

Spotlight

SPRING 2009

METHODIST
HOME FOR
CHILDREN

healing
young hearts
and **minds**



Spotlight™

Published semi-annually by
Methodist Home for Children

In service to God, our mission is to build upon the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual strengths of children, youth, and families, and to affirm their worth.

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We Are Not Powerless

A few weeks ago I was teaching a Wednesday Evening Lenten Bible Study based on the Rev. Dr. Sam Canon Wells' book, "Power and Passion." The book is a character study of six individuals involved in the crucifixion. We were studying Pontius Pilate, a figure that occupies a great place in our imaginations but about whom there is little historical record. Other than a single inscription on stone from Caesarea and a few coins, all writing about Pilate is pure speculation.

We engaged in such speculation about his probable origins (Samnium), his probable career path (military), and his social standing (a member of the second tier of nobility) in order to determine what his motives might have been as he dealt with the Passover crowd and with Jesus. One of the class members asked if I thought that Pilate had no choice in the matter, that he was appointed by God for the task, and was in fact powerless.

My opinion about Pilate in that moment is my opinion about all persons at all points. We are not powerless to act. We like to claim: "there was nothing I could do," or "I'd like to help, but I can't." However, we can always do something. Legislators facing shortfalls in revenues may not have all the money they anticipated, but they still have the

power to act on behalf of children, youth, and their families. Corporations may have bottom lines that are significantly tighter this year than in other years, but they can still decide to give something to those who have nothing. Congregations have the power to decide what to do with plate offerings and proceeds from barbecues, and individuals can still respond with joyful generosity to God's call, a call to offer tithes and gifts that is perhaps more urgent in times of lack than in abundance.

Methodist Home for Children, like all agencies, is of course operating in a challenging economic environment. We are facing high demand for our services and a decreasing amount of revenues. Yet we are not powerless. We have the ability to make choices and the capacity to find creative ways to serve children, youth, and their families. We believe that God continues to grant us the power to align our mission and ministry with his will for the world.

Blessings,

Reverend Bruce E. Stanley
President/CEO

ON THE COVER: MHC children creating playful hearts. See article pg. 1.

Jordan Center Children Offer Heartfelt Thanks!

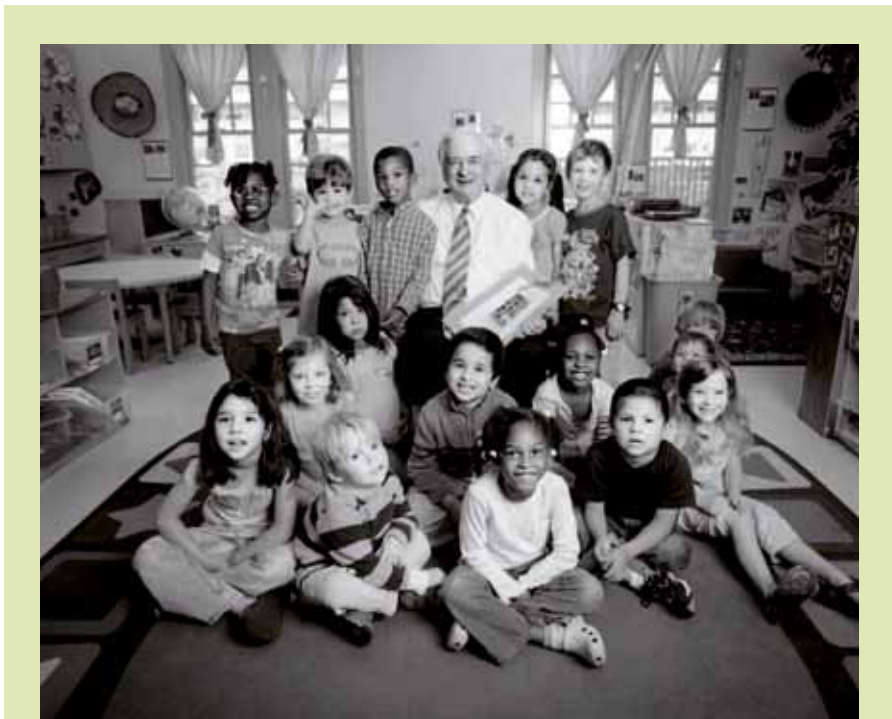
By Enuma Okoro

US Senator Kay Hagan recently showed her support for the SCHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Program) legislation bill that the Senate approved in January. SCHIP will ensure healthcare coverage for all children regardless of their parents’ income. President Obama later signed the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 into law on February 4, 2009, giving states the resources they need to sustain and strengthen the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP, formerly SCHIP) and extend enrollment to millions of uninsured children who are qualified to receive coverage through CHIP or Medicaid. This is a welcome and much needed program for children in poverty. The 2009 projected allotment for CHIP for the state of NC is \$245.7 million dollars

To show our appreciation for the support of Senator Hagan’s efforts, and others such as Representatives’ Price, Etheridge, and Miller, the children at Methodist Home for Children’s Jordan Child and Family Enrichment Center spent a morning creating “Hearts for Hagan.” The colorful, glittering homemade thank you cards were sent to the Senator’s office. ■



MHC Jordan Center kids create thank you hearts for Senator Hagan.



Last spring former Governor Jim Hunt visited with children at MHC’s Jordan Center. Hunt was photographed by Simon Griffiths for a book on leadership.

A Charmed Evening Honors Our Mission

By Enuma Okoro

A change of scenery can be good for the spirit. On January 24th, Methodist Home for Children hosted it's 12th annual charity gala, "A Winter's Tale" at the spacious new Raleigh Convention Center. The evening was an unqualified success.

The ballroom was stunningly decorated with vibrant red roses and luminous candlelit tables. Close to 500 guests socialized, dined, and bid on a wide array of live and silent auction items in support of MHC's work caring for young people and their families. The agency raised over \$175,000 for its mission to nurture children, youth, and families.

The gala was co-chaired for the second year in a row by MHC volunteers Kelly and Michael Clay, and Melanie and Ken Crockett. MHC supporter and WRAL anchor Debra Morgan hosted the evening with her usual radiance and continual enthusiasm for our work, and Golden Corral Corporation served, once again, as the event's lead sponsor.

The evening's keynote speaker, long-time child advocate and acclaimed author, Andrew Bridge, captivated the audience as he shared his tale of growing up in the foster care system. As a child of a mentally-ill mother, Bridge moved between state facilities and foster care homes, all the while finding ways to nurture his spirit and his intellect. He spoke particularly of what he termed "the quiet child inside," drawing listeners into the depth and interior life of those children who on the outside appear quiet and withdrawn. Andrew was one of those children, and his moving story of brokenness and eventual healing and advocacy for children is captured in his memoir, *Hope's Boy*, a *NY Times* bestseller.

"Andrew reminded our donors that life is fragile for all our kids and families, regardless of what exterior front they show. And he reminded all of us to take care with how we listen to those who seemingly have little to say, especially those on the margins. Many of the children we serve require such compassionate attention," said MHC President/CEO Bruce Stanley, reflecting on the impact the speaker had on educating attendees on the importance of the work of MHC.

Part of the evening's program was devoted to inducting two new members into Methodist Home for Children's Guardian Angel Society: Corporate Press and Rex Healthcare. The society recognizes those who, through their service and support, have made extraordinary commitments to the children and families served by our agency.

Robert Zimmerman and Alice Dean are co-owners of Corporate Press, a company that has been part of the MHC family for almost three decades. Robert traces the connection to our agency back



NCCUMC District Superintendents (above) enjoy the Gala with their lovely wives, (left to right) Goldsboro DS, Charles and Glenda Cook, and Raleigh DS, Tim and Pam Russell. Featured Gala author, Andrew Bridge (above right) poses with Monica Jones, a youth adopted through MHC, and President/CEO Bruce Stanley. (at right) MHC's newest addition to the Gala evening: a chance to win a diamond!





Above: Pastor Greg Moore and wife, Molly (seated, at right) enjoy the gala with five members of their All Saints UMC, Brier Creek, congregation. Below: With a winning bid at AWT's live auction, Laurie and Gene Merlo now have a basketball signed by the 2009 NCAA championship team!

to his childhood in Raleigh. As a boy living in the neighborhood near Methodist Orphanage, Robert befriended many of the young people in care at MO. Today he loves to share his fond memories of those interactions. With that background, it is no surprise that Corporate Press has made many in-kind contributions to MHC over the years, including generous donations of printing services for every "A Winter's Tale" gala. MHC thanks Corporate Press for their support.

Remember when Rex Hospital was located at Wade Avenue and St. Mary's Street? That property was adjacent to the Methodist Orphanage campus, and the

warm relationship between our two organizations dates back well into the previous century! Today Rex Healthcare provides a variety of healthcare services throughout Wake County with facilities in Cary, Apex, Garner, Wakefield, downtown Raleigh, and another site opening in Knightdale in May 2009. One way that Rex Healthcare invests in the well-being of our community is through their annual sponsorship of "A Winter's Tale," and this year marks their eighth such commitment. They also participated in the capital campaign for MHC's Jordan Center. For this steadfast support, we tip our hats in gratitude to Rex Healthcare. ■



Many thanks to our "A Winter's Tale" sponsors, who helped make the evening possible.

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MHC Best Practices are Giving Kids a Chance

By Enuma Okoro

All the girls had on exactly the same clothes, khaki pants, navy blue polo-style shirts and generic sneakers. In this environment, youth would have to learn new ways of defining themselves.

They had gathered in the common room that opened directly from their individual locked rooms. The counselor was trying to teach them about self-respect and taking responsibility for their feelings, their behaviors, and essentially their lives. She asked the room of young female offenders, "How do you want to be remembered?"

They could not shout out their responses, but had to practice taking turns and listening to one another. Some were ready with their answers as though they had been reflecting on such a question for a while now.

"As a great mother."

"As someone who chased dreams."

Some of the answers came more slowly, as girls pondered what the future could hold for them if they stayed on a new and better track.

"I wanna be remembered as someone who was changed for life after this."

"I wanna be someone that anyone can trust."

As an outside observer, one wonders how such cheerful, energetic kids ended up in a state Youth Detention Center (YDC), sleeping in spaces with just enough room for a bed and a stainless steel sink and toilet. It is easy to go a step further and speculate about what happens in these YDCs that could make any difference in how these youth function when they return to live in their communities.

MHC staff and youth welcome NCDJJD staff and members of the community for an open house at one of our Multi-purpose homes.

The good news is that Methodist Home for Children is helping transform the system of training that young people like these girls receive in YDCs located across North Carolina. For more than 15 years, MHC has been working with juvenile offenders in a structured and non-punitive environment to teach social, academic, and life skills. Such training is done in the context of promoting values such as respect, empowerment, and compassion. In 2004, the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (NCDJJD) and the State Legislature did a thorough review of programs to find the best practices for working with youth offenders in the state's YDCs. They wanted to know what gives a kid the best chance of being a constructive member of society and ultimately reduces recidivism, the likelihood of re-offending.

When the state looked at MHC, they saw that we were using a Value Based

Therapeutic Environment (VBTE) model built on techniques that include training measures with a high success rate for changing the attitudes and behaviors of juvenile offenders. MHC has always believed in a model where staff members interact therapeutically with youth. This requires compassionate, caring adults who work with small groups of youth to encourage positive behaviors and constructive social interactions. Our model helps change the paths of many young offenders and reduces the risk of them breaking the law again once they are released (thus less recidivism). VBTE-trained staff members engage their charges consistently throughout the day to provide therapeutic interventions. There is intense focus on developing life skills that help youth control anger issues, establish better relationships with adults and figures of authority, and effectively address problems and challenges.

Also, under MHC's systematic approach to working with youth, each child is assessed for an individual service plan that best meets their needs. This service plan helps identify the needs of youth and creates an individualized





Local UMC pastors visit one of DJJDP's Multi-purpose homes run by MHC.

roadmap that guides staff interventions.

In 2005, MHC and NCDJJD began a three-year pilot program to evaluate the outcomes of the VBTE model of care. This program, housed at a YDC near Charlotte, provided VBTE training to one set of young people, while another set of offenders received the state's traditional treatment model—this was our “control group.” By observing the progress of the two sets of youth, basically side-by-side, it was not difficult to collect information about how the young people responded to different types of training.

Findings from the pilot program were quite dramatic!

- 30% of the VBTE group earned GED's; 12% of the control group earned GED's.

- The VBTE group generated a monthly average of 5.75 “behavior alerts;” the control group had a monthly average of 40.3 “behavior alerts.” (A “behavior alert” is a consequence on a youth in response to serious behavior infractions.)

- The VBTE group spent a monthly average of 3.84 hours in disciplinary isolation; the control group clocked 300.4 hours for the same monthly average!

- There were considerably more visits with family in the VBTE group and almost twice the amount of family attendance for treatment activities or meetings when compared to the control group.

- A “Pride in Delinquency” assessment administered at admission and at six months showed improvement (or less pride in delinquency) for the VBTE group

and a worsening (or increase in pride in delinquency) for the control group.

- Of discharged youth, 33% were rearrested from the VBTE group and 52% were rearrested from the control group.

Guided by the results generated by this pilot program, the state has designed their “next generation” of YDC facilities to use the VBTE model and has contracted with MHC to train their staff in its implementation. YDC staff members who interact with youth on a regular basis are trained in the model, including teachers who are now able to work with youth both academically and therapeutically. The classrooms also have VBTE-trained counselors who help with behavioral issues during school.

We are thrilled that the work of MHC is now touching and transforming more young lives than ever before, because the YDCs admit annually a volume of youth far beyond the service capacity of agencies like ours. Through our partnership with NCDJJD, we have helped promote a values-based therapeutic model of responding to troubled youth, and we have encouraged the development of a more effective environment for all incarcerated juvenile offenders in North Carolina.

Remember those young women with matching, generic sneakers? When asked by their YDC counselor “If your life were a movie, what would the title be?” their responses suggested that they will indeed benefit from VBTE to help them move to a healthy path.

“The Journey That Never Ended.”

“The intent is to change behavior and to help kids be more prepared to return to the community and to ultimately reduce the chance for re-offense. Going at it from a therapeutic angle means everyone is thinking, ‘How do I help the child be more successful?’ and ‘What are the things he or she needs when they go back home?’ The model stresses the importance of empowering youth and teaching them to recognize their strengths. Counselors have to ask themselves, ‘What skills can we work on today with this specific youth?’ and ‘How can I reinforce an individual strength in a youth today?’”

LYNDA HICKS

MHC DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

“Gang Life vs. True Life.”

We offer up our work, our words, and our continued support as heartfelt prayers for these girls and for all the young people in North Carolina who are living in a YDC. May our loving God grant them healing, transformation, and a successful transition back to their families and loved ones. ■

All Work and Some Play

By Enuma Okoro

Earlier this year MHC hosted an innovative three-day training on art and play therapy for the staff of our In-Home Family Services (IHFS) and Multi-purpose Homes. Kelly Campbell, Clinical Coordinator for MHC's IHFS program in New Hanover County, organized the workshop presented by the Chesapeake Beach Professional Seminars Training Program (CBPS). The training provided MHC staff with new

therapeutic techniques on working with the children, youth, and families in our care. In the mental health professional field, play therapy is recognized as an effective way to help children process the trauma of their lives and develop coping skills that lead to healing. The training was instructive, experiential, and interactive. Participants were taught an array of interventions to help children build self-esteem, and identify and communicate their thoughts and feelings on issues ranging from death to anger in a safe and therapeutic environment. Though art and play therapy is used primarily with children, it offers systemic approaches of caring for families. The recent training included a focus on stress and relaxation management for families, and strategies for parenting—all of which will help our staff teach new and effective parenting skills to the families. MHC plans to provide further training opportunities in this area. ■

MHC staff practice play therapy skills with one another.

“Most of the families and children we work with have experienced trauma in their lives. Play therapy is a non-threatening way to work through that trauma, and it provides great techniques for building a strong therapeutic relationship and rapport with families and children”

KELLY CAMPBELL

CLINICAL COORDINATOR,
IN-HOME SERVICES

What We Value

HONESTY

to be truthful, fair, sincere,
and straightforward

RESPECT

to show consideration for feelings,
rights, and property of self and
others; to embrace diversity

EMPOWERMENT

the ability to have control over
one's choices and life

RESPONSIBILITY

accountability for one's behavior,
duties, and obligations

COMPASSION

an understanding of the suffering
or troubles of others which
creates an urge to help

SPIRITUALITY

discovering personal meaning
and purpose



Remembering Mr. Martin

By Peter MacBeth

It was Christmas, 2004—my first yuletide working for Methodist Home for Children—and I recall getting a report listing a generous holiday gift from a donor in southeastern North Carolina. It took me several weeks to find this gentleman at home, but early in 2005 Mr. Elwood Martin finally picked up the phone, said “hello” in a quiet and very country voice, and patiently accepted my words of thanks on behalf of MHC.

Mr. Martin struck me as someone not very comfortable talking with a stranger on the phone, but what he did say spoke volumes about his faith and devotion. He told me that his wife, Rosadell, had died some years earlier, but before she passed she had asked her husband to “do something” for MHC. Apparently he agreed to his wife’s request, because he went on to say, without any elaboration, “I’ve taken

care of you,” and then added, “and you’ll always get something while I’m here.”

True to his word, Mr. Martin continued to send MHC a lovely donation every Christmas, and I would respond in January by mailing a thank you note because that phone of his would just ring and ring and ring! I’m sad to say that we never spoke again.

After Mr. Martin died in 2008, notice arrived that MHC is a beneficiary of the Elwood and Rosadell Martin Charitable Trust. Funded with significant land and timber holdings, this trust is designed to provide annual support for five faith-based institutions in NC including Methodist Home for Children.

Thanks be to God for this compassionate and selfless couple! And thank you, Mr. Martin, for ensuring that your gift will continue to arrive here every year.

This year Camp UMC (Shalotte) welcomed MO Alumni President Billy Griffin (below left) to speak at its MHC Sunday service. At the conclusion of his remarks, Billy presented a plaque to Camp high school senior, Suzannah Harrelson (center), in recognition of her service project on the history of MHC. This project included a fundraising component, and last fall Suzannah and her church family produced a big spaghetti dinner and shared all the proceeds with the alumni association and MHC. Fellow MO alumni Rom Hardin (right) joined Billy in honoring this lovely and hardworking young Methodist lady.



Remembering the Details

If you are considering the creation of a bequest to support the ministry of MHC, you can review suggested language at our Web site www.mhfc.org. Just click on “donate” and scroll down to the section titled “donate by bequest.”

For those who are ready to give instructions to their attorney or estate planner, the following details should be all you need: designate your gift to **Methodist Home for Children Foundation, 1041 Washington Street, Raleigh, NC 27605**. The foundation’s Federal Identification Number is **56-2259577**.

Some MHC supporters are opting to leave a “final gift” by designating MHC as a beneficiary of their qualified retirement plan. This arrangement does not require legal services, and it is easy to set up and easy to amend if circumstances change. Most plan administrators require you to designate either the dollar amount or the percentage of your account passing to charity, and to provide information to allow the administrator to locate the charity (e.g. the details listed in bold above).

As always, we strongly urge you to consult with your legal and financial advisors regarding any estate gift you are planning.



Contact Peter MacBeth, MHC Development Officer about including MHC in your

estate plans: 1.919.754.3620 or pmacbeth@mhfc.org

We Are Family

Join us in celebrating with these families who adopted through Methodist Home for Children since our last publication. For more information about fostering and adopting, please call us toll-free at 1.888.305.4321.



Sonji and Alex Carlton celebrate having four-year-old Caden (right) and five-year-old Kylie in their lives forever. The adoptions were complete in February 2009.

A Heartfelt Thank You...

...to the United Methodist Women, pastors and members of the churches in the North Carolina Conference for supporting our mission through a special offering for Methodist Home for Children Sunday 2009.

You have helped us make a difference in the world...one child at a time.

Your generosity helps clothe, feed and provide for children in our care. Your gifts also support our foster and adoptive parents who offer safe and loving homes for children across North Carolina.

Thank you.



This "Forever Home" was completed in August 2008. Pictured above, Aalyiah, Tracy, (mom) Tireanna, Xavier, and Adrianna.

Good Neighbors Build Community

In February, MHC opened its offices on a Saturday morning for the annual meeting of the Bishop's Park Homeowners Association, a group of Raleigh residents who live adjacent to MHC's administrative headquarters. This neighborly act of good will generated many thanks from the participants including a lovely bouquet of flowers and one very thoughtful letter of appreciation. That note read, in part: "We would like to thank you very much for your 'neighborliness'... [your conference room] was the most apropos, convenient, and comfortable place we have ever had the privilege meeting. Secondly, but most important, we cannot thank you adequately for the kind installation you put on your vacant lot between the Methodist Building and Bishops Park—the children's development center. It gladdens my heart to look out our windows and see the children playing—or hear them when our windows are open ... there is nothing you could have built that we would have liked better. We thank you so much for your insight, your vision, and your caring." ■

What a Beautiful Story

By Peter MacBeth

It may have been that date to the State Fair in the fall of 1949: Classmates Charles Maultsby and Mildred Parker were having so much fun that they missed the bus bringing students back to the Methodist Orphanage (MO) campus. Grabbing a cab, they returned to face the reproach of their respective house parents—there were consequences for breaking the rules!

That date may have started the transformation that took these two from longtime friends to high school sweethearts to a couple who will celebrate in 2009 their 57th year of marriage.

Mildred and her younger brother Edward arrived at MO in July, 1941 from the small town of Poplar Branch in Currituck County. Her future husband Charles was actually admitted to campus twice: In 1939, he came to MO with younger brother Dickie, but the two soon left for Burlington to live with their mother and grandmother. The outbreak of WWII created new hardships for their family, and in April, 1942 the boys returned to MO accompanied this time by their older brother Colin.

Living on the MO campus was a positive experience for Charles and Mildred, who moved through grades together in school. “I remember an English class where Charlie was often asked to read aloud,” she recalls with a smile. “You could tell how smart he was, and I thought even then that he’d probably go to college.” Charles replies, “I was smart enough to fall in love with the prettiest girl on campus!”

In their high school senior year, long after that state fair date, Charles was the proud escort for the campus May Queen—Mildred, radiant in a beautiful dress borrowed from Meredith College. By

graduation, Mildred’s senior class ring, purchased by Charles, took on another function, becoming her engagement ring.

MO provided each graduate with a new trunk for their belongings, and in the fall of 1951 Charles and Mildred loaded this luggage on a bus and headed off to enter High Point College. There they made good use of a year’s tuition scholarship offered to MO graduates by this Methodist institution.

Traveling back to Raleigh in June 1952, Mildred and Charles were married in the chapel at Edenton Street UMC. Not owning a car, they accepted the invitation of a friend who did have wheels to make a honeymoon trip to Lake Junaluska—accompanied by the friend, his date, and another couple!



Charles worked for the Lilly Company, later Valspar, and retired as comptroller after almost 40 years with an industry that provides paints and coatings to the furniture industry. Mildred worked in the financial departments of several area companies, balancing time at the office with time at home where she and Charles raised two children, Chuck and Beverly. Today, both kids are parents themselves and live close enough so that Charles and Mildred can spend ample time with their three grandchildren.

An avid golfer, Charles is modest when describing a hobby that has brought him two holes-in-one, plus a seniors champion trophy at nearby Sedgefield Country Club. Mildred is active with Jamestown UMC, and it is no surprise that this church (part of the Western NC Conference) includes MHC in its annual mission’s budget.

A few years ago, while entertaining at their beach cottage near Myrtle Beach, the Maultsby’s were reminiscing about their lives to a guest who exclaimed, “What a beautiful story!”

Charles and Mildred agree. “We are very thankful that we were raised at the orphanage,” says Mildred. Her husband adds: “Looking back, I can’t believe how poor we were and how hard things must have been. But we had each other, we had our faith, and we got through it all just fine.” ■

Above, Mildred and Charles celebrating May Day Festivities in 1950. At left, May Queen still escorted by Charles.

Befriending God through Mission

By Enuma Okoro

Earlier this spring I was invited to speak to the Raleigh District of Pastors on the importance of Mission and Outreach. I kept thinking about John 15: 8–17 when Christ calls his disciples friends and no longer servants.

It occurred to me that anyone on the faith journey could benefit from hearing how being involved in mission feeds and nurtures our growing friendship with God.

Our mission as Christians is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Disciples are friends of God sent out to extend that friendship to a broken world. But Christians have known for centuries that extending care and support can seem unending and burdensome, especially when the world is enduring one crisis after another. As early as the 4th century, Christians knew about spiritual fatigue and restlessness. They called this feeling *acedia*, the noonday demon, a spiritual apathy that affects the faithful by discouraging them from their religious work.

Our modern tendency is to simply equate *acedia* with laziness, a failure to use one's talents or gifts, or to perform one's duties. But leaving it at that definition denies a deeper theological understanding of *acedia*—that which works against friendship with God. Thomas Aquinas, the 13th-century theologian whose writings have deeply affected Christianity, understood *acedia* as the spiritual sorrow and joylessness that came from an awareness and aversion to the responsibility and the burden of a love relationship with God.

When any of us are overwhelmed by the responsibility to love others as our neighbor through relationship and active mission and outreach, we resist delving into deeper friendship with God. *Acedia* keeps us in the dark to the things of God. It skews our understanding of what is in

our best interest and what is for our own good. Such misunderstandings make us shy away from those practices that foster the joy of friendship with God, practices such as being in community with the poor, loving those neighbors that may or may not look like us, and caring for children, youth, and families like those served by MHC and other such agencies.

The corresponding virtue for Aquinas, that which fought against *acedia*, was *caritas* (charity), spiritual joy whose objective was friendship with God. *Caritas* nourishes us towards the things of God and towards increasing likeness to that original image in which we were made. *Caritas* moves us to practical and tangible love of neighbor. Cultivating *caritas* involves the sort of outreach to the community that fosters knowledge of one another and that seeks to not just provide



for, but to establish relationship between people of different social, economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Caritas, friendship with God and with neighbor, demands daily commitment from us. It opens us up to the possibility of discomfort, and the incessant call to change, to act, and to shift our priorities, our ways of seeing the world, the order and hierarchies we have created. Deep friendship with God always requires something from us—responsibility, vulnerability, suffering, challenge and change. It requires a constant dying to self and being born anew in the baptism of Christ.

When we are challenged to remember that God transforms the world through friendship, and that such friendship begins with the Christ who no longer calls us servants but calls us friends, then we have to understand the role of serving others a little differently. When we understand that the act of reaching out to another human being in need is actually about cultivating our friendship with God, then missions becomes the food and nourishment and clothing that we ourselves need in order to know God more intimately. Being in mission with the poor, the sick, the hungry, the imprisoned, the homeless, the widow, and the orphan is essential to fostering a deepening friendship with God, because that is where God can always be found. ■

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

JOHN 15:12–15

Employee Makes a Difference

By Enuma Okoro

When Veronica Soles was hired in 2007 as Director of Staff Recruitment, she had several goals in mind and, after settling in, she quickly got to work. Her first goal was to use available internal and external technology to ensure that the recruiting and hiring process at MHC was seamless and modernized. With eight years of experience in human resources, Veronica knew that this effort would not only improve the hiring system, but would also incur financial savings and wider visibility for the agency.

Other goals tackled by Veronica were the recordkeeping and interview processes used by MHC when hiring new employees. By restructuring these areas, she has helped strengthen agency capacity to recruit and hire the most qualified individuals. Veronica stays connected with new employees should they have any questions or concerns, and she goes to great lengths to make herself accessible to each individual.

Another focus area for Veronica is retention, currently at about 70% across the entire agency. She hopes to see that number rise quickly, to as much as 80% by the end of 2009, and she has implemented specific retention tools to help us reach that goal.

Veronica maintains a proactive approach to her work and involves herself in new projects where her gifts can be utilized. She co-chairs the Wellness committee and tries to keep her fellow staff members fully engaged with MHC. Her positive attitude, ready smile, and genuine excitement are infectious among her co-workers. According to Veronica just doing her job is not enough. She says, "I don't want to be just a recruiter, I want to be someone who is making a difference throughout the entire agency." Congratulations, Veronica; you most certainly are making a difference, and your strong commitment to serving children and families is greatly appreciated. ■



"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

2008 Employees of Excellence Awards

Methodist Home for Children is continually blessed with an extraordinary staff that is devoted to serving the children, youth, and families of North Carolina. Each year, several employees are selected to receive the Employee of Excellence Award for the outstanding quality of their work. These individuals go beyond their call of duty to reflect the mission and values of the agency and serve as models for their fellow staff members. The 2008 Employees of Excellence are:

Veronica Soles

Director of Staff Recruitment,
Corporate Services

Lisa Lesane

Resident Counselor,
Robeson Juvenile Home

Iris Herring

Family Services Specialist,
Robeson Juvenile Home

Laney Brown

More at Four Lead Teacher,
Jordan Child & Family
Enrichment Center

Jackie Mason

Intensive Family Preservation
Specialist, Family Preservation

Laura Mayer

Foster Care Specialist

Another Round of Applause for All!



MHC would like to thank all those who helped make Christmas a lot brighter for the kids and families in care, including **Wake Technical Community College, Grace AME, PPD, Inc., Clear Channel, Wakefield UMC, All Saints UMC, Genesis UMC** and **Hatteras Investment Properties**. Once again, **WRDU 106.1, (The Rooster)** helped generate countless gifts for our children, youth, and families. Presents were donated and wrapped at Triangle Towne Center Mall and Cary Towne Center Mall. Thank you!

We are very grateful to the Church and Society Committee at **Jarvis United Methodist Church** in Greenville, who threw a fabulous Christmas party for all our children in foster and group homes in Northeastern North Carolina. Thanks to

Above: "A Rooster Christmas!"

At right: Tricia Phillips of Sharon United Methodist Church surrounded by journey bags prepared by youth groups at Sharon UMC and Mount Zion UMC.

Darlene Howard and everyone at Jarvis who helped make the holidays special for many of our kids at MHC.

A heartfelt thank you goes to **Pastor Paul Dunham** and all of our friends at **Farmville United Methodist Church** who, in addition to being faithful "1K for 1 Kid" supporters, helped us meet many of our last-minute Christmas gift needs with great book and toy donations.



We sincerely appreciate the efforts of **Debbie Pitts**, Minister of Music at **Bailey United Methodist Church** and **Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church** in Bailey who took on the task of organizing a Christmas gift drive for many of our kids "down east." Debbie garnered the help of members at both churches to gather a bounty of gifts to brighten the holidays for families and children in our care.

MHC was blessed to receive generous donations of clothes and toys from **Harry Hosier UMC** in Fayetteville. The Rev. **Regina Henderson** and several lay leaders drove to Raleigh to visit us and deliver their donations.

We send many thanks to **Pastor Kwan Seok Kim** and the **UMW of Agape Korean United Methodist Church** in Cary. We so appreciated the handmade crocheted blankets and scarves that they donated to MHC.

Cheers to **Eric Staal** of the **Carolina Hurricanes Hockey Club** for his support of our youth. Each season Eric graciously donates tickets for our group home youth to attend a game, offering them a new and memorable experience. Go Canes!

Special thanks goes to the Children's Ministry at **Wake Forest UMC** for their



Last fall several children stayed enjoyably busy while their parents attended MHC's Foster Care Awareness meeting.

donations of stuffed animals and special handmade blankets for the children at MHC.

UMW President **Cheryl Thornton** and the **Black Creek United Methodist Women** provided 15 colorful backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils, rulers and all sorts of school supplies for children in foster care in their area. Thank you so much!

Many thanks goes to **Tricia Phillips** and the youth of **Sharon UMC** in Poplar Branch and **Racheal Stone** and the youth at **Mount Zion UMC** in Grandy. They donated "journey bags" filled with colorful pillowcases, toiletries, books, and toys for children in foster care.

Thank you to **Freddy Tatum** and **Seaside UMC**! Their Teddy Bear ministry provided handmade teddy bears for all children in care attending the adoption celebration.

Doc Ellis of **St. Paul's UMC** in the Wilmington District, coordinated the Angel Food Ministry providing February and March food baskets for five families each month. These baskets contained enough food to feed a family of four for one week. MHC and the families we serve deeply appreciate this bounty!

We also thank **Harbor UMC** and **Mary Lou Serene** for their Angel Food Ministry

which provided food baskets to 14 families serving foster care children in the Wilmington District. Each family received a week's supply of food in addition to a turkey, fruits and vegetables.

United Christian Campus Ministry

helped staff and sponsor MHC's Wilmington Adoption party. We send many thanks to the **Rev. Kevin Hay** and his volunteers!

Bill and Kay Applewhite of Wilmington donated a package they purchased called "All About Fun." This package consisted of a bounce house, a cotton candy machine, 50 certificates for food at Wendy's, and Cheer Wine beverages for an outdoor spring picnic sponsored by United Christian Campus Ministry.

Thank you to **Reid Greenlee**, Eagle Scout member of Troop 100 sponsored by **Edenton St. UMC**. Reid put his hard work into building a bench for MHC's Jordan Center playground. Reid is also a member of the Order of the Arrow. ■

Thursday, September 10, 2009 at 6:00

*Epicurean
Evening*

MARK THE CALENDAR!

*The third annual
Epicurean Evening —
fine dining and
a rousing live auction —
to benefit Methodist
Home for Children*

Our black-tie culinary fundraiser will be held at the Wilmington Hilton Riverside.

For more information, please contact Development Officer, Regina Hawse at 910.471.6088 or rhawse@mhfc.org

Methodist Home for Children

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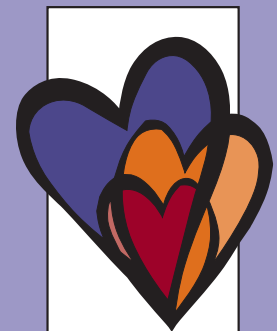


THANK YOU!
Your support through mailed gifts, website donations, and state and federal campaign designations help MHC serve youth like those shown here at one of our Multi-purpose group homes.



**COMBINED
FEDERAL
CAMPAIGN**

TO OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES:
MHC has been accepted into the Combined Federal Campaign. Our CFC agency number is #28619. Please designate MHC as your charity of choice — and encourage friends, co-workers, and neighbors who are also federal employees to do the same! We participate in these areas: Research Triangle Area, Onslow County (includes Camp Lejeune), Southeastern North Carolina (includes Fort Bragg), Cherry Point, and Piedmont Triad Area.



METHODIST
HOME FOR
CHILDREN



CALLING ALL STATE EMPLOYEES!
You can designate MHC as your charity of choice in the State Employees Combined Campaign. Our SECC code is 1588. Encourage others to do the same — and better the lives of children, youth, and families in North Carolina.

