

Cross Connection

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Label Area

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- Our Core Beliefs**
- Radical Hospitality
 - Passionate Worship
 - Faith-forming Relationships
 - Risk-taking Mission
 - Extravagant Generosity
 - Connectional Ministry
 - Fervent Prayer and Diligent Study of Scripture

Your uniquely 'Methodist' financial partner

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Five Case Studies

Lakeside UMC A Multi-Purpose Worship Facility

Lakeside UMC in Humble is a new church start with a thriving young congregation. Beginning with 39 members in March 2009, present-day Lakeside is the church home to 224 people, with more than 140 in regular attendance.

The church owns a plot of land, but currently meets at an elementary school nearby. With worship attendance reaching capacity at the school nearly every Sunday, the church turned to Heartspring's *Mortar to Mission* program to help it build a multi-purpose worship facility to accommodate its rapid growth.

Lakeside UMC chose Heartspring for the church's building needs for several reasons. According to Senior



The shovel and ceremonial jar of dirt mark the groundbreaking for the multi-purpose facility of Lakeside UMC.

Pastor Stephen Rhoads, the fact that Heartspring is the financial partner of the Texas Conference means a lot.

"I believe in the connectional system and wanted to put that belief into practice,"

Rhoads said. "If we cannot support our conference churches and ministries, can we truly call ourselves connectional?"

Secondly, because Lakeside is such a young church, it needed a financial partner who understood the inherent difficulties of starting a new

church. Rhoads knew Heartspring's President C. J. Taylor had been in his shoes. "We needed an organization that was willing to take a risk on a 'rookie' church," the pastor noted. "C. J. and Heartspring were willing to work with us."

Rhoads also was grateful that Heartspring was willing to go the extra mile, offering to help them understand the details of various financial proposals from other organizations, even if the church chose a different financial partner. "Offering to help us in spite of choosing another company told me that C. J. and Heartspring cared more about ministry than making a dollar," he added.

To fund the project, Lakeside worked with Heartspring on a "Growing Together, Building in Faith" capital campaign. The cam-



Lakeside, which started with 39 members in 2009 is a 224-member church today focused on leaving a legacy for youngsters such as these, and other families in the future.

Vibrant, growing congregations changing lives and reshaping futures for Jesus Christ

Mortar to Mission

- CAPITAL CAMPAIGN
- LOAN COMMITMENT
- STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN
- ENDOWMENT DEVELOPMENT

See page 6 for "Frequently Asked Questions about Capital Campaigns."

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Heartspring Methodist Foundation

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Spend Sunday at the Lake
www.thelakesideumc.org

paigned very strong congregational support with family commitments of more than 2.2 times the church's annual operating income, outstanding results and one of the most successful campaigns conducted by Heartspring to date.

After much preparation and hard work, Lakeside held its groundbreaking ceremony last month, with plans to begin building as soon as possible. Excited about the future, capital campaign consultant Larry Van Zile said, "I so enjoyed working with Lakeside UMC. To witness that new congregation full of young families with children was invigorating. Their level of commitment, enthusiasm and support was inspiring to me!"

According to Rhoads, Lakeside's purpose is "to feed people where they are." In addition to feeding people spiritually, Rhoads believes geography also plays an important role. Many Lakeside worshippers used to drive to Kingwood, downtown Houston or Baytown to worship because they could not find a church where they lived. "Now, they can feast on God's spiritual food - where they are," he said.

With a new facility on the way, the Lakeside congregation is excited about their opportunities to expand their ministry and community outreach efforts.

Greggton UMC *Major Facility Renovation*

Greggton UMC is Heartspring's newest Mortar to Mission client. The Longview church, established in 1810, is building on its long history in a positive transitional phase that focuses on growing its ministry and leadership.

Looking ahead, Greggton decided that a major facility

renovation was necessary to help meet its evolving needs and those of the community it serves. That's when Greggton contacted Heartspring about the Mortar to Mission program. The pre-campaign study delivered promising results, indicating that the church is well positioned to launch a capital campaign. Rev. Ricky Ricks and the Greggton congregation are getting excited about what lies ahead.

"This is a good time in the life of the congregation," said Ricks. "We shared the pre-campaign study with the church in early December, which affirmed we are united, confident and ready to move ahead with our vision. Our members are enthusiastic and excited about improving our facilities and enhancing our mission in the community."

Winterfield UMC *Family Life Center*

Winterfield UMC in Longview is an established congregation experiencing new life as younger families



move into its neighborhood. With growth, church leaders realized that new fellowship and educational space was needed to serve the needs of their members and decided a family life center was the solution. They asked Heartspring and its Mortar to Mission program to help turn that vision into reality in summer 2010.

With Heartspring's guidance, Winterfield's capital campaign produced commitments of more than \$500,000, representing 1.53 times its annual operating income - considered "outstanding" results.

"While I didn't become



Attending the ground breaking ceremony from left to right: Krystal Brockermeier, Director of Communications for Heartspring Foundation; Rev. Stephen Rhoads, pastor of Lakeside UMC; Rev. Morris Mathis, District Superintendent, Central North District; Jim Harrison, a member of Lakeside UMC Leadership Team; and Dr. Donald Waddleton, Director of Center for Congregational Excellence.

pastor here until the capital campaign was finished, I've been inspired by our congregation's commitment to the future," said Winterfield Rev. Jay Barnes. "Our members are still amazed at the success of our First Fruits Sunday, with the returns from the first four months after that service far exceeding expectations. With giving on track, the whole church is excited to 'get to the bricks.' Members are really satisfied with the capital campaign that is helping us build for the future."

The church gained church conference approval last month to begin construction on the Family Life Center. Winterfield will kick off its annual stewardship campaign in the coming weeks.

Coldspring UMC *Multi-Purpose Christian Life Center*

Coldspring UMC, established in 1848, has a vibrant congregation that has outgrown its facilities. The

church realized about five years ago that expansion was on the horizon, but it wasn't until Rev. David Green moved to the church in 2009 that the idea began to take shape. Under his leadership, the congregation decided to build a multi-purpose Christian Life Center adjacent to the church to offer additional meeting space for its growing youth ministry, community outreach and church-wide events.

Green says, "We're out of room and bursting at the seams! We have a congregation that is mission oriented. The new center will offer us even more opportunities to rebuild lives for Christ, which is what we are called to do."

To fund the project, the Coldspring leadership team interviewed multiple capital campaign resources and was most impressed with Heartspring consultants Pat Hall and Larry VanZile. After becoming a Mortar to Mission client, Coldspring launched a successful campaign that resulted in commitments

equaling 1.88 times annual operating income. With the capital campaign complete, the church hopes to begin construction this spring.



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Small church, big heart

First UMC College Station offers heavenly hospitality to the homeless

With two children in tow, a very-expectant single mother arrives on the campus of First UMC in College Station, relieved to have a classroom-turned-bedroom for her family at a time when she is emotionally and financially depleted and in dire need of help and hope. Within hours, she goes into labor and is whisked off to the hospital for the arrival of baby #3.

“As a host church in the



Cinzia Lys Burleigh was born the week after Thanksgiving during her parent’s stay at First UMC College Station

Family Promise Program, we welcome several homeless families as our special guests during the year,” says FUMC’s program coordinator Annie Williams, “and two occasions have been even more memorable because there have been new babies born during our week.” FUMC College Station has been actively involved with Family Promise since

2007, supporting the mission of *helping homeless children and families achieve sustainable independence*. Adds Williams, “I will never forget these young mothers because they leave with much more than they arrived with, and we get to be a part of blessing them with much needed baby items and support.”

When the scheduled rotation points to First UMC College Station, volunteers from several nearby churches link arms to help them transform several rooms of the church into living and sleeping quarters for families who have nowhere else to go. “Since we are the smallest church in the program in our area,” notes FUMC Pastor Jacqui King, “this literally becomes a

church-wide ministry where everyone serves. Singles and UMW members help with meals and others help move furniture or assist with homework and games. During our week, not only does this program physically transform our church, but it also transforms our minds for service. Since families can’t often stay together in shelters, we are

humbled to provide a home for them and prayer or whatever is needed.”

During the day, the visiting families participate in activities at the Family Promise Center in

Bryan, including job and life preparation classes, and return to the host church for evening meals, activities, and bed-and-breakfast hospitality. “Some guests have come to church services or choir practice to hear us rehearsing.

The “new face” of homelessness

“When you look at the economy and trends, there are 600 homeless families just in Bryan/College Station,” says the nonprofit’s director Dr. Phebe Simmons, “which astoundingly makes the 9-year-old child the new face of homelessness.” Adds Simmons, “We always have a waiting list, but thanks to our 9 church partners, we have served 75 children and 47 adults in the last year.” Prayers are answered as adults find employment and homes for their families.

Hosting is quite an undertaking, adds Williams, “First Church-CS is a small church in comparison to the other eight host churches in Family Promise, but our members have big hearts and believe there is nothing we cannot accomplish when Christ is on our side.”

“It is rewarding for a small church to be able to touch many lives in cooperation with other churches,” says Vicki Thompson, one of the first volunteers involved with First Church-CS. Adds Thompson, “Since I have been involved in the Family Promise Program I have been encouraged by its mission to serve families in transition. It has been embedded in my mind to always be sensitive towards persons with special needs – even before realizing the depth of the family’s pain or situation.”

Everyone pitches in. Williams, who has often spent the night on location at the church, is thankful for additional ‘Buddy Churches’ that have recently stepped in to help: Lee Chapel UMC, St. Francis Episcopal Church,

Imagine having a sum total of worldly possessions that would fit into a small locker.



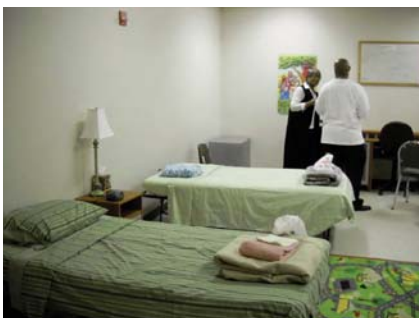
The Fellowship Hall serves as a homework zone/dinner and playroom for games and videos.

Washington Chapel Baptist Church, Christ Holy Baptist Church, Roans Chapel Baptist Church, and Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church. “I enjoy seeing our guests being so happy when all can remain together in a safe environment. Volunteers are there to support by speaking words of hope, extending the families love, compassion, a listening ear, great meals, and entertaining the children while parents take a moment for themselves.”

Happy Endings

According to Dr. Simmons, upon graduation from the program, a family must have secured employment where a percentage of pay has been deposited into a savings account for use to locate a place to live. “We love seeing the success stories as our Family Promise families go to the top of the waiting list for low income government housing.”

“I was in a neighborhood store recently and got a hug from one of the families in the program,” shares Pastor King. “They were so excited to tell me they had gotten a job and were back on track!” She adds, “This program transforms our church physically and spiritually and we encourage other churches to consider how they might impact their community.”



A kingdom investment of \$274 covers one day of operation for Family Promise of Bryan-College Station for a year, as church rooms become bedrooms and kitchens become cafeterias.

Volunteers have expressed a variety of personal experiences:

- *I’ve seen about a dozen families served since I’ve taken part; adults and children alike stay in my thoughts and prayers more often than I expected.*
- *Sharing the extravagant welcome of God is the gift we give and receive through Family Promise. May God continue to open our hearts and allow us to share in acts of heavenly hospitality.*
- *I am grateful to this program for opening our eyes to the needs in our community and allowing us to meet some wonderful people.*
- *I am thankful that our church family has become closer and we have made lasting friends.*
- *I am thankful for the dignity Family Promise gives to people, and the nourishment of home cooked food, and privacy with their families.*



Risk-Taking Mission

Cy-Hope Program Models the Possibi

What We Do

Adopt-a-School Programs

Cy-Hope is committed to partnering with schools and offering ministry of sustenance, mentoring, tutoring, volunteers and empowering to long-term self-sufficiency. We've already adopted Francone and Andre Elementary and will continue to adopt more.

Hope Centers

Cy-Hope has created "Hope Centers" in trailer parks and apartment complexes where kids can come for tutoring, life skills classes, Bible study, sports, games, and mentoring. These Hope Centers will provide a location to offer English and citizenship classes to adults. Our first two Hope Centers are located in the Longhorn Trailer Park and Windfern Trails Apartments. (Photo at right)

Backpack Program

In an effort to prevent childhood hunger and to provide each child the opportunity to succeed in school and life, the Backpack Program will provide food for needy school children each weekend. In each bag, children find food that will help sustain them through the weekends when school food is not accessible. We currently serve 18 schools (and more every week) which include over 700 children. Our goal is to have all 49 Title 1 schools participate in this program.

Dual Credits Program

Scholarships are given to qualified at-risk students.

Larry Dierker Baseball Academy

At **Dierkers Champs** baseball academy, not only will players receive positive baseball instruction, but they will also receive caring, positive role models.

Children will have the opportunity to have the best, most rewarding experience within Cy-Fair Sports Association.

Children will get top-level baseball instruction.

20 teams played in Spring 2011 at all levels under Dierker Champs.

150 kids and 100 adult volunteers participated in the first Larry Dierker Baseball clinic. It was a great day of fun and fundamentals with Coach Dierker leading our coaches and volunteers in gearing up for the spring baseball season.



Former Houston Astros All-Star pitcher and manager Larry Dierker, after whom the teams were named, meets with Dierker's Champs players such as 7-year-old Cody Vern.

By **April Canik**
Communications Director
Texas Annual Conference

For centuries, the American church has excelled at the "pot hole" approach to church work. "We are all quite good at giving money *over here* and doing some volunteer work *over there*,

how to work more collaboratively," adds Zelenka, "and Foundry made a three-year commitment to build relational bridges outside of the church on behalf of our community."

Although Cy-Fair is an affluent region with exemplary schools and athletic programs, a quick study of actual demographics revealed shocking realities. "We were surprised to learn of the deep pockets of poverty within miles of both of our church campuses," she adds. "I was also stunned to learn that almost 50 of the 83 campuses in Cy-Fair are classified as Title 1, meaning they have 40% or more of their students on free or reduced lunches because their family income is under \$40k a year."

Foundry's core group felt compelled to the mission of delivering life changing options to economically, spiritually and relationally disadvantaged children in the Cypress Fairbanks area. What began as an Adopt-a-School program for Foundry UMC, quickly exploded into a vision for a multi-layered initiative. "When we learned that 25% of the students in Cy-Fair have a personal affiliation with an addicted parent, more than anything we wanted to give the kids in our area **hope**, and that is how Cy-Hope came to be."

and over time we began to get frustrated at our **lack of true impact** and we wonder: *What good are these random efforts really doing?*" observes Lynda Zelenka, an associate pastor at Foundry UMC in northwest Houston.

When Foundry's senior pastor Godfrey Hubert and his leadership team read *Present Future*, a provocative book by consultant Reggie McNeal, they were re-energized and redirected to move forward with an entirely different and more effective mission strategy. McNeal, a proponent of "leadership communities," has experienced greater collective impact by encouraging church leaders to link arms with business executives, school superintendents and nonprofit directors to build cross-sector teams rallying around a community need or issue. "Several of us attended McNeal's Missional Renaissance training to learn

Foundry provided the initial seed money, office space and leadership for this new 501c3 organization called Cy-Hope and set about to identify faith-oriented community leaders to serve on the Board. "One by one, we set up meetings with superintendents, credit union and Chamber of Commerce executives and other influencers that shared our faith and vision – and no one declined our invitation to join the leadership team," says Lynda of her new role as Executive Director of Cy-Hope.



ities of a “Missional Renaissance”

Foundry member and former Astros Manager Larry Dierker signed on as Board President and in no time was lending credibility to a new “Dierkers Champs” program to provide transformational athletic coaching for at-risk students who would not otherwise get to be on a baseball team. “Our goal was to sponsor four baseball teams in the Cy-Fair league,” adds Lynda, “but we ended up fielding 19 our first year!” Cy-Hope also treated hundreds of students to Astros games last summer and sponsored Christian athlete Joe Irman as a special guest speaker at several high profile Cy-Fair District meetings.

A new scorecard for the missional church

Having a grassroots, cross-sector effort has accelerated Foundry’s entry into several schools and the launching of Cy-Hope’s three pronged initiative to take the church to the students.

“While we diligently follow the school’s rules related to religion, I am a firm believer that we can be the hands and feet of Jesus without ever saying a word about him,” she adds, “and this leadership community has experienced breakthrough-traction in becoming a true catalyst in Cy-Fair.”

A snapshot of results to date:

- Adopted 2 local schools
- Opening several HOPE CENTERS (large spaces for afternoon Bible study, homework, crafts, English classes, cooking, sports and other activities to provide meaningful interaction with adults and other children)
- A backpack partnership program with the Food Bank (provides food every Friday for families over the weekend)
- Young Life leaders starting faith-based “Wild Life” programs in middle schools
- Sponsoring 65 students to camp away from home for the first time in their lives
 - Leveraging company “matches” for scholarship money for students to take dual credit college classes while in high school (students can get culinary, cosmetology and welding certifications to help enhance job opportunities)
 - Applying for St. Luke’s Episcopal Charity grant to fund additional scholarships
 - Hosted a community breakfast for 250 which facilitated an additional 19 schools being adopted

Practicing what we preach

(Backpack pilot program partnership with the Houston Food Bank launched weekly in two schools with plans to organize in 17 schools)

“When the children learned they would get a number for a corresponding backpack full of groceries to take home on the weekend, one asked if they could share it with their parents. Another angry fifth grader did not want to get the enrollment form signed by his mother, initially, as he retorted- No one wants to help ME! He came back with his paperwork and was shocked to get a backpack full of food the first week. When he returned to school on Monday he had made a Tshirt with his number on the front of it, so proud that he was backpack #2! By the changed attitude in one week, we can know that we are making a huge difference in their lives, one kid at a time. These children learn better when they are not hungry, and they tend to attend Monday-Friday when they need to return and pick up their backpacks on those days.”

Rev. Lynda Zelenka

NEW to our community!



CY-HOPE

Making Life Better for Kids in Cy-Fair

Mobilizing the community to:

- Bring hope to economically, relationally and spiritually at-risk kids:
 - Backpack food program
 - Hope Centers
 - Recovery programs
 - Coaching to excel on the field and in life
 - Resourcing families
- Encourage and support teachers by providing:
 - Mentors and tutors
 - Classroom volunteers
 - School adoptions
 - Teacher appreciation events

Committed to helping every school receive exemplary status

WWW.CY-HOPE.ORG

HOPE Center

“We average about 40 elementary and middle school students at the trailer or apartment complex twice a week during the week and four times a week during the summer and our high school and college interns and volunteers from the church help us. We would love to expand hours and add adult cooking classes to help them stretch their food budget or ESL classes. As God provides a leader, we start a program. We are partnering with Boy Scouts to start a troop. Each community and social dynamic is very different, so it is important to understand that as you begin building relationships.”

Theresa Fauser, Program Director for Hope Centers





Heartspring Methodist Foundation

Continued from page 2

MAGNOLIA

United Methodist Church

Magnolia UMC Property Acquisition

Magnolia UMC saw a rare opportunity to acquire properties adjoining the church in mid-2010, becoming Heartspring's first client for the foundation's newly minted Mortar to Mission

would have been lost, and Heartspring jumped in and led us through a very successful capital campaign program. With the new property in hand, we can now focus on continuing to grow our church to meet the needs of our community."

Senior Pastor Capri Grimes notes, "The time and attention from Heartspring

"We needed an organization that was willing to take a risk on a 'rookie' church . . . C. J. and Heartspring were willing to work with us."

Rev. Stephen Rhoads
Senior Pastor, Lakeside UMC

integrated program.

Magnolia chose Heartspring to advise its capital campaign, called Stepping Forward in Faith. The Mortar to Mission program includes a loan guarantee, giving Magnolia the funds for a timely land purchase and a few needed renovations in the sanctuary.

"We appreciate that Heartspring was so attentive to our tight schedule," noted a member of Magnolia's leadership team. "We had to move quickly to purchase the property or this opportunity

was just what I needed to follow God's plan for this church with confidence. They really helped us get focused on what needed to happen for our mission and vision to come true."

Heartspring also is providing Magnolia with two years of stewardship campaign support and endowment development services as part of the Mortar to Mission program to help fuel the church's new growth and re-energized mission.

Mortar to Mission Process

STEP ONE: Assessment
(Heart Spring consultant works with the church to assess readiness)

STEP TWO: Loan Commitment
(if short-term or long-term financing needed)

STEP THREE: Ongoing Consulting
(assistance in conducting campaign)

STEP FOUR: Endowment discussion
(focusing on long-term viability)

Capital Campaign Frequently Asked Questions



With professional guidance, how much could we expect to raise toward our project?

Assuming the church family is well informed and committed to the project, a good rule of thumb is 1.5 to 2.5 times the church's annual operating income.



Doesn't the cost of a professional consultant take away from the money that could be used for the project?

Statistics prove that a professionally directed campaign will result in more money committed for the project. Other campaign costs may include meals, printing, postage, audio-visu-als, or favors, but these costs are minimal when the church celebrates the campaign victory.



What should we expect the total costs of a campaign would be?

Professional consulting fees average \$15,000 to \$30,000, and are based on the size of the congregation, average worship attendance, and the campaign's scope. Other costs should be budgeted with the consultant's guidance in keeping with the church family's preferences.



Does the Foundation offer capital campaign assistance to churches?

Yes, capital campaign assistance is included in our integrated Mortar to Mission program that takes you from concept to long-term support for project operations.



Our church needs to keep campaign expenses low, so can't we do our own campaign and save consulting fees?

Research conducted by Dr. Michael Reaves and outlined in his book *Extraordinary Money*, reveals that a "homemade" campaign raises significantly less than a professionally guided campaign and doesn't provide savings.



Aren't all capital campaigns alike?

The Foundation consultant cus-

tomizes the campaign for each individual church according to its size, financial capability and the project to be funded. Also, the Foundation understands Book of Discipline requirements, charge conferences and trust clauses, which sets it apart from other secular campaigns.



If we can't raise enough to pay for our project, can we get a loan for the rest?

The Foundation makes *loans* for capital projects and offers special financing allowing for capital pledges as "collateral." In Heartspring's Mortar to Mission program, a loan commitment is guaranteed if the church follows Heartspring's guided capital campaign. The amount of the loan is determined by the results of the capital campaign and church financials.



What does stewardship support include for the church?

As part of the Mortar to Mission bundled program Heartspring staff will provide two years of assistance in conducting an annual stewardship campaign. The Foundation works with the congregation using Consecration Sunday, Extravagant Generosity or another program mutually agreed upon.



What does endowment development support include for the church?

Heartspring offers guidance and various marketing literature and other resources on endowments for the church to use for promotions. Additionally, the Foundation staff is available to present educational seminars to the church on the importance of endowment development.



Is there a resource person who can meet with our church to answer our specific questions and help us develop a financial guideline?

The staff of Heartspring Methodist Foundation is always available to assist a church of the Texas Conference. Contact the Foundation at 713-533-3780, 800-521-9617 or email: office@heartspringmethodist.org.



Ministry Snapshots

Wildfire Disaster volunteers to the rescue

Rick Carpenter, the West District Disaster Response Co-Coordinator, recently led ERT teams in October and December to clean slabs of Bastrop area homes totally destroyed by fire. Team #1: Participants were Mike Griffin (Cooks Point UMC), Glen Grant, Lorrie Bell, Rick Carpenter (all from First UMC, Huntsville), and Billy Irwin



Glen Grant and local volunteer Carol Nokota, operating the skidsteer at a residence demolished by the fire.

(University Heights Baptist Church, Huntsville).

At one of the locations Rick Carpenter says, "I believe we were the first teams to arrive at this house. The homeowner had attempted to sift through some of the ashes looking for his wife's jewelry, and some of us continued tried to help with little success." Teams moved most of the metal and ashes to the curb for removal. Rick adds, "There is much more work to be done in the area.

December team members included Jere & Margaret Kessler, Glen Grant, David Gingles, and Rick Carpenter, all of First UMC, Huntsville; and Glen Dutton of Faith UMC, Orange.

They cleared a burned fence line and assisted where a house was being rebuilt.

After building two cement wheelchair ramps, the afternoon turned into a temporary wheelbarrow fiasco. "You can't imagine the piles of ash as far as you can see in that area," adds Carpenter.

For those who would like to serve, Rick is form-

ing another Bastrop team to return in Jan/Feb of 2012. They have also begun tentative planes for a week-long work trip in June. He can be reached at 936-662-7119 or nohurricane@gmail.com.

At this time, Bastrop is open to both non-ERT volunteers, as well as certified Early Responders. Please visit their web site with all inquiries: <http://bastroprelief.org/volunteer>.

Rev. Clay Whitaker, Texas Annual Conference Disaster Consultant said, "Our TAC-

COR group has excellent participation from top-notch folks, both clergy and lay, throughout the Texas Conference.

"That said," he continued, "extra kudos are in order for Rick Carpenter for his outstanding leadership in disaster response. This year alone, Rick has led three disaster response teams: one for tornado relief in Alabama, and two for wildfire relief in Bastrop (not to mention his plans for another Bastrop trip in early 2012)."



Left to right: David Gingles, Glenn Dutton, and Team Leader Glen Grant using a homemade trowel to finish work on a wheelchair ramp.

\$ Wildfire Update \$

When the wildfires raged through Texas this summer, Methodists in the Texas Annual Conference responded with their wallets to contribute over \$233,000 by year-end to help fund relief projects.

During 2011, initial grants of \$2,500 were given to more than a half-dozen churches to use to meet needs ranging from equipment to clear land or refurbish fire departments to expenses related to replacing utility poles or helping families cover temporary living expenses. "Now that the assessment phase is underway, the Texas Annual Conference is ready to provide additional grants of \$5,000 or more, as needed, to those who submit their requests through pastors and district offices," explains Rev. Diane McGehee, Director of the TAC Center for Missional Excellence.

"We hope to review the submitted requests by early

March so that we can begin sharing these donations with the areas that need to restore their communities and families to normal operation. Once we are able to assess and the extent of the need in our local conference and help meet that need, we want to also provide assistance to the Brazoria area which was also hit with widespread damage to residences and open areas."

TAC encourages churches or individuals to submit funding requests by March 1 through their District Superintendent and to specify items and amounts for which funds will be expended. Rev. McGehee also encourages those working in disaster relief and recovery efforts to share their stories of hope – lives are being touched and transformed through the generosity of our members and we want those who gave so generously to hear these stories!

Extravagant Generosity

Donations to Volunteer Fire Departments

The Old Boston UMC community project for the end of year was to help the firefighters who have had a long, dry, and wildfire-filled summer. Old Boston UMC donated \$600,

split between the New Boston Volunteer Fire Department and the Maud Volunteer Fire Department.



Roy Beckett was Pastor Ross Hyde and Janis Brewer



Spotlight on Upcoming Events

Fellowship Opportunities



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking at the Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C. August 28, 1963.

Public Domain Photo Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, www.archives.gov.

Black Methodists for Church Renewal Houston Chapter will present its annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast on Monday, January 16, 2012, 8 a.m. at the Power Center, 12401 South Post Oak Road in Houston, Texas.

This year's theme is: ***The Power of a Dream!***

Table sponsorships are as follows (10 seats per table):

- **Platinum Table (\$1,000)**
- **Gold Table (\$750.00)**
- **Silver Table (\$500.00)**
- **Bronze Table (\$250.00)**
- **Individual Ticket (\$25.00)**



The Youth Mass Choir from local churches in the Texas Annual Conference performing at the 2011 breakfast.

Questions may be directed to: Frances Dunlap at 281-999-5114; francesl.dunlap@sbcglobal.net, or

Anna Loraine Vienn at 713-729-8142 or classycakes@gmail.com. Checks should be made payable to BMCR and mailed to: **BMCR; 3014 Hutchins Street, Houston, Texas 77004.**

Learning Opportunities

Ready...Set...Go...Improve Your Skills for Service

If you want to learn more about the ministry of the United Methodist Church and grow spiritually in the process, don't miss these upcoming lay leadership training events offered by districts in the Conference.

Following are the dates, time and locations for each event:



Central North District - Training will be held at Conroe First UMC, January 29, 2-4 p.m. Contact Doris Folser at 281-895-7700 for more information.

Central South District - Leadership training workshops will be held Sunday, January 29 at First UMC Westpark Campus; 2-6:30 p.m. Registration is available online, www.heartofhouston.org or contact the district office at 713-222-0117.

East District - Woodville UMC is the location for the East District training, February 4 and February 18. For additional information, contact the office at 936-699-2213.

North District - Local Church Officer Training, January 22 at 3 p.m. at Linden First UMC; 400 E Rush. All are welcome. Contact: Anna M Rohde at 903-758-7003 for more information.

Northwest District - Training will take place at Lakeview Conference Retreat Center on January 28, 2012. Contact Pat Travers in the district office at 903-593-1861 for more information.

South District - 2012 District Leadership Training on Saturday, January 21 at First UMC Pasadena. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. To register, go to www.southdistrict.org or call Cindy Hassey at 281-998-8993. Childcare provided by reservation only.

Southeast District - Lay speaker training will be held January 21-22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wesley UMC in Beaumont, Texas. For more information, contact the district office, 409-833-9510. A second training session will be held January 29 at Wesley UMC, 3-5:30 p.m. Contact Rev. Beverly Tune, 409-962-1076.

Southwest District - January 28 is the date for the Southwest District training. The location is First UMC Missouri City. Contact the district office at 281-499-3700 for additional information.

West District - Christ UMC in College Station is the site for this training event. For details, contact Ellen Willett at 936-295-5441.

Mission Opportunities

Mission Trip to Bolivia

Be in prayer for the TAC team traveling to Bolivia January 17-27 to train 50+ Methodist pastors there on how to operate effective pastoral care ministries to families in their region.

During their stay, the Texas team will also learn more about the local culture, lay the ground work for a women's ministry retreat in Bolivia later this year, and how to facilitate a stronger partnership with the Bolivian pastors and local Embassy to enable pastors to come to America for additional training in the months ahead.

The Art Project, Houston
A project of the Bread of Life

The Artist's Way
A SPIRITUAL PATH TO HIGHER CREATIVITY

St. John's Downtown
February 7 - March 13, 2012
(Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:30 PM) in Room 127

All Proceeds go to benefit The Art Project, Houston, an art therapy and self-empowerment project of the Bread of Life, Inc. facilitating the healing and transition of homeless men and women of Houston

Cost: \$25 Weekly, total \$150. \$25 deposit due January 17
Please make all donations payable to: The Bread of Life, Inc., TAPH Artist Way Class in memo line.
Fee includes art supplies

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Recover your creativity from a variety of blocks. Whatever your spiritual orientation, The Artist's Way will resonate in your creative mind with truth, wisdom, and inspiration. There is no artistic ability needed. Come and experience the freedom today!

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*Space is limited.