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Movie to feature Wiley College historic debate team

A United Methodist News Service Report
By Linda Green

It is not every day that Denzel Washington and Oprah Winfrey do a movie together about a historically black college with fewer than 1,000 students.

But that's what happened when the pair learned about a David and Goliath match up in which Wiley College's 1935 debate team won a national championship against Harvard University and also beat other perennial oratorical powerhouses.

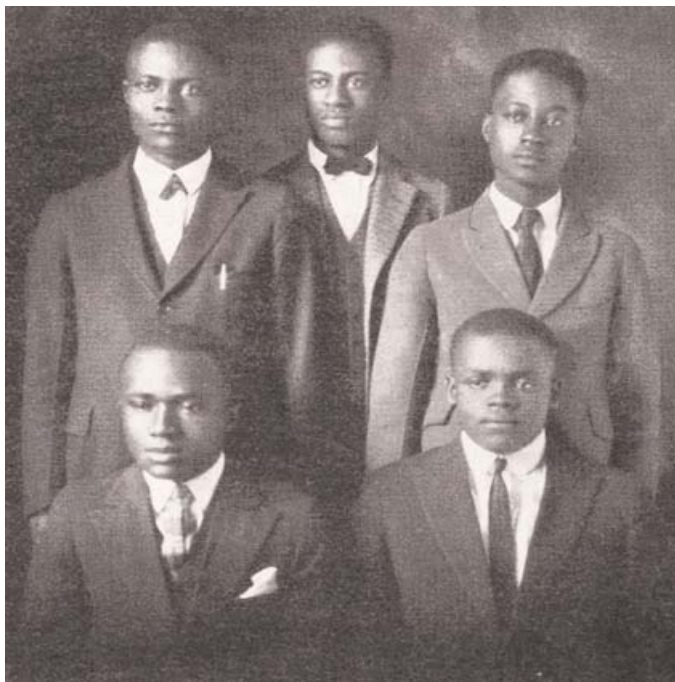
In 2004, the United Methodist-related College in Marshall, Texas, began to receive inquiries from Hollywood about Melvin B. Tolson, leader of Wiley's first debate team.

"We started getting calls and researching ourselves for them," said Veronica Clark, Wiley's director of public relations.

The Wiley staff learned that over a 15-year period, Tolson's teams lost only one of 75 debates. The Wiley Forensic Society competed against historically black colleges, but earned national attention with its debates against the University of Southern California and Harvard University. The winning team was composed of four men (including Tolson) and one woman.

"After we did our research, it was submitted to Mr. Washington

and the production company, and from there a script was developed," said Clark.



Melvin B. Tolson (center) led the Wiley College debate team to a U.S. championship in 1935 with a win over Harvard University. The story is depicted in the movie, "The Great Debaters," scheduled for release December 25.

UMNS photos courtesy of Wiley College

The Great Debaters

Scheduled for release December 25, "The Great Debaters" is being produced by Winfrey's Harpo Productions. Washington is both director and star. Filming began in early 2006 and wrapped over the summer. Most of the scenes were filmed in Louisiana with brief scenes on the Wiley campus and at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

"Everyone is extremely excited," Clark said. "It is not every day that Denzel Washington and Oprah Winfrey want to do a movie about a college, especially one about a college our size." The liberal arts college has 926 students enrolled.

"As soon as we learned of the

movie at Wiley, the alumni have just been bombarding the college with telephone calls," Clark said.

"This is exciting. It just doesn't get any better than this. Not to mention that a great story is being told about newbies coming onto the debate scene and doing so well."

The Marshall community also was excited about Washington's arrival. "He came to campus in sweatpants and a baseball cap," said Clark. "He was here to work (and) he was very approachable."

Since racial diversity was needed in the film, students and community members came out in droves. Other actors in the film include Forest Whitaker, Columbus Short, Jermaine Williams, J.D.

Evermore, John Heard, Kimberly Elise, Nate Parker, Justice Leak, Jurnee Smollett and Denzel Whitaker.

The story of Melvin Tolson

Tolson was born in 1898 in Moberly, Mo., to a Methodist Episcopal pastor and his wife. His father served churches in Missouri and Iowa.

A graduate of historically black Lincoln (Pa.) University, Tolson was hired by Wiley College in 1924 to teach English and speech. He also coached junior varsity football, directed the theater club and organized the Wiley Forensic Society.

Tolson was a mentor and teacher to civil rights activist James Farmer Jr. and Herman

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Getting involved

Teens on a mission

UMYUL (United Methodist Young Unique Ladies), a teen unit modeled after UMW gets involved in missions in their community. Story on pages 4 and 5.

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The mission of the Texas Annual Conference is to equip congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world to the glory of God.

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Sneed Memorial UMC gets new additions

By Thelma Jones
Editor, Cross Connection

The historical roots of the United Methodist Church run deep in Texas. Hundreds of churches can trace their beginning back over more than a century.

Sneed Memorial UMC is just such a church. Founded in 1869, it has been in existence for

To pay for the walkway and the lift, a series of community-wide fundraisers were conducted. When the modifications were finished, the church held a dedication ceremony that included the members and others in the community. Dr. Earl Bledsoe, West District superin-



Dr. Earl Bledsoe (left) and Rev. Gene Bixler with the congregation of Sneed Memorial UMC. The church held a dedication ceremony for a new walkway and chair lift that gives easier accessibility to the elderly and physically challenged.

138 years. The present building was built in 1929 with the sanctuary on the second story and a fellowship hall and class rooms in the basement. New modifications have been added recently to Sneed Memorial.

In order to be more accessible to older parishioners and the physically challenged, a chair lift at the front entrance of the church and a street level walkway to the basement entrance have been added. Additionally, one of the restrooms in the basement has been modified to be more accessible.

"We have some elderly members who struggle to climb the stairs to our sanctuary or to our basement," says Rev. Gene Bixler, senior pastor. "We decided to modify our church simply because it needed to be done."

tendent was the guest preacher and speaker.

Sneed Memorial has an enthusiastic approach to evangelism. When asked about connections to its community, Rev. Bixler was quick to turn the focus to the church's presence in the community. "There is a church of another denomination that holds services twice monthly in our facility. When their church is not conducting services, some of their members join us for worship."

"Our church's activities have drawn four new members to the congregation, including two since the dedication ceremony," says Bixler. "Now the community can join us in reaping the benefit of their generosity."

Historically Black college focus of upcoming movie

Continued from page 1



United Methodist-related Wiley College is a historically Black school in Texas.

Sweat, an African American who was refused admission into the University of Texas Law School. Action by the law school resulted in a Supreme Court decision that challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine of racial segregation, a policy established by the 1896 case of Plessey vs. Ferguson.

He left Wiley in 1947 to teach at historically black Langston (Okla.) University. That same year, Liberia declared him its poet laureate. Beginning in 1952, he served two terms as mayor of all-black Langston. He died in 1966.

Resurrecting a legacy

The movie has instilled a sense of pride in the students and the Marshall community. The debate team, defunct after Tolson left the school in 1947, was resurrected in the last academic year and won a debate against Morehouse University. Clark called the win "icing on the cake."

In an interview with the Marshall (Texas) News Messenger, Washington said he thought the Wiley debaters "would be just a really wonderful story to tell. It's about the spoken word — something you don't see much in film — and about education and about debating."

Washington said this part of the story of blacks in America needs to be told — that there is a huge gap between the end of the Civil War and the climax of the civil rights struggle in 1964. He called the movie a "David and Goliath" story.

He also said the spoken word is an important part of current hip-hop culture, and the debating film shows the roots of that tradition. "Our oral history is rich and deep, and debating is a big part of it, a part I didn't know about. It's something I want to share on the film with others," he told the newspaper.

Wiley College is the first historically black college west of the Mississippi River. It was founded in 1873 by Bishop Isaac Wiley of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Freedman's Aid Society to pre-



A monument to Tolson and his achievement stands on the campus.

pare the newly emancipated people for the future. The college is one of 11 historically black United Methodist-related institutions of higher education and is financially supported by the denomination's Black College Fund.

*Green is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tennessee.

Dare to dream

CLT stays focused on vision of transforming congregations, changing lives

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications
Texas Annual Conference

The Core Leadership Team did nothing but dream during the October meeting.

“Dreamer. Visionary. Those are words that we use today to dismiss people as irrelevant,” said Core Leadership Team member Jack Steele, as he led the group in its devotional time.

going out to make disciples,” Griffin said. “This is about you. I would like to see [laity and clergy] be empowered – to go out and be the driver, be the dreamer.”

For the third month, representatives of District Leadership Teams met with the CLT to dis-

have a world view for missions,” said Rev. Jerry House Jr., who represents the West District on the CLT.

Among the highlights of the West District report was the upcoming LEAD Institute. LEAD stands for Leadership, Education and Development. The January

“A dream is the way God steps into our lives and speaks a new word, unfolds new possibilities, invites us to a new reality.”

Jack Steele
Core Leadership Team Member

“But, the Bible is filled with dreamers and visionaries. We could quickly name a number: Abraham, Jeremiah, Haggai, Elijah, Joseph, Mary, Elizabeth, Paul, Peter.”

Centered on Jeremiah 31:31-34, Steele explored the role of dreaming and vision casting in a fruitful ministry.

“A dream is the way God steps into our lives and speaks a new word, unfolds new possibilities, invites us to a new reality,” Steele said.

Being visionary requires one to look into the future – the preferred future. Some of the questions asked around the CLT table October 18 to shape that discussion were: “Where do we want to be at the end of the quadrennium?”

and “How do we get there?”

Stephanie Griffin, North District Lay Leader and CLT member, suggested that one way of reaching the goal is to focus on empowering the laity and clergy of the annual conference.

“This is not about the Bishop, the district or the center leaders

cuss their district’s ministry plan and evidence of fruitfulness thus far. Presenting in October were the Central North, Central South and West districts.

Equipping dreamers

Achieving a dream or living into the vision of one’s future often requires people to learn new skills. Districts are stepping up throughout the annual conference to ensure that local church

2008 event will feature Pastors Rudy and Juanita Rasmus of St. John’s UMC in Houston as the keynote speakers. Also on the drawing board, is the West District Lay Academy, said Chuck Samson, West District Leadership Team member.

“Churches would direct leaders or potential leaders to the academy, which would provide instruction not available in any one local church,” Samson said.

In the Central North District, quarterly events have been designed to empower churches to fulfill the vision and mission. The first event is entitled, “How Is It With Your Soul?” The remaining quarterly events will focus on Faith

Forming Relationships, Evidences of Fruitfulness and Charge Conference.

Mark Young, who leads the Central North District Leadership Team, also noted that there will be a district mission retreat and data entry training to assist churches with the Vital Signs

laity and clergy are equipped to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Another aspect of achieving the dream is setting measurable goals.

“By 2010, all West District churches will be known as welcoming, witnessing and transforming congregations, and will



CLT member, Rev. Kenneth Levingston listens to other district presentations after giving the Central South district’s report.

reporting system and DOVE system for clergy records.

One of Young’s dreams is that more attention be given to marketing and advertising of local ministries.

“I think a lot of United Methodist churches are becoming invisible, because we are not marketing,” Young said. “How is [the soul] of your church, and how are you getting this message out to your people?”

“We hope these events will galvanize people.”

Language of dreamers

In the Central South District, the dream is to serve the diverse mission field in a relevant way.

“The Central South District is composed of churches primarily within Beltway 8 in the city of Houston,” said Rev. Kenneth Levingston, who represents the Central South District on the CLT. “Inside Beltway 8 is basically the United Nations. Everyone lives within this area.”

Six languages are spoken in this region and every continent is represented, Levingston added. Central South District Superintendent Rev. Jim Welch noted that diverse ministries are among the districts priorities.

Diversity, in this case, trans-

lates into effective ministries to African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, young adults and those impacted by the justice system. Already worshipping are Living Water Chinese Mission, Newgate Restorative Justice congregation, and, a Vietnamese missionary, Rev. Vinh Ha, has been welcomed to the district.

Additionally, the Central South office will relocate into the heart of the district in November. The new office will be in the Wesley Community Center, just outside of downtown Houston.

“The United Methodist church began as urban ministry,” Welch said. “We as a denomination have deserted our roots and opted for ministry to upper middle class people. The heart of Houston ministry is designed to be a ministry to all people.”

Visit the CLT web page at www.txcumc.org, click Administration and then click Core Leadership Team, to preview the team’s agenda, action items or to e-mail members.

The next meeting is November 16, 2007.



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and Rev. Kip Gilts dialogue about ministry plans in the West district.

Teens of St. Andrew's UMC and United Methodist W

By Thelma Jones
Editor, Cross Connection

Negative reports about today's youth seem to be the standard. The media is full of stories that highlight young people involved in drugs, gangs and violent behavior.

“They are to be commended and applauded for their willingness to serve their fellow man and to give to their church and community a message of love and hope.”

Tiffany Wilson

Where's the church and what is it doing about this situation in the community? Great question. A group of young women from St. Andrew's UMC in the Central South District is answering that question.

UMYUL, (*United Methodist Young Unique Ladies*) of St. Andrew's UMC in Houston, Texas is a group of teens who believe that they can be a source of positive change in their community.

Working with United Methodist Women, UMYUL is practicing extravagant generosity. They started their mission work with a school supply drive, raising over \$200 and collecting donated school supplies for the Star of Hope shelter.

A full flat bed of supplies was delivered to 160 school age children living at the shelter. During a tour of the facilities and interaction with some of the residents, the girls realized that some children were in soaked diapers. Diapers are a 'donated only' item at the shelter; hence, they are in short supply.

This need quickly turned into another project for UMYUL. They began a diaper drive for the shelter. The goal is to be able to provide the Star

of Hope mission with several months' supply of diapers. The delivery date is set for mid-November.

In addition to the Star of Hope mission, they have put

together approximately 80 bags of supplies that were distributed through St. Andrew's church food pantry. The girls have also planned a Harvest Festival complete with candy, games and food, which will give children in the neighborhood a safe, holy place to come to celebrate the blessings of a new fall season.

“Their motivation and willingness to serve others is so exciting,” says Tiffany Wilson, sponsor for the group. “It is such a blessing to see these girls in action!”

It takes a huge step of faith and a spirit of generosity to help your church grow in mission ministry while helping your neighborhood become a better place.

UMYUL has some great ideas in recruiting more girls to join their unit. “They are to be commended and applauded for their willingness to serve their fellow man and to give to their church and community a message of love and hope,” says Wilson. Amen to that. Thank you, St. Andrew's UMC.

*Charlene Fowler,
Communications Coordinator
for United Methodist Women
contributed to this article.*



Top: Star of Hope representative explains how the shelter operates and the services provided.

Bottom: (from left to right) Grace Collins, Gigi Collins and shelter representative share ideas about community involvement.

Women practice “extravagant generosity”



Top Left: Group photo - (Back row) Ciara Meniffee, Carlyle Thompson, Leighanne Weggmann, VeAniqka Griffin and (Front row), Jessica Steptoe, Kiyana Hickman, Grace Collins, and Tiffany Wilson, Sponsor of UMYUL.

Top Right: Carlyle Thompson shows off artwork about world-wide mission at a UMYUL retreat.

Middle Left: School supplies collected are delivered to the Star of Hope Mission by (left to right) Grace Collins, Gigi Collins, Jessica Steptoe, VeAniqka Griffin, Ciara Meniffee, Tiffany Wilson, Kiyana Hickman and Brittany Wiseman.

Middle Right: Leighann Weggmann shows off her artwork at the UMYUL retreat.

Bottom Left: Bags of food and supplies from the church's food pantry were distributed by Jessica Steptoe, Ciara Meniffee, Kiyana Hickman and VeAniqka Griffin.

Linden youth build new ministry for community

By Sharma Castillo, Youth Director
Linden United Methodist Church

The Youth at Linden UMC spent a Saturday in October building a Wheel Chair Ramp for Mr. Simpson, a resident in the Linden community.

Mr. Simpson had not been able to get out of his house for months now. They found out that he had purchased an electric wheel chair but has not ever been able to use it. The Youth ministry decided that they could remedy the situation.

This is the first ramp for this group to build on their own and how excited they were to complete this project. They started at 8:15 am and were done by 1:15pm. Amazing!

They worked so hard on this ramp. They have decided to continue with this mission of building ramps for people through out their community.

No matter who they are these youth are dedicated to helping people.

As the youth director, I am impressed with these youth. They got up early on a Saturday morning to build a ramp for a stranger. Even I struggled getting up that early on a Saturday morning. What a beautiful fall day it was as we dug six post wholes, constructed the box and put it all together.

I am just blessed that these youth take the time to share God's love. What a wonderful way to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Ashley Hoskins, a Linden youth, summed up the experience quite simply. "This is the coolest thing I have ever done," Hoskins said. "It rocks!"



One ramp on its way. Youth began work on a wheel chair ramp for a Linden resident.



Linden youth ministry and Mr. Simpson are pleased with the outcome of the project.

Women Well Represented Among Recently Elected Delegates

By Bill Ball, Jr.
North Texas Conference

An analysis of the gender distribution of general and jurisdictional conference delegates from the South Central Jurisdiction is included in the current edition of The Flyer, a publication of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Laywomen comprise 47% of

Jurisdiction, clergywomen comprise 31% of the General Conference delegate positions. In 5 of 15 (33.3%) conferences, clergywomen were elected to lead their clergy delegations. Nationally, the percentage of clergywomen Elders and Deacons among those in active status is 25.7%.

serving in conference positions (such as Director of Connectional Ministry).

The United Methodist Church still has a long journey to travel before proportional representation is achieved for clergywomen serving as the Senior Pastors of large churches. Historically, we have observed

In the South Central Jurisdiction, clergywomen comprise 31% of the General Conference delegate positions. In 5 of 15 (33.3%) conferences, clergywomen were elected to lead their clergy delegations.

the 2008 General Conference lay delegates in the South Central Jurisdiction. Women lead the lay delegations in 6 of the 15 conferences (40%). Eight of the 15 conferences have 50% or more laywomen in their delegation.

Women are the majority group for U.S. laity with 57% of United Methodist church members. Some would emphasize that we need to reach the 57% mark for women lay delegates. Yet, others emphasize that reaching the 50% mark provides ample opportunity for strong representation and embodies a healthy balance in church leadership.

In the South Central

The article includes a detailed comparison of clergywomen delegates to clergymen delegates for General Conference. Many more of the clergymen are serving as the Senior Pastor of large churches with multiple associates. More clergywomen delegates (26.1%) than clergymen delegates (19.6%) are serving as District Superintendents.

For General Conference delegates in the South Central Jurisdiction, 30% of the clergywomen and 15.7% of clergymen are serving in positions beyond the local church and not as District Superintendents. All of these clergymen and none of these clergywomen delegates are

that it is common for clergywomen to seek appointments beyond the local church when they experience a pattern of high resistance within local churches.

The author concludes that despite these obstacles, it appears that clergy voting in these elections recognized this context and sought to achieve proportional representation by considering a broader range of leadership settings within which to identify clergywomen delegates.

The analysis was authored by Bill D. Ball, Jr. from the North Texas Conference. The full text of the article is available at: http://www.gcsrw.org/the_flyer/Full%20Stories/SouthCentralParticipation.html.

Time to look ahead to Lent!



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4th Step: Submit to Igniting Ministry, Matching Grants, P O Box 320, Nashville, TN 37202 by December 1, 2007 or fax to 615-742-5777.

If you have questions regarding any part of the process, we are here to serve you.

If you secure your own quotes, Igniting Ministry will need to approve them before you submit your application and narrative.

Igniting Ministry can assist you! Applications for Lent 2008 will be accepted November 1-December 1, 2007. The application form is available to download at <http://www.ignitingministry.org/matching/overview.aspx>.

One million matching dollars (\$1,000,000) are available to local churches each year to assist

Local Christian author announces new book series

By Steve Massey
Editor, The Teague Chronicle

Fairfield businesswoman and author Eleanor Clark has some exciting news for readers who enjoyed last fall's release of her novel *Eleanor Jo: A Christmas to Remember*. The second and third installments of her seven volume work, *The Eleanor Series*, are now in print and widely available in hardback edition.

Clark says that this ministry of writing came to her from an encounter with God through Disciple Bible Study. She is a long-time member of First United Methodist Church in Fairfield, Texas.

"As I looked back over my life and the history of my family," says Mrs. Clark, "I saw a great opportunity to put together a series of books that would be entertaining and fun, teach history, and focus on American history and its Christian heritage, as well as the faith of my family. Leaving a legacy for my children and grandchildren was very important to me. As a member of our family began to research our genealogy, I got excited about the possibilities of fictionalizing our own stories to accomplish this."

The finished product is unquestionably a gem, and would make a timeless gift for any young girl. Book one, *Mary Elizabeth: Welcome to America!*, as well as book two, *Victoria Grace: Courageous Patriot*, continue to emphasize the character building themes of patriotism,

faith, and family upon which the entire series is constructed.

And just like the rest of the volumes in *The Eleanor Series*, the stories unfold along and within historically accurate settings—in the case of these two novels, the journey to the New World from Europe, which represented the hopes and dreams of countless immigrants for a better life in a land of opportunity, and the outbreak of the American Revolution, a time of great dreams and horrible fears in the days when the outcome of that effort was far from certain.

The fictional stories are based on the real life experiences of Mrs. Clark's family, going back some 400 years. The author's reverence for her family legacy shines through in all of the stories, but is perhaps best reflected in each novel's prologue.

As each story begins, we are introduced to a young girl in the

present day who, while preoccupied with problems of her own, finds herself powerfully drawn into an incredible tale, even if somewhat reluctantly at first, told

by her "Grand Doll," her wise and affectionately named grandmother. The specific trials and triumphs of the family's ancestors as related in *Grand Doll's* stories are aptly chosen to empower the young girls to overcome the very difficulties

presently weighing on their young minds and spirits.

Mary Elizabeth: Welcome to America! examines the challenges in the life of a young girl who, in 1635, is uprooted from the only life she has known, and is set out from Europe across the Atlantic. Her experiences aboard ship and in this strange and unfamiliar New World instill within her the value of perseverance in the face of difficulties, and the faith upon which she must rely

for that perseverance.

Book two, *Victoria Grace: Courageous Patriot*, takes the reader back to the dawn of the American Revolution as seen through the eyes of a young girl, whose desire to learn about medicine brings her face to face with the awful reality of war, as she is called upon to nurse the wounded. As young Victoria bears witness to the true cost of freedom, she knows she must somehow find the courage to see herself through such a frightening time.

The character themes are different for each of *Grand Doll's* stories, always appropriate to the immediate needs of her granddaughters, but the source of their strength is always the same. The challenges facing each girl may differ from the others, but like the branches of a tree, they all lead back to the same roots: Faith, and family.

Did you ever find yourself feeling kind of sad after finishing a great novel, simply because the joy of reading it had come to an end? If so, then you will happily discover one of the remarkable aspects of *The Eleanor Series* is that when the story is finished, the lesson is just getting started.

An educator as much as an author, Mrs. Clark has included at the end of each story a number of exercises and activities intended to bring the novel's theme to life for the youngster. Historical trivia, questions to ponder, and

lots of activities, including, for example, elaborate instructions for the hosting of a tea party—complete with some delicious sounding recipes—are among the variety of suggestions by which the reader can bring the message out of the pages and into his or her experience.

The stories are written for the benefit of our children, especially young girls, but the experience of *The Eleanor Series* is tailor made, in every respect, for the whole family.

Parents and grandparents will benefit every bit as much from the reading of these stories to/with their little ones as the children themselves. And the lessons, recipes, and suggested activities included at the end of each book are valuable for any reader, regardless of age.

The matriarch of a family that includes five children, seventeen grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, Mrs. Clark has lived in Fairfield since 1996, along with Lee, her husband of over 50 years.

Her novels *Mary Elizabeth: Welcome to America!*, and *Victoria Grace: Courageous Patriot*, are available in hardback edition for \$14.99, and may be purchased at Cokesbury online, Barnes & Noble, Christian bookstores, or on her website: www.eleanorseries.com.



Author Eleanor Clark holds her first book, *Mary Elizabeth: Welcome to America*.

United Methodists help care for at-risk youth and families

By Kirsten Pasha
Community Relations Officer
Methodist Children's Home

United Methodist lay people and clergy were reminded that the at-risk youth across Texas and New Mexico are "our children," at the annual Commissioner's event held at Methodist Children's Home.

"The children at Methodist Children's Home are our children, not somebody else's," Marlene Richardson, member of First United Methodist Church in Crowley, Texas, said to fellow Commissioners. "They are the responsibility of our churches and each member in the church."

The Commissioners support the ministry through prayer, sharing the Home's story and raising funds.

"Your role is vital in helping us reach children and families who need healing and hope," said Dr. Ann Weiss, Commissioner Chairperson and member of St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Katy, Texas. "You can be our voice, the voice of our children."

The Commissioner's annual meeting provided training for new Commissioners, allowed them to tour the campus and Boys Ranch and meet with students in their home units. The meeting also provided information about the Home's programs and equipped them to go out and share the story.

There are 110 Methodist Children's Home Commissioners

for the 2007-2008 year.

About Methodist Children's Home

Methodist Children's Home provides services to more than 800 children and youth daily.

Methodist Children's Home provide residential care in Waco, the Boys Ranch near Axtell, foster care and other services through outreach offices in San Antonio, Houston, Tyler, Dallas, Lubbock, Corpus Christi, El Paso and Albuquerque, N.M.

For more information, visit www.methodistchildrenshome.org, or call 1-254-753-0181.



Dr. W. Earl Bledsoe, District Superintendent for the Texas Conference, visits with Bosh, a Methodist Children's Home resident, during the annual Commissioners meeting.



Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

Fellowship Opportunities

First UMC Beaumont

Friday, November 9, 2007, the Day and Night Orchestra of First UMC Beaumont will host an event for your dancing and listening pleasure in the Rothwell Hall.

Tickets are \$15 per person. Contact the church office for more information.

The United Methodist Women and the Youth Ministry will host their annual fall bazaar and bake sale and turkey dinner sale on November 15, 2007.

Tickets are \$10 each. For more information, contact the church at 1-409-832-0295.

Moody Memorial UMC Seaside Treasure Festival

The ninth annual Seaside Treasure Festival will be on Saturday, November 17, 2007 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Seaside features over 100 arts and crafts vendors, a gourmet lunch in the Seaside Cafe, a fabulous silent auction, entertainment, and much more.

Join the fun at Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church, 53rd and Avenue U, just two blocks off the seawall. Festival proceeds support mission and outreach work in the Galveston area. Admission is free.

To request more information, email stf@moody.org or call (409)744-4526, extension 783 and leave a message.

Mission Opportunities

Ubuntu Explorer Journey

Ubuntu is a Zulu word meaning, 'you are human so I am human.' Kathie Mann, Director of Partners in Mission will lead a team of 14 UMW women on an Ubuntu journey to Kenya February 6-20, 2008.

For more information, contact the office of Partners in Mission, 713-521-9383.

Learning Opportunities

Lessons About God: From The Land of The Bible

Delve deeper into the characteristics of God's nature. The conference will be led by Dr. James W. Fleming, founder and Director of the Explorations in Antiquity Center and the Biblical Resources Study Center.

Fleming's unique teaching style weaves together four perspectives for a better understanding of Biblical times: theology, archaeology, history and geography.

The event will be held at First UMC Houston, 1320 Main Street in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$20, payable at the door.

For more information, call the Biblical Ministries desk at 713-458-4781 or 1-800-652-2999.

“Loving Others to God” Seminar

Rev. Royal Speidel of the General Board of Discipleship will present a series of seminars across the annual conference called “*Loving Others to God.*”

These seminars are designed for leaders in the church responsible for evangelism and outreach. In “*Loving Others to God,*” participants can expect to have their own spiritual lives enriched as they learn how their relationship with God intersects with every other corner of their lives, while also learning ways to share their Christian faith with others.

Meals and workshop materials will be provided by the Radical Hospitality and Evangelistic Ministries team. This workshop is being held at the following locations:

November 10, 2007, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Aldersgate UMC, College Station

November 17, 2007, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. First UMC, Pasadena

November 18, 2007, 2-8 p.m. First UMC, Jacksonville

Happy Harbor breaks ground on \$7 million project for Seniors

By Ann Meador - Communications Coordinator
Methodist Retirement Communities

Methodist Retirement Communities (MRC) and its Happy Harbor Methodist Home affiliate broke ground in October on a new 61-unit low-income senior apartment building on its La Porte campus at 1111 Bayshore Drive. The campus currently has Happy Harbor Methodist Home and the 51-unit Happy Harbor Senior Apartments.

residents who live there say that it is the nicest HUD senior housing building that they have seen. Anyone who is thinking of moving to the new La Porte facility is welcome to tour the Unity Apartments anytime they are in Bryan to see how the new La Porte facility will look,” Holland said.

The building will have a large activity room, TV rooms, laundry rooms on each of the

plus bed nursing care facility, and Happy Harbor Senior Housing, a HUD-subsidized independent living apartment building, became affiliates of Methodist Retirement Communities (MRC) in 2002.

The construction of this new building is the second phase of a planned \$15.2 million redevelopment of the Happy Harbor campus. The first phase was the recently announced \$500,000



MRC officials, members of the Bayview Senior Housing Board and the Happy Harbor Methodist Home Board, and HUD officials do the honors of officially breaking ground on the new \$7 million apartment building for low-income seniors in La Porte.

The \$7 million grant includes \$6.5 million for construction and approximately \$500,000 for rent subsidies. In order to live at either the current Happy Harbor Senior Apartments or the new Bayview Senior Apartments, seniors must be certified as low-income and will pay rent on a sliding scale.

“There are numerous low-income seniors in La Porte and the surrounding communities who will benefit from this new facility.

“The building will face the Bay along Bayshore Drive and will share the park that is adjacent to the current Happy Harbor Senior Apartments,” said Narda Holland, Director of Housing for MRC.

“This building will be very similar to our Unity Apartment building in Bryan, Texas. The

three floors, and a library. It also will have a porch with ceiling fans where residents can sit and enjoy the scenery, Holland said.

Initial plans call for completion at the end of 2008 or early 2009.

Seniors who want to see if they qualify or want to be placed on the waiting list for one of the new apartments should contact Mary Ann Wells, Happy Harbor Senior Housing manager, at 281-471-6055.

“MRC operates 360 low-income senior apartments in three different cities including La Porte.

“As in all of our facilities, this new building will welcome persons of all faiths and is an equal housing opportunity facility,” Holland said.

Both the existing Happy Harbor Methodist Home, a 100

renovation of the existing Happy Harbor Senior Apartments. Phase two is the \$7 million grant for the new Bayview apartments.

These two projects represent nearly half of the \$15.2 million goal. Phases three and four will address the need to replace the existing nursing facility.

In addition to the Happy Harbor campus, MRC affiliates include Edgewater Retirement in Galveston, Crestview in Bryan, TownCreek in Huntsville, PineCrest in Lufkin and Cornerstone in Texarkana. MRC is a service ministry of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and serves 57 counties of East Texas.

To learn more about Methodist Retirement Communities, call 281-363-2600.