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Three Sections -- Section A

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Our vision is to ignite a passionate, spiritual connection with Christ among all people in Western Pennsylvania.

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Image by Jan Woodard

Clown Cindy Lemon of Asbury UMC in Uniontown presented at the Children's Ministry Seminar.

Reaching Children Who Come, Those Who Don't

By Jan Woodard, Staff Writer

Jesus said to love the little children. That includes those who come through our doors, and those who don't.

"We can do the best job in the world with our kids, but if we aren't reaching others, we're only doing half the job," asserted Indiana Dist. Supt. Sharon Schwab, keynote speaker at the 2007 Children's Ministry Seminar, held at **Ingomar UMC** on Oct. 20.

"How do we view children? Like Jesus? Are they a bother? They need people to touch, bless and meet their needs. If they're inspired and comfortable, everyone else is more likely to be," she said.

Building on the theme, *First Aid for Children's Ministries*, Schwab presented three tools to diagnose the health of ministries to and with children, suggesting the question, "How can we improve?" be applied with each instrument.

Natural Church Development (NCD) is one way to measure the effectiveness of

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Fifth graders in Melinda Romito's classroom at Neil Armstrong Middle School in the Bethel Park School District prepare to fill a backpack with school supplies to send to a student in Nyadire, Zimbabwe.

Photo by Vicki Flotta



Mission Group Connects African Orphans with WPA Schools

By Jackie Campbell, Staff Writer

The Nyadire Connection, a Pittsburgh District outreach group that supports the United Methodist Mission in Zimbabwe, is providing a way for students in a suburban Pittsburgh school district to make a difference in the lives of orphaned children in Africa.

All eight schools in the 5,000-student Bethel Park School District are involved in some way. In the elementary and middle schools, students in each homeroom are raising \$50 to sponsor an orphan at one of 28 public schools in the villages surrounding the Nyadire Mission. They're also filling backpacks with school supplies for the child. These orphans either live in child-led households or are looked after by extended family, said Sara Dickey, outreach director at Christ UMC who helped establish The Nyadire

Connection. The \$50 covers tuition for an entire year and the cost of a school uniform.

In late October, the Rev. Lloyd Nyarota, assistant to the Bishop in Zimbabwe, visited Bethel Park and spoke with some students, faculty and administrators at Independence Middle School.

"Lloyd's travels began in Mutare, Zimbabwe, where he rode for three hours in the back of an open truck to the airport in Harare. There was no fuel for a car and no money for bus fare, so he found this ride. Thirty hours of flights brought him to Pittsburgh at 10 am Wednesday, Oct 24," said Drew Harvey, a member of **Christ UMC in Bethel Park** and the Nyadire Connection. Harvey took Nyarota directly to the middle school, where he presented a slide show to about 140 seventh and eighth graders.

"His presentation was centered

around a 12-year-old girl who he had recently visited with in Zimbabwe. She is an orphan who continues to live in her rural home and takes care of her younger brother and sister," Harvey said. "Lloyd contrasted her day as head of a child-led household with what a 12-year-old in Bethel Park might experience. He did all this in a descriptive, yet positive way that connected with the kids.

"This brought a complex, global situation down to a level the middle school kids could relate to on a kid-to-kid basis, he noted. "The students had questions and asked if they could write to some of the Nyadire kids."

"The idea with The Nyadire Connection is to personalize the overwhelming and paralyzing Africa statistics on orphans, HIV, poverty, etc. so that people can help person-to-

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person." Each Bethel Park classroom will have a photo, name, and school of a specific child and will send their backpack, with a photo of their class, to that child.

"The children feel really good about helping a child halfway around the world," said Lorna Kestner, a fifth grade teacher at Neil Armstrong Middle School. "It is very heartwarming to know how generous the families of Bethel Park are. I am always overwhelmed by how much the kids give. One of our teachers (Phil Himmler of First Bethel UMC) went to Zimbabwe so she has talked to a lot of our classes about it." Kestner's homeroom is sponsoring Blessmore, a student at Manhemba Secondary School.

"Many of my students wrote letters asking about Blessmore's life," she said. "One student told Blessmore that she prays for him everyday. We are anxious to get letters back from him

The Nyadire Connection (TNC)

supports the Nyadire UM Hospital and mission station. The 240-bed hospital and clinics provide care to about 500,000 men, women and children and 150,000 in-patients each year.

One in four children in Zimbabwe is an orphan. TNC supports 22 orphans in the Home of Hope and seeks to provide support for up to 500 others. Contribute to Conference Advance #MS004800P for Nyadire Mission or #MS004850P for the Home of Hope for Orphans.

The Rev. Lloyd Nyarota spoke to many Western PA groups. Drew Harvey of TNC said, "Lloyd tells a story of desperation, but always with a smile, an upbeat attitude, and a foundation belief that God will guide the future."

so that we can learn more about his life."

Vicki Flotta, public relations director for the school district, said all eight of the schools have embraced the program. "I'm so proud that the Bethel Park School District was so willing and excited about being a part of the project," she added. "Just to be able to help and to make a connection with these children is a great thing for our students."

Flotta said Harvey approached the district about connecting the children in Bethel Park with those in Nyadire last Spring. "When Drew shows the pictures of these children and tells some of their stories, you can't help but be touched," she said.

"I am amazed at how little effort it truly is for us and how meaningful it's going to be for all the children. We're extremely pleased to be a part of it."

The Bethel Park School District stresses community service and has not hesitated to work with faith-based groups to help those in need and give students a chance to make a positive difference in the lives of others. "We've partnered for several years with South Hills Interfaith Ministries in collecting food, school supplies, clothing and other items for the families they serve. The Bethel Park families are extremely supportive and generous."

Flotta said some Bethel Park teachers, after hearing how scarce notebook paper and other items are in Zimbabwe, are taking the initiative to bring in canvas tote bags and donating items to fill them. "We're also thinking about gathering T-shirts to send," she said.

The high school Interact Club has adopted Nyadire as its international project and will finalize specific plans soon.

This month the home-

rooms will concentrate on raising the \$50 to support their child, build the backpack of supplies and establishing connections with pen pals.

The Nyadire Connection will collect all the items and ship them to Emanuel Chiimba, the administrator at the Home of Hope in Nyadire, who will pay the school fees and deliver the uniforms & backpacks to each of the orphans, Harvey said.

Shipping a container of supplies costs about \$10,000, said Diane Miller, Conference Mission/VIM coordinator, who also met with Nyarota when he was in Western PA. As a long-time teacher, Miller said she's very excited about the collaboration with the Bethel Park School District.

"Kids need this connection to a bigger world," she noted. They often are so self-involved. But seeing pictures and hearing the stories of children from Lloyd and others who have been in Zimbabwe makes them much more aware than just reading about Africa in a book.

"These kids (in Bethel Park) are helping other children stay in school," Miller said, "and it started with a faith-based group."

Harvey said The Nyadire Connection hopes to take the sponsorship program to other school districts.

"The idea is to use this as an opportunity for each teacher to more accurately teach about Africa, and connect the words with an action. Its part of what Lloyd calls 'Chabadza,' a Shona term meaning that we help each other by working with each other."

For information, go to www.nyadire.org, e-mail outreach@chirstumc.net or call 412-835-6621. Connect with Nyarota at www.7villages.com/ RevLloydNyarota.



Image by Mark Rehn

The Rev. Lloyd Nyarota, communications and area project coordinator for UM Bishop Nhwatiwa of Zimbabwe, and Drew Harvey of Christ UMC in Bethel Park and the Nyadire Connection, talk with Conference Mission/VIM Director Diane Miller during a visit to the UM Center in late October. Nyarota told Miller and the Rev. Larry Homitsky, director of connectional ministries, the two Zimbabwe conferences need support for ministries to orphans; funding of the \$20 monthly salaries for the 400 clergy; and help with training for clergy.

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Did You Know?

By Susie Lowe, Administrative Assistant

The United Methodist Foundation of Western PA has provided consulting, educational, fund management, and related services to United Methodist congregations, agencies, and individuals for over 35 years. Here are answers to 10 *Frequently Asked Questions* about Foundation services.

- A representative will be happy to come to your church or organization to provide consultation on fund management, estate planning, or endowments AT NO CHARGE. No solicitation is ever made of individuals or churches for gifts to the Foundation.
- Becoming an account holder with the Foundation is EASY!
- No minimum dollar amount is required to open an account.
- Deposits may be made to an account at any time. It's best to make deposits close to quarterly close dates of Mar. 31, June 30, Sept. 30, and Dec. 31, as the Foundation does not pay short-term interest.
- A church or agency can have multiple Foundation accounts. The distribution of income/ withdrawals is guided by the church or agency.
- Individuals can create a life income gift or an estate gift through the Foundation.
- Every year the Foundation awards grants which benefit UM churches and agencies in western PA, whether an account holder or not. The maximum is \$5,000. Applications are due the end of April and awards are issued a month later. Obtain a grant application at the Foundation website (noted below).
- Capital campaign services are available. Experienced consultants are happy to discuss your options.
- The Foundation is not a lending agency.
- The Foundation is located at 223 Fourth Avenue, Suite 707 of the Benedum-Trees Building in Pittsburgh and a member of the National Association of UM Foundations.

Fund Your Faith is provided by the United Methodist Foundation of Western Pennsylvania. To learn more on how the Foundation can assist in funding ministry in your congregation, visit www.umfoundation.org or call 800-743-2128.