

R E P O R T E R

NTC tips off 'Nothing But Nets' week

By DR. JOAN GRAY LABARR
Editor

The Nothing But Nets (NBN) anti-malaria campaign kicked off a week of activity in the Dallas area Feb. 5 as NTC and campaign leaders addressed a laity and clergy luncheon at Christ UMC, Plano.

NBN, which bills itself as a global, grassroots campaign to prevent malaria, held a series of Dallas events as Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert declared Feb. 4-10 to be "Nothing But Nets Week"



Bishop Alfred L. Norris lifts up the "power of the pen."

as part of the city's commitment to the cause.

During the week NBN leaders worked with faith community, civic and business leaders to raise awareness about the global fight against malaria, a leading killer of children in Africa.

In addition to the NTC host, others for the week were the UN Foundation, ExxonMobil, the Dallas Mavericks and several student organizations.

The Feb. 5 luncheon began the week with a presentation by Bishop Alfred L. Norris and discussions of current issues and threats posed by malaria, as well as the opportunity to pray for children and families who suffer from the disease.

Christ UMC pastor, Rev. Don Underwood, who has been a strong advocate of the NBN campaign on the national and local level, greeted participants and introduced fellow Texan Elizabeth McKee Gore, who is coordinating NBN for the United Nations Foundation.

Gore called malaria one of the greatest health threats facing the world today, with at least one million, and potentially

three to four times that many, persons dying from the disease annually. Because malaria is a disease of poverty with most victims in developing countries, cases often go undiagnosed.

As she explained how malaria is a treatable disease, which once ravaged the southern United States, particularly Texas, Gore lamented both the human loss as well as the economic loss, estimated to be some \$12 million each year, because people are sick and unable to work.

"The good news is that malaria is a preventable and treatable disease, and God gave us the gifts to eliminate it," Gore said.

She celebrated the United Methodist role in the NBN campaign and noted that the UMC was the only faith group invited to the malaria summit at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the Fall of 2007.



UN Foundation NBN coordinator Elizabeth McKee Gore, left, grew up at First UMC, Whiteboro, and brought two special guests, her grandmother, Opal Thompson, and mother, Janice McKee, both longtime members of the Whitesboro congregation, to the Feb. 5 faith leaders' luncheon.

The result of the summit was the foundation's commitment to \$3 million in matching funds for the NBN campaign. The \$3 million goal has been reached, and NBN leaders are hoping for more significant partner grants in the future.

The NBN campaign, which was initiated by Sports Illus-

trated columnist Rick Reilly, promotes insecticide treated bed nets as the most effective prevention for the disease, which is spread by a mosquito species that is active at night. The campaign also includes treatment, education, vaccine research,

See "NTC tips off..." on Page 4A

Northaven UMC 'horse traders' allocate mission funds

By JOHN A. LOVELACE
Special Contributor

Once a year, eight "horse traders" get together at Northaven UMC, Dallas, and have their "funnest meeting of the year" giving away money.

It's been that way since 1969, when the church created its Human Development Fund. Best estimates are that the fund has given away about \$1 million.

The horse trading part, said in jest, indicates that the eight-member Human Development Fund committee always has more requests than it has money. Requests from 39 entities for 2008 totaled \$136,225. Grants to 24 of those 39 entities

totalled \$46,000. The total pretty well exhausted contributions of \$43,473 from 85 pledge-paying units during 2007 and \$2,684 remaining from prior years.

There's no sustaining endowment or investment. For the most part, what comes in one year goes out the next. The committee's recommendations go to the church's Leadership Council for final approval.

To qualify for a Human Development Fund grant, a requesting agency must be non-profit, preferably be connected to a member of Northaven or The United Methodist Church, address issues of poverty, education, justice, medical needs and/or special population, preferably in the Dallas area, and show sustained support from

sources beyond Northaven.

Committee members, understandably, develop favorites among repeat annual applicants and new applicants. That's where the horse trading begins in language like, "I'll OK \$500 for this one if you'll go \$1,000 for that one."

Longtime committee member Phillip Shinoda says, "One question we always ask is will this money make an impact on the recipient agency." The answer typically comes from someone like Joanna Clarke, development director for Community Partnership of Dallas, which helps children "in transition" to foster care, relative care, or live in their own homes but are at risk of abuse.

As part of her agency's grant



A volunteer at North Dallas Shared Ministries (NDSM), supported by Northaven UMC's Human Development Fund, helps a client family fill their cart from NDSM food pantry.

application, Ms. Clarke wrote, "This (HDF) funding makes such an impact on what we are able to achieve for the children we

serve..." For 2008, Community Partnership of Dallas requested \$2,000. It received \$1,500.

See "Horse traders..." on Page 5A

NTC tips off 'Nothing But Nets'...

Continued from Page 1A

and prevention efforts.

"This is a grass-roots campaign, and we want to keep it super simple. Remember, malaria kills, send a net, save a life," Gore declared.

She noted that the global effort has raised \$18 million in the past year, with an average donation of \$60. "This means that thousands of people, primarily United Methodists, have contributed," she said.

NBN has set a goal of 300 million nets, at \$10 per net, a total of \$3 billion dollars.

Bishop Norris praised the NBN program and the conference support, noting that among the United Methodist priorities for the future is global health and stamping out poverty, both of which are linked inextricably.

He cited the NTC Bishop's Initiative for Africa University, "Transforming Lives, Transforming Africa," as another example of the battle against disease and poverty. Bishop Norris noted that NTC churches are engaged in a Lenten campaign to raise \$1 million to build a health clinic and provide scholarships for AU health science students.

Bishop Norris noted that the NBN campaign was begun by Rick Reilly and "the power of the pen."

"We must realize, confess and comprehend that every human being is a composite of body, mind and spirit, and realize that when any of these three is neglected, the body cannot be

whole," he said.

Playing on the image of wholeness, Bishop Norris drew a parallel between the "power of the pen" in Reilly's column and the "power of the pen" in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. The pen in the latter case being a habitation for pigs was also a vehicle God used to bring a person to wholeness.

NTC Associate Director of Connectional Ministries Rev. Marji Bishir, who coordinates the NBN effort for the conference, showed a video depicting the many creative ways NTC churches have raised \$120,563 for the campaign to date.

She also explained that churches and districts are now holding three-on-three basketball tournaments that will lead up to a Conference Championship game on March 8 at Christ UMC, Plano. The winner will play in the Central Texas - North

Texas playoff game on April 26 at First UMC Fort Worth. This is the weekend of General Conference and African bishops whose countries benefit from NBN are expected to be in attendance.

For information about the tournament rules, registration, cost, or Conference Tournaments, contact Tournament Director Rev. Darlan Pace, 972-291-5441, darian@gkumc.org.

For more information on the NBN campaign and upcoming activities, please call Rev. Marji Bishir, 972-526-5000, 800-969-8201, or send e-mail: bishir@ntcumc.org.



Rev. Marji Bishir, left, with Elizabeth McKee Gore.

Africa University Initiative DVDs

DVDs featuring the Bishop's Initiative for Africa University are available free of charge to churches for use in their Lenten campaigns. Two versions are offered, including one with a short video suitable for use in worship and a 7½ minute video designed for use in classes and small group settings and another DVD with the short video only. To obtain a copy, please contact the NTC Communications Office, 972-526-5036, 800-969-8201, or e-mail labarr@ntcumc.org to order.



Spring IM campaign has broadcasts, billboards

North Texas Conference *Igniting Ministry* will be contributing to a cooperative buy of broadcast television spots and highway billboards during the April 23-May 2 United Methodist General Conference as the primary spring 2008 marketing effort.



Local churches are encouraged to take advantage of the general church messages by developing inviting and welcoming plans to encourage potential visitors to "Come Home for Easter." Resources, including over-sized postcards featuring an African theme to coordinate with the Lent/Easter Bishop's Initiative for Africa University, are available for order from The Crouch Group, telephone 888-211-0273 or Website: www.thecrouchingroup.com to view the products and designs.

The NTC is contributing \$25,000 toward the cooperative buy with the Central Texas Conference and United Methodist Communications. Central Texas, host conference for the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, is contributing \$50,000,

and United Methodist Communications has approved a matching grant of \$75,000, providing for a media buy of \$150,000.

In addition to the customized broadcast television spot scheduled for the General Conference time period, *Igniting Ministry* is also planning to air the "Finding Yourself" spots on major cable outlets the two weeks prior to Easter on March 23.

"We are especially fortunate to have two opportunities for major television exposure during Lent/Easter and again during General Conference, and our *Igniting Ministry* Team stands ready to help churches develop their own initiatives to capitalize on the national exposure" says NTC Communications Director Dr. Joan G. LaBarr.

For more information on the NTC Spring 2008 *Igniting Ministry* initiatives or to schedule a consultation in a congregation, contact Dr. LaBarr at 972-526-5036, 800-969-8201, or e-mail: labarr@ntcumc.org.

Juntos Servimos issues plea for wheelchairs

Juntos Servimos Ministry, based in Matamoros, Mexico, is seeking 24 "traditional" wheelchairs for use in several nearby villages.

Larry Cox, Juntos Servimos executive director, reports that the ministry is moving close to collecting a thousand wheelchairs, primarily through the organization Joni and Friends and efforts by First UMC, Mansfield, and individuals in the Brownsville area.

Cox cites an example of the kind of persons who need the

chairs. A young man named Cuco had a diving accident that left him motionless from the neck down. Over the years his condition has improved, and with an appropriate chair, he would be able to participate on a wheelchair basketball team. He has learned to use a computer and is, as Cox describes, "a courageous, wonderful kid."

For more information or to contribute chairs, contact Cox at 956-763-0326 or e-mail: larry@juntoservimos.org.

First UMC, Kemp, Sunday School 'tithes' for NBN

Children at First UMC, Kemp, have their own special offering each Sunday. Elementary age Sunday School students bearing decorative buckets follow the ushers down the aisle and collect gifts to support the church's children's programming and missions. After hearing about the Nothing But Nets Campaign, the children committed to giving one half of the first month's collection to NBN, with a goal of purchasing at least ten nets. Their tithe of 50 percent of the "first fruits" of the year reached a total of \$300, far exceeding the original goal. Pictured from left are Children's Sunday School Class representatives Kendall Riley, Keagan Bakke, Cotton Riley, Zoe Munden and Travis Munden with pastor Rev. David A. Yunker.



'Horse traders' allocate mission funds

Continued from Page 1A

Shinoda said committee members measure each application against two criteria: The agency's effectiveness and its consistency with Northaven's mission.

In measuring an applicant agency's effectiveness, the committee is aided immeasurably by the fact that one or more Northaven members relate to most applicant entity as a volunteer, director or donor.

One example is North Dallas Shared Ministries, for 2008 the largest grant recipient agency (\$8,000). Judy Rorrie, the agency's executive director and Northaven member, said Northaven is one of 46 congregations supporting NDSM by providing financial support, volunteers, a congregation member to serve on the NDSM advisory council and by conducting a periodic food drive for the pantry.

In 2007, she added, Northaven members complemented the HDF grant of \$7,500 with gifts totaling \$12,700, and 13 Northaven members volunteered 4,500 service hours.

Of the 24 recipient agencies for 2008, nine are explicitly though not exclusively United Methodist: Art Spirit, Open Door Pre-School (Grace UMC, Dallas), Perkins Youth School of Theology at SMU, Project Transformation, Dallas Bethlehem Center, Methodism's Breadbasket, Wesley-Rankin Center, Cameroon Hymnal Initiative and La Fundacion de Cristo (Christ's Foundry Fellowship).

Committee member Rev. Dr.

Bill McElvaney was the pastor (1967-73) when the church established the Human Development Fund "to extend Northaven's mission to the urgent needs of the wider community."

He notes that, from the beginning, the fund depended on "third-mile giving," the prior two "miles" being the church's operational budget and its benevolences, including apportionments which he says have been paid 100 percent for many years.

Committee chairwoman Sandy Long acknowledged that Northaven's recent building fund campaign "flattened" gifts to the Human Development Fund. A low-key promotion is part of each new-member orientation session. Otherwise there's no big push.

In a 2006 article summarizing the Human Development Fund's history, Dr. McElvaney wrote, "The support of the HDF by each Northaven pastor through the years and the unflinching con-



Tom Walker, right, a Northaven UMC member, helps enroll a client at North Dallas Shared Ministries (NDSM). For 2008, NDSM is scheduled to receive the largest of 24 grants from Northaven Human Development Fund.



A North Dallas Shared Ministries volunteer explains the clothing selection process to two clients. Some clothes are free; others are "gently" priced. A Northaven Human Development Fund grant helps make this and other NDSM services possible.

sistency of lay involvement have been the indispensable factors in the continuance and growth of the HDF."

As for the annual horse-trading session, Dr. McElvaney, who coined the phrase, says simply, "It's a joyful thing to give."

Palmer Studies lecture series set at Suncreek UMC, Allen

Suncreek UMC, Allen, announces the Palmer Studies in the Faith lecture series set Feb. 17-18 with Rev. James W. "Jim" Moore as guest lecturer. He will also speak at a special clergy luncheon at 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 18.



Dr. Moore

Dr. Moore will preach for worship on Feb. 17 with services scheduled at 8:15, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Evening lectures will both begin with a 6:00 p.m. fellowship dinner, and the program beginning at 6:45 p.m. Tickets for the dinner may be purchased from SunCreek UMC. "Faith is the Answer, but what are the Questions?" is theme for the 2008 lectures.

Dr. Moore is the author of 36 books. He served from 1984 to 2006 as senior pastor of St. Luke's UMC, Houston, a congregation with more than 7,500 members.

After retiring from full-time ministry, Dr. Moore moved to the Dallas area and is currently serving as Minister-in-Residence

at Highland Park UMC, Dallas.

Singer-songwriter Celia Whittler will also be featured in the worship and music time of the lectures. She has sung more than a thousand concerts in the United States and Europe and has provided leadership at the national for the UMC and other denominations. She has seven independent recordings to date, with five of these still in print.

The mission of Palmer Studies in the Faith was established in 2001 to foster spiritual growth, family renewal, and service to community. Support for the inaugural year of the lectureship was provided in part by the estate of the late Dr. George H. Palmer to honor his many years of ministry in the UMC. George Palmer's grandson, Rev. Burt Palmer, was the founding pastor of SunCreek UMC, serving from 1995 to 2001. George Palmer's son, Rev. Jim Palmer, served on the SunCreek UMC staff from 1999 to 2003.

For more information or to register for the clergy luncheon, please call 972-390-1695 or visit the Website: www.suncreekumc.org.

Around the Conference

NTC Ministry, ArtSpirit, Dallas, hosts "A Valentine Open Mic Night," Feb. 16 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. For more information, please call 214-288-5225. ***

First UMC, Allen, hosts their annual **Easter EGGstravaganza**, March 16 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. for children to grade 5. For more information, please call Susan Hale, 972-727-8261.

Birth

Blaine Donald Theodore, son of **Heather and Robby Theodore** and grandson of **Ray and Rev. Kristie Rossett**, NTC Extension Ministry, **Sacred Places, Inc.**, was born Jan. 29, weighing 7 lbs 13 oz and measuring 20 inches.

Sorrows

James R. Peckham, father-in-law of **Rev. Denise Peckham**, **Button Memorial UMC, Little Elm**, died Feb. 3. Funeral services were held Feb. 7 in **First UMC, Madison, NY**. ***

Mary Frances George, mother of **Rev. Larry George**, **Superintendent, Dallas-Denton District**, died Feb. 7. Funeral services were held Feb. 11 at **First UMC, Iowa Park**.

Positions available

Plymouth Park UMC, Irving, is seeking a **children's ministry director**. Persons interested may call Jeff Markle, 972-581-5633, or e-mail jmarkle@novationco.com. ***

Suncreek UMC, Allen, is seeking a part-time **communications administrative assistant**. Persons interested may obtain more information on the Website: www.SuncreekUMC.org, under the category "staff."

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SCJ episcopal candidates



Among the candidates for the office of bishop interviewing with the South Central Jurisdiction Women's Leadership Team Jan. 28 at Highland Park UMC, Dallas, were from left: Revs. Earl Bledsoe, Texas Conference; Jim Welch, Texas Conference; Tim Bruster, Central Texas Conference; Roberto Gomez, Rio Grande Conference; Jim Dorff, North Texas Conference; Cheryl Bell, Kansas West Conference; Rodney Steele, Arkansas Conference; Mike Lowry, Southwest Texas Conference, and Steve Rankin, Kansas West Conference. All have been endorsed by their conferences and are engaged in a six-week period of interviews throughout the South Central Jurisdiction. Elections will take place during the Jurisdictional Conference in Dallas July 16-19.

8A | NTC *circuit* First UMC, DeSoto hosts global poverty workshop

First UMC, DeSoto, will host the Bread for the World "Offering of Letters" workshop, March 1 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The worship will focus on an understanding of the role of Bread for the World as an organization and its advocacy information on the 2008 "Offering of Letters," an initiative promoting the Global Poverty Act and an increase in funding for poverty focused development assistance. There is no cost to the workshop.

Presenters will be Seth Wispelwey, Texas Bread for the World Central Organizer, and Susanne Berman from the Austin office.

In 2007 Bread for the World and its partners secured a \$1.4 billion increase in development funds to combat poverty. For the first time in a decade, the number of people living in extreme pov-

erty fell under one billion.

Some tangible benefits include:

- The country of Malawi reduced its child mortality rate by nearly half.

- India increased the female enrollment in technical schools from 5 percent to 45 percent.

- Latin America saw the number of children attending primary school increasing to 97 percent.

The year 2008 marks the critical halfway point to meeting the Millennium Development Goals to cut global poverty in half by 2015. Created in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, are a compact between developed and developing nations to work together to alleviate poverty,

hunger and inequality.

Bread for the World's 2008 "Offering of Letters" advocates for the Global Poverty Act,

which declares it official United States policy to work to achieve the goals set at the beginning of the millennium.

This year Bread for the World volunteers are working to designate key contacts at Dallas-Fort Worth area churches that support the program. Those interested in becoming a contact for their congregation are invited to e-mail Suzanne Berman, sberman@bread.org.

While RSVPs are not required, it would help organizers to know how many persons to expect at the First UMC, DeSoto, workshop. Please either call 888-257-0239 or e-mail: breadtx@bread.org.



MCH hosts statewide child care conference

By KIRSTEN PASHA
Methodist Children's Home

Methodist Children's Home (MCH), Waco, hosted a four-day statewide conference Jan. 15-18 to discuss the state of child care in Texas and what the faith-based community offers the foster care system.

The more than 100 attend-

ees were invited by MCH and Judge Carole Clark, of Smith County. They included Texas district court judges, social workers, attorneys, CASA volunteers, juvenile probation staff, Texas Department of Family Protective Services and Child Protective Services staff and other agency personnel.

"We have reached a saturation point, with 33,000 children in out-of-home care in Texas,"

Bobby Gilliam, MCH president, said. "By bringing together major stakeholders in Texas foster care, we can promote an open dialogue and exchange ideas for providing our children with effective resources and systems that address the social issues they face."

The agenda included training on MCH's "strength-based" philosophy of care. Also, internationally renowned Psy-

chologist Karyn Purvis of Texas Christian University, who was recently quoted in a Newsweek article on international adoption, presented training on attachment disorder.

"There's so much we can do, and none of it's rocket science; this is everything your grandma knew about taking care of children," Purvis said. "By caring for a child in intentional ways, we teach him he's safe. Attachment will tell a child he's precious, and healthy attachment is the basis for healthy growth and development."

The conference concluded with two panel discussions. The first focused on what the faith-based community offers the foster care system, and participants included Don Forrester from Children at Heart Ministries in Round Rock, Ed Knight from Presbyterian Children's Home in Austin, David Capers from Boles Children's Home in Quinlan, Kerry Fortune from Ben Richey Boy's Ranch in Abilene and Bobby Gilliam from MCH.

"Our society is throwing away a generation of young people," Gilliam said. "We see what's not working and we base our philosophy on something different - we offer hope."

The second panel discussion included Judge Scott McCown, from the Center for Public Policy Priorities; David Capers, from Boles Children's Home; Joe Gagen, of Texas

CASA; and Colleen McCall, DFPS director of field. They discussed why the CPS system is at a saturation point and addressed the capacity crisis of caring for these children and improving the child welfare system as a whole.

MCH provides services to more than 800 children and youth daily through residential care in Waco, the Boys Ranch near Axtell, and 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, please visit Website: www.methodistchildrenshome.org.

Help for tornado victims

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is responding to victims of tornadoes that struck five southern states the night of Feb. 5. Early responders were involved in debris clean-up and search and rescue operations.

NTC churches that want to contribute to UMCOR's network of care for the victims are asked to send checks to: Treasurer, North Texas Annual conference, P.O. Box 866128, Plano, TX 75086 with NTC Advance Number 258.



Leaders of Christian organizations participated in a panel discussion that addressed what the faith-based community can offer the foster care system. From left: Bobby Gilliam, Methodist Children's Home; David Capers, Boles Children's Home, Quinlan; Ed Knight, Presbyterian Children's Home, Austin; Kerry Fortune, Ben Richey Boy's Ranch, Abilene; and Don Forrester, Children at Heart Ministries, Round Rock.

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presents

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For more information, please call 817-638-2211
e-mail: jfdean001@embarqmail.com

All proceeds to benefit Seven Hills Building Fund