



ST. PAUL, PONTIAC **A NEW BEGINNING**

by Carol Christianson, Chairman, St. Paul Administrative Board, with Cheri Fish

What a wonderful difference LWML has made for the urban mission at St. Paul in Pontiac, Michigan! Last June, Pastor Dietrick Gladden and wife, Rebecca, were overjoyed to be at the convention in Pittsburgh. They had the opportunity to meet others in ministry who encouraged them in their difficult ground-breaking work in this distressed community.

The St. Paul mission began several years ago after the last Michigan District LCMS church closed in the city of Pontiac. The district planted a new urban ministry, with then Vicar Dietrick and Rebecca as the only staff, to launch and grow the ministry. Pastor Dietrick's vision has always been to provide help and a safe place for children, youth, families, and the downtrodden so they may be uplifted with their hope in Jesus. Now many are being introduced to Jesus and are seeing His unconditional love in action. The work load is staggering for just the two of them as they build an extensive ministry of worship, discipleship, and youth and children's ministry, serving basic human needs along the way.

The LWML convention's vote to fund St. Paul's grant request brought new hope and fresh excitement for St Paul's future! The week after the convention, St. Paul was able to hire their first church secretary. The secretary now provides ministry

support in the form of communications and organizational skills, much needed for a new office built and furnished by volunteers from sister churches. She also has a heart for the people of the community and provides urgently needed support to Pastor and Rebecca. The church is seeing growth, stability, and quality of ministry — with greater numbers of people being served — as a result of her help.

Praise be to God for the work being accomplished in the St. Paul community with the help of LWML mites!

Last July, St. Paul, Pontiac, was surprised by 240 children attending VBS, thanks to wider outreach to the community! Volunteers from area churches as well as St. Paul's youth scrambled that week to serve so many. At St. Paul, every event is accompanied by meals served to a hungry community; both breakfast and lunch were provided to children and parents who came to VBS. Backpacks and school supplies were also provided to those children who otherwise may not have had

them. Thanks to this LWML grant, the ministry was able to stretch its limited budget to purchase additional food, VBS materials, and backpacks so that no child was left out. "I will never forget one little girl," reported Carol Christianson, "who asked me at breakfast if her little brother could please have seconds because he was so hungry. The joy on the faces of the children that week was a precious reminder of how Jesus' love can touch them through us."

Grant funds are also making an impact for the youth at St. Paul. "We have been able to hire two young musicians to lead worship," Carol stated, "and, as a result, have seen more youth involved. A donated van has been repaired and is used to transport them to events, especially their basketball team to games. T-shirts have been provided for the players as well. The boys on the team are mentored individually; they are learning to be a team and experiencing life outside the community."

One young man on the team (a 10th grader whose two brothers are serving life sentences for murders committed) is being mentored by the church. He has shown great improvement on the team and significant progress with his grades at school. He demonstrates accountability to Pastor Dietrick by bringing in school progress reports.

Beginning with basketball, his life has been positively redirected through St. Paul and the youth programs. We see hope for many young people through the youth ministry.

All this has happened with just the first part of the grant funds received. The balance of the funds will provide for wider outreach and further development of the youth ministry. Praise be to God for the work being accomplished in the St. Paul community with the help of LWML mites! **Q**



Current Mission Grants Highlighted This Issue

Native American Outreach Training Center Fairbanks, Alaska — \$95,000

God is opening doors for making connections and building relationships to Alaska Natives. Young and old alike are in need of additional mentoring so they can take their place as leaders in the Church and in their communities. An LWML grant will enable this ministry outreach to grow a more robust volunteer program through establishing a training center, creating a mission center for those coming in from bush villages for theological instruction, and developing partnerships with agencies to help address the needs of Native people.

Bible Story Books in Sign Language and Written Text — \$100,000

The need exists for Bible storybooks that teach the truths of God's love, especially in developing countries. Lutheran Friends of the Deaf has received requests for updated religious educational materials for the Deaf from countries around the world. An LWML grant will enable them to continue publishing the Bible Story Book series and sending out this material to the Deaf children in places such as Kenya and India.



Mission GRANTS

Mission Goal: \$1,830,000.00 | 2013–2015

- 1. Training K-9 Comfort Dogs for LCMS Chaplains.....\$30,000
- 2. Lutheran Children's Books for Southeast Asia\$72,000
- 3. Training Indigenous Pastors and Deaconesses – Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana\$100,000
- 4. Rebuilding Nord Est Haiti Lutheran School.....\$100,000
- 5. Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Schools, Winnebago Tribe, Nebraska\$58,553
- 6. I CAN — Serving At-Risk Children with Learning Needs.....\$99,000
- 7. Bible Story Books in Sign Language and Written Text\$100,000
- 8. Native American Outreach Training Center – Fairbanks, Alaska\$95,000
- 9. Strengthening and Expanding Campus Ministry\$100,000
- 10. Worship for Shut-Ins.....\$80,000
- 11. Preparing Leaders for a Diverse World – Concordia College, Selma, Alabama\$50,000
- 12. Voice of Care Ministry to the Developmentally Challenged.....\$50,600
- 13. Christ-Centered Tutoring Through Rebecca's Garden of Hope (RGOH).....\$100,000
- 14. Student Scholarships for MOST Ministries Mission Trips\$20,000
- 15. Building Homes and Hope in Haiti.....\$100,000
- 16. Support for Lutheran Public Radio\$40,000
- 17. Christian Education Support for Children – India\$85,000
- 18. Mission Outreach at St. Paul Community Lutheran Church – Pontiac, Michigan\$65,559

KEY: ● – grant paid in full
○ – grant partially paid

Check the latest updates for mites received and grants funded at www.lwml.org.