MLM was created last year by a volunteer (which is now posted on the MLM web site, www.mlmc.org). While visiting MLM, Richard happened upon the cards.

“They speak to you,” he agreed. “They’re an
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Heritage Foundation: A Way to Cast a Long Shadow

One of MLM’s most revered leaders is part of an increasingly important support effort.

...a continuing legacy that carries on beyond your own life something that you were interested in while you were here.

a planned gift to continue MLM efforts even after their lives have

Kal Makela, a founding member of MLM, is among several past and present organizers who continue to remain active in the MLM Heritage Society, the organization that recognizes and promotes long-term giving efforts that support MLM’s services for the homeless and needy in metropolitan Kansas City. These living stakeholders have notified MLM that they have made

ended.

Kal puts it in simple terms. “People should plan so that when they pass out of the picture, they can commit part of their estate or whatever it is to go to support MLM. People like myself who are living on a limited retirement income can still have an impact. It will provide a contin-
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More information on these and other stories is always available at www.mlmc.org, or (816) 931-0027

MLM works hard to minimize expenses.
Ninety percent of designated gifts go directly to programs.

Making a Connection that Shares the Word

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inspiration.”

Since then, Richard has never been without a pocket full of the cards. He leaves them at the library or store, hands them out at bus stops or just about everywhere he goes. He’s never had anyone

turn one down, and often sees the kind of reaction that he hopes for.

“Maybe someone’s having a bad day and they get one of those cards and it helps,” he explained. “They get a word from God and their day might be a little brighter. I love distributing them.”

To date, Shirley and Richard have not met, but the two obviously share something that is fundamental to MLM.

“I’ve been blessed,” Shirley explains. “This is an opportunity for me to share something I believe in.”

New President Sees Growing Need for MLM Services

Vicki Westerhaus could probably be called a glutton for punishment.

A corporate attorney specializing in business transactions with the prestigious Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP, she is also active as a Lutheran volunteer in several areas—including her current service as president of the MLM Board of Directors.

“I really like MLM because it focuses on basic human needs,” she explained. “It keeps people in their homes; it helps them with food and other basic issues. I like that.”

A native of Omaha, Neb., Vicki came to metropolitan Kansas City nearly 20 years ago to practice law here.

Soon after she joined Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Vicki was asked by former president Lisa Peck to join the MLM board and to “get involved”. With

her husband, Doug, Vicki began to volunteer for MLM activities, even bringing their youngest children, David, 6 and Nick, 3.

“It’s good to take the boys to events to help so they understand the wonderful work that MLM does, and to appreciate the need in our community,” she explained.

“My husband, Doug has also been involved in several areas, and we thought it was a good way to become better acquainted in our church and in the community.”

Two years ago, Vicki’s increasing involvement led her to be named to the MLM Board of Directors. “The more I get to know members of the MLM staff, the more impressed I am with how much they do with limited resources. I think it’s one of MLM’s strengths: they help a



Vicki Westerhaus: looking to grow grassroots support.

tremendous number of people, especially given what they have to work with.”

Vicki hopes MLM’s resources can be increased. “One of my hopes and the board’s vision is to expand our basic support,” she said. “I’d especially like to see us build the grassroots support from individual Lutherans.”

Heritage Foundation: A Way to Cast a Long Shadow



Kal Makela: a way to carry on something you believed in when you were here.

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uing legacy that carries on beyond your own life something that you were interested in while you were here.”

Now 94, Kal was among the original area members of the two Lutheran ministries that in the 1970s led to MLM. “From the start, we concentrated on serving the poor in both Kansas Cities (Missouri and Kansas),” he said. “It’s been a great thing to be involved in.”

Kal believes that MLM has been effective and creative at identifying new sources to continue these services, but the challenge of funding is always critical, especially today.

“Metro Lutheran Ministry has been very good at using very little of its money

for administration,” he said. “They’ve done very well considering the economic stresses.”

Kal noted that MLM is endorsed by others as well. He cited support shown by other denominations and government agencies that recognize MLM’s efficient and effective services. “I know there are many non-Lutheran organizations that give their support. I think that shows the trust that is invested in MLM. It reflects that MLM is able to do its job and do it efficiently.”

If you would like to become a member of the Heritage Society or qualify for membership as you have made a planned gift in your estate plan, please call Jim Glynn, 816.285.3117.

Community Needs Not Always Obvious, But Often Dramatic

I think most of us get a renewed sense of hope when we go through the Easter season and spring is in the air. This year, the stock market improved during this period and many middle class Americans have new hope about a restoration of their standard of living. On the other hand, the poor and homeless in our midst have a different outlook.

We at MLM experience the people we serve to be faith filled and hopeful about their salvation as Christians. They have less reason to be hopeful about finding a job if they are unemployed. Employment is a lagging indicator of economic recovery. Even as investment portfolios for the middle class begin to increase again, our nation's rate of unemployment is expected to increase for months to come. What

that means for those who are unemployed is that low paying, temporary and entry-level jobs have scores (sometimes hundreds) of applicants for each opening.



Jim Glynn sees reasons for hope and a call for action.

The sense of hopelessness can be overwhelming.

That is where we come in. By "we" I mean all of us who are committed to follow the teachings of Jesus and extend a hand to our brothers and sisters in need. We can all help with our dollars and our time. We thank our faithful stakeholders for helping us weather the current financial storm to date. In order for MLM to continue saying "yes" to the people desperately seeking assistance and hope, we need you to say "yes" by sharing your resources (dollars and time) in ways that your hearts lead you. If you wish more information about how you can help, please give me a call at 816.285.3117.

Blessings to you,
Jim Glynn, Executive Director

New Care Coordinator Sees Growing Need in the Community

Don Baston joined MLM in February as the new emergency assistance coordinator.

A native of Kansas City, Ks., Don spent 23 years in Houston, Tx., where he earned a bachelor of business administration from Letourneau University, a masters degree from the Houston Graduate School of Theology, and graduated from the Dallas Seminary Extension School.

While there, he also served as supervisor of Community Outreach and Marketing for the MethodistCare STAR Health Plan and as community education specialist for the University of Texas, Harris County Psychiatric Center.

After returning to this area, he served in a Kansas substance abuse treatment center and served as Jackson County Outreach Manager for United Services Community Action Agency and at the Kansas City, Ks., Workforce Partnership. He is also an associate pastor at Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Kansas City.

Don is impressed with MLM's services, and says they are especially critical today. "A middle aged man came in the other day" Don recalled. "He had been a journeyman carpenter who had made \$45 an hour, but was laid off. Suddenly he found himself doing day labor for \$25 a day. He was a microcosm of our new poor—people who have never faced this."

Others face not job loss but a reduction in hours that are often less steady as well. "They need assistance," he said. "Many times, they just don't know what to do."



Don Baston helps MLM meet a growing need in metro Kansas City.



MLM Midnight Volleyball was a big success in January. This all-night event for high school students drew players from throughout the KC area and raised awareness of the needs in the KC area. Many, like this group from Advent Lutheran Church, subsequently became more involved in MLM.

CICSE Event A Success

Metro Lutheran Ministry once again joined the Congregational Inner-City Servant Event (CICSE Event) hosted by Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Leawood, Saturday, May 2.

Working with MLM, the church identified low-income elderly and disabled homeowners who need help with minor home repair projects. More than 100-plus volunteers participated in a "Join Hands Day" servant event. The Lord of Life Lutheran planning team handled all details of the event including lunches, funds for materials and training of Project Coordinators.

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"with God all things are possible." —Matthew 19:26

Hunger Awareness Panel Featured In Annual Lecture

Leaders in the battle against world hunger will join for a discussion May 29 as part of the annual Metro Lutheran Ministry Dykman Lecture Series.

Advent Lutheran Church in Olathe will host the event featuring a four-member panel discussing work being done to combat hunger by the Lutheran Churches. The group will include Don Baston, Metro Lutheran Ministry; Tom Eckard, Lutheran Mission of the Good Shepherd; Barbara Hoffmann, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Relief;

and Human Care Pastor John Schroepel, Lutheran World Hunger Advocate.

The dialog will focus on the three million children who die because of hunger—each year. In the United States, more than one out of every 10 households—some 35 million people—face the risk of hunger. In metro Kansas City, MLM has been forced to limit visits to their food pantries due to the high demand for food, while other organizations face similar shortages.

The panel will discuss the Lutheran Church's response to hunger, providing insights into the current crisis and how the community can participate in showing Christ's love to others by reaching out to the hungry in our midst.

The annual lecture series is named in honor of former board president and perennial MLM leader Loyd W. Dykman. Although admission is free, seating is limited so for more information or to reserve seats, call Suzanne Bartling at (816) 931-0027.



Hannah Proctor leads a Northland effort that provides backpacks for school children.

Scout Effort Helps Northland MLM

Hannah Proctor received the Girl Scout Gold Award March 28 for organizing a Back to School Fair for students in the North Kansas City School District for MLM Northland.

MLM Northland Coordinator Jeani Wells was project mentor, while financial and volunteer support came from St. James Lutheran Church.

Operated by MLM Northland and United Services, the annual fair is held at

St. James with 25 vendors such as Healthe Kids, Clay County Health Department, DARE, and IdentiChild. Health screenings as well as fun activities for the kids were available. Each school-aged child was provided with a backpack filled with school supplies plus hygiene kits for each family. In 2008, 520 students received backpacks. The 2009 Back to School Fair will be held on August 6.