

MLM VISIONS

Volunteers Find Hunger Is Real and Widespread

Craig Lorenzen admits he's been deeply gratified with his volunteer service this year helping with MLM Saturday food distributions. He's also gotten a free education.

"It started in January," Craig recalled. "That first morning the wind chill was like 15 below zero. We got to MLM and witnessed these people standing in line for food. Some had been there at 4 a.m. and they were just frozen. We were amazed that people today could have so much need for a basic commodity—food."

Craig is one of several volunteers from Christ Lutheran Church who have joined MLM's growing Saturday food distribution program.



MLM's bi-monthly food distribution draws a lines of people, even in bitter cold. Staff and volunteers check clients in and welcome participants.

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The program this year was expanded to two Saturdays each month in order to meet increasing need. Fortunately, volunteers and supporters have generally kept pace, ensuring the program runs smoothly by helping to cook hotdogs or carry boxes of commodities for the older clients or those with a disability.

"It's a real eye opener to see the need right in our community," Lorenzen explained. "It makes you realize what this is all about. It's pretty rewarding to be part of that."

Craig noted that several in his group had sought a hands-on experience but had received even more. "The people are so grateful and so friendly," he said. "We've made friends down there that we look forward to seeing every month."

It's also an education of MLM programs. "A lot of us have chosen to support MLM through United Way at work and through matching programs," he explained. "But when you get down there and see what MLM is made of and what they do, it can't help but touch your heart."

Long-Time Supporter Leaves Memories and More

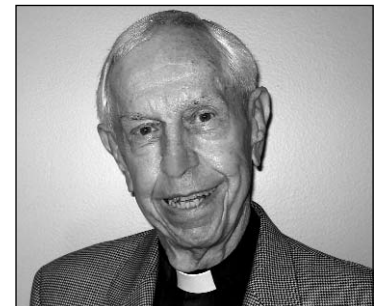
Metro Lutheran Ministry lost a long-time supporter and constant leader with the death earlier this year of the Rev. David Ebersole. Although 77, even his death while snorkeling in Hawaii was typical of his energy and zest for life.

To most involved with MLM and the region's Lutheran communities, Ebersole was a constant source of inspiration and guidance. He was still active, leading the latest in a series of area

Lutheran churches he served as interim pastor. He was also an avid gardener, ballroom dancer and a person deeply committed to helping others.

Ebersole served as a pastor in Pennsylvania from 1959 to 1982. In 1984, Ebersole became the pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Kansas City, North, where he served until his retirement in 1988. Shortly after he retired, however, Ebersole started filling in as interim pastor for area

congregations, including Children's Memorial Lutheran
(please continue to Page 2)



Rev. David Ebersole: his impact continues.

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

Life Skill Training In Demand with Tough Job Market

The increase in demand for MLM's food distribution and pantry programs has been visible with the recent economic upheaval. Less visible, an equally important effort occurs at the Chael-Dykman Education Center and MLM's life skills training.

Cachet Montgomery, life skills and employment assistance coordinator, and Bruce Miller, project care family case manager, report that the number of clients there has increased—and so have their individual challenges.

"Sometimes even people with credentials just don't get the job," Bruce explained. "It's a tough job market, to say the least."

The center offers a row of computers with Internet access to allow for online applications, a virtual requirement in today's job market. At times, lines stretch

behind the computers as clients wait for their turn to work on resumes, complete applications and learn computer skills.

"Our clients have a real challenge," Bruce said. "They may be trying to take care of their children and not even have a home, but they have to show up for an interview looking positive. They're under a lot of pressure."

Many of the individuals have trouble using computers, which are critical for almost everyone in today's job market. MLM is increasingly seeing those who held a good job among the homeless.

Despite the challenges, there are successes. Cachet instituted a practice of placing paper stars with the names of graduates who have found a job. The program has been so successful that a second wall is now filling with stars.



Cachet Montgomery and Bruce Miller report waiting lines are common at MLM's Education Center where clients learn job skills and submit applications.

Years of Service, Years of Need Meet at Wyandotte

MLM's Wyandotte County office this fall is passing two very important anniversaries. In October, coordinator Yvonne Brown marked her 30th year and, in November, the Wyandotte center celebrated 35 years.

Located in the basement of St. Luke's Lutheran Church at 722 Reynolds, Kansas City, Kan., the center is reached by walking down two flights of concrete stairs to the church basement.

"If those steps weren't concrete, they'd be worn through from all the foot-steps of people who have come here for help," Yvonne said. "After 35 years, there have been thousands of people who have come down those steps to get help."

Yvonne has personally talked to most

of those people. She shakes her head at the challenges facing a majority who come.

"Often, it's a combination of things," she said. "A lost job or even lost jobs, sickness, you name it."

Yvonne has seen many changes as well. "The first of this year, the number of Hispanics that we see increased dramatically," she noted. "In many cases, it was because their (work) hours were being cut. They're employed, but when they are cut to four or three days a week, they can't make it."

The economy is a factor in other ways. "We're getting people in who weren't in

poverty before. It's a real shock."

The stimulus program has been one positive. "Several of those programs have especially helped with food supplies. We are also increasing partnerships with organizations such as the Workforce Partnership and that helps. It's difficult today to be effective without good partnerships."

Yvonne has no plan for retirement. Although she has gained a healthy level of skepticism, she has no doubt that God put her at the Wyandotte location for a purpose. "I ask more questions," she laughed. "But I think I've also grown spiritually and that's important."

Supporter Leaves Memories and More

(continued from Page 1)

Church in Kansas City and Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Prairie Village.

At the time of his death, Ebersole was interim pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Atchison, Kan. He was involved with MLM at many levels, including the organization's Heritage

Society, living stakeholders who have notified MLM that they have made a planned gift to MLM. Following Pastor Ebersole's death, the family requested that in lieu of flowers, you may honor his memory with a donation to Metro Lutheran Ministry, 3031 Holmes, Kansas City, MO 64109.



Yvonne Brown has seen thousands of needy in her 30 years with MLM.

Saying "Yes" In Our Walk As Christians

Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21, NRSV).

Those who know scripture recall that Jesus was talking to a young man who wanted to follow Him but walked away sadly because he was rich and did not have courage to do what Jesus asked.

Don't we all have weakness of faith when we know our blessings exceed our needs and we don't share our resources with people who are hurting? When we take that extra step of faith and help others, our return on investment is clear and immediate. We feel joy and satisfaction for having said "yes" in our walk as Christians.

Every day at MLM we say, "yes" to wounded people in crisis because those

who share our mission have said, "yes" through dollars, cans of food and gifts for our Christmas Store. During the last year, the needs of our community have



Jim Glynn: The needs of our community have increased dramatically, but so has your generosity.

increased dramatically, but so has your generosity.

We need you more than ever as we go forward. Unemployment is likely to stay high for many months. The people we serve are unemployed at a much higher rate than the community at large. Often, they have no savings and live from day to day with long odds of finding a job in the near future.

We are grateful that MLM's doors are open and welcome people in crisis at St. James, St. Luke's and on Holmes Street. It is our privilege to "love and serve the Lord" by helping others. We invite you to join us by sharing your blessings with people who are hurting. Support our mission by volunteering your time or sending a cash gift to help others.

Blessings to you,
Jim Glynn, Executive Director

Chiefs Tickets Help Kids, Parents and—Yes—Players

Twenty MLM clients—mostly children and parents—recently attended a Kansas City Chief's game thanks to the Fox4 Television Love Fund for Children, a weekly raffle that provides some much-appreciated fun for area residents in need.

Director Lisa Herring said the tickets are provided by two players who enjoy helping area young people, Branden Albert and Brian Waters. "A lot of times the kids write letters to them after the game," Herring noted. "They post those in the locker room. It really means something to the players."

The program also provided parking, food vouchers and a Chief's cap for each participant. Later, a party will be held at Arrowhead and the players will sign autographs and talk with the children about making good choices.

"It's just a wonderful opportunity," said MLM Caseworker Jeanette Jones "The kids love it, and for the parents its something they couldn't otherwise do."

Christmas and More On the MLM Calendar

The 2009 Christmas Store has been scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 9 through Saturday, Dec. 12 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1700 Westport Road.

Volunteers have prepared for more than 1,000 families. The store provides Christmas shopping to improve the quality of life for families, older adults and other individuals not able to do for themselves.

Other calendar items:

- Ten Thousand Villages, 7947 Sante Fe Drive, Overland Park, is hosting a Metro Lutheran Ministry benefit shopping day on Sunday, Dec 20 from 1 to 5 p.m. Fifteen percent of all proceeds that day will be donated to MLM. Ten Thousand Villages is a fair trade retailer of artisan-crafted home decor, persona accessories and gift items from more than 130 artisan groups in some 38 developing or third world countries.

- The MLM Spring Fling—March 6 2010 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Long-time MLM veteran Faye Cowee is back as a parttime receptionist.



Gwen Hixson is among MLM's volunteers who have been handing out devotionals during food distribution programs.

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



POEO: A Night To Remember

The Power of Each One Event was a moving highlight to the 2009 year for MLM and its supporters. With more than 300 in attendance, highlights included (clockwise, from left):



accepting accolades for her late husband Pastor David Ebersole; Yvonne Brown honored for 30 years of service; performances by Joseph and Sue Martin with the Advent Lutheran Church Choir. More information and photographs on this and other stories are at the MLM Web site, www.mlmc.org.

