

Surviving the Winter on the Streets of Detroit/StreeThreads by Mixie Hockman



Our StreeThreads team is always trying to meet the needs of our homeless clients. This Christmas we were able to pass out reusable cloth bags filled with the necessities for life on the streets such as; toiletries, underwear, socks, gloves and hats and provide a delicious hot meal plus a lunch for the next day. We are so blessed to be a part of a congregation that generously shares their abundance with this mission. We want to thank those of you who faithfully

contribute your resources to make our team able to be a beacon of hope for so many. After four years of weekly contact we have created some very special friends among our clients. One such special friend is a young man named Mack. He knows our whole team by name and we all look forward to seeing him each week. His ready smile and joyful spirit gives us such pleasure. With the anticipation of our Christmas celebration Mack took pen in hand and wrote his feelings of

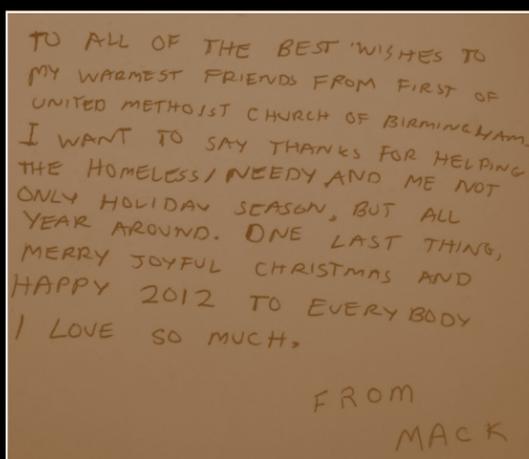
team:

“To all of the best wishes to my warmest friends from First of United Methodist Church of Birmingham. I want to say thanks for helping the homeless/ needy and me not only holiday season but all year round. One last thing, Merry Joyful Christmas and Happy 2012 to everybody I love so much.” From Mack—

Do we ever wonder if we are making a difference...to Mack we are!!!



gratitude to our team. The following are his words which you can see in the photo of his Christmas card to our



Henderson Settlement by Sue Walters

A Volunteers in Missions team will be returning to Henderson Settlement, part of the Red Bird Missionary Conference, in Frakes, KY, June 24—30. This is our fourth annual trip, and we'll be working with the Youth Ministry in their summer program. The kids in this impoverished community are extremely disadvantaged but appreciative for the nurturing, enrichment, and academic and religious instruction the Settlement provides year-round.

This is a perfect mission trip for adults and families, especially those with teens needing community service hours. Pastor Chad Oyer and our senior high youth have spent the past two spring breaks working in Henderson's home repair program. Ask them or ask us....we'll tell you the people and the mountains truly touch your heart! So if you're interested in sharing Christ's love in one of the poorest counties in the U.S. set in the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, please contact Deb Roy (338-7582) or Sue Walters (879-6239) for more details.



Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said,

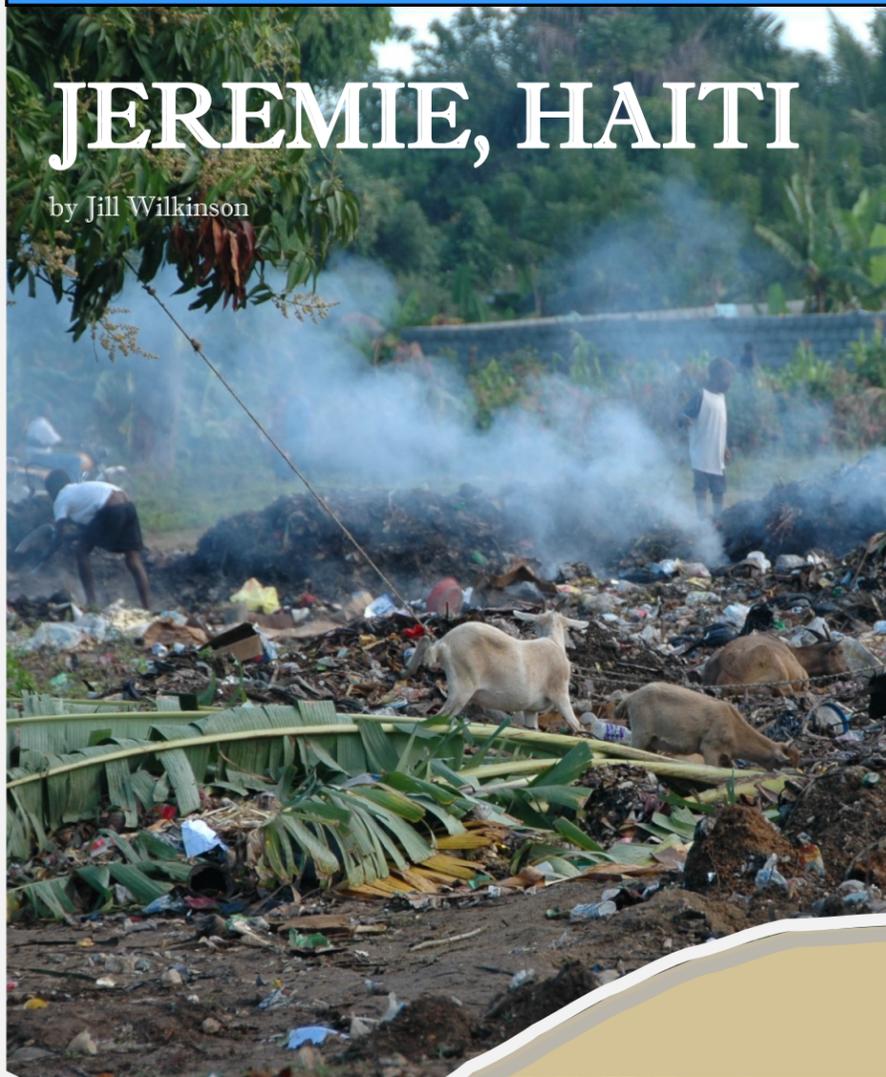
“Here I Am, Lord...Send Me”

~Isaiah 6:8

April 2012

JEREMIE, HAITI

by Jill Wilkinson



related Gebeau Clinic and Home for children to ascertain the needs to be met by our church community. The focus of the trip would be to work alongside the Haitian leadership and community to help them help themselves. We were true to this theme throughout the adventure!

The needs consisted of completing the cement-block wall along the road to secure the Gebeau property, which housed the Clinic, Children's Home and surrounding farmland. The Children's Home also needed interior painting. The medical clinic needed file storage, organization and EKG machines. The John Wesley College (the K-14 school owned by the church) needed a computer lab. And finally, they wanted an ophthalmologist to come and work in their clinic.

The FUMC Missions Committee donated funds to pay for raw materials and Haitian labor at all sites. Geoff and Mixie Hockman came on board as Mixie's "swan song" as Missions Chair. Partnerships were established with Beaumont and St. Joseph Hospitals to supply 25 laptop computers. A partnership was established with St. John's Hospital to supply medications to stock the pharmacy at the clinic. Fundraising proceeded with the sale of note cards to the FUMC family at Christmas. (Continued on page 6).

The first goal of a mission trip is to leave people in need better off than when you arrived. The second is to leave the people you are serving feeling the love of Christ. And the third is to maximize resources and talents to get as much done as possible.

Ignited by Nancy Smith's earlier trip to Haiti with a non-church oriented group, FUMC's (First United Methodist Church) vision took on direction, form and substance. John and Nancy followed up with a visit to the Jeremie Methodist Church and



Costa Rica 2012 VIM Trip by Ann Littleton

During the month of March, the Costa Rica Volunteer in Mission team was busy working at two of our favorite mission sites in Costa Rica. The first week, we returned to the village of Mansiones to help construct a parsonage behind the church building. In 2003 – 2004, FUMC Birmingham provided the funding to build the church, named Faro del Este – Beacon of the East. At that time, there were 45 adult members and now the congregation has grown to over 130. On March 18th of this year, the Faro Del Este congregation celebrated its eighth anniversary and asked our mission team to be a part of the service. What a special day for the team, especially those members who were present in 2004 when the new church was dedicated.

We began our work week in Mansiones by singing the hymn, "Sing a New Church". "Let us bring the gifts that differ and, in splendid, varied ways, sing a new church into being - one in faith and love and praise." During the week, the team members were busy painting the church and preparing the partially constructed parsonage for the rainy season by digging a drainage ditch.

The second week, the team returned

to Coronado to the Costa Rica Methodist Children's Home to help construct the second orphanage house at this site. In 2009, FUMC Birmingham provided the funding for the construction of the first orphanage house. Our team members have worked at the home for the past three years, and last year we were present



Vacation Bible School

for the dedication of the first house. The first day we were on site this year, we were able to meet the 11 children who are now living safely in that home. What a tremendous feeling it was to see their smiling faces and to know they now have a loving and spiritual home and a family to take care of them.

In addition to shoveling dirt, mixing cement, laying block and constructing re-bar, all the team members were

'Mansiones and the second week we traveled to Llano Grande, a village higher up in the mountains surrounding San Jose. The congregation in Llano Grande hopes to someday soon construct a new church building and move out of the renovated garage where they now are gathering. We are looking forward to helping them realize this dream and are so grateful that the congregation, UMW (United Methodist Women) and the Missions Ministry here at FUMC (First United Methodist Church) Birmingham is so generous in their support of the missions in Costa Rica. Praise God for the amazing work that has been accomplished in Mansiones and Coronado!

"In This Very Room" is another hymn we sang while we were in Costa Rica. "In this very room there's quite enough love for one like me – quite enough love for all of us – quite enough love for all the world." The truth of those words filled us all while we were inside the church – the parsonage – the fellowship hall – and the home!

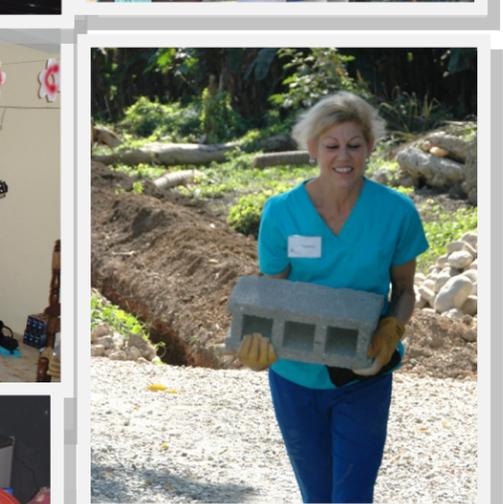


Beginning of work week

involved in two afternoons of Vacation Bible School. The first week, we met with the Sunday School children of



VIM Team and others.



(Jeremie, Hait continued from page 1).

The call went out for volunteers. Seven volunteers donated a week of their time, their talents and their resources to pay for the trip, and the date was set for January 6-14, 2012.

The team was comprised of Brian William, Nancy and John Smith, Mixie and Geoff Hockman, Peter Quiring, Jerry Chao, Kerry Charnesky, Dianna and Duane Ralston and Scott and Jill Wilkinson. Skills were matched with needs, and we were Haiti bound!

We were housed at the Methodist guesthouse, home of Rev. Chrisnel and his family. Their staff prepared our meals. Since our team was spread out during the day, mealtime was expanded to share our experiences, thoughts and observations. We had daily devotions and prayer, which brought us together as the body of Christ in a special way.

The first to complete their task was the tech team who set up the laptops for the school computer lab. Kids could hardly wait to get their hands on those computers! The Haiti teachers were ready to use them to give the students more life options.

The Haitian masons and assistants built the wall with the American team. We treated everyone to a party to celebrate the completion of the 10-foot-high by 150-foot-long wall, the goal for this trip.

The Children's Home was painted with the assistance of the children. We took this opportunity to shower them with the donated toys and school supplies we brought. Cake and pop were a huge hit! The children held our hands, hugged us and danced with us. Love broke through any existing language barrier. The painting crew, Mixie, Geoff and Kerry, had grown especially close to the children with their daily exposure. The children sang English songs to serenade us. A guitar was found, and Scott Wilkinson led them with more singing. We were very blessed by the time spent with the children!

File cabinets were delivered, but we needed to wait for the government-designated files. Nancy and Deanna organized medical storage areas, acquired skills of using a lensometer to

determine the strength of the glasses we brought with us as well as help with organizing glasses on hand but not available because they were not labeled, were dirty and disorganized. Nancy worked with Dr. Marx, the clinic medical director to set up and train on the EKG machines we brought.

Dr. Scott Wilkinson worked with Dr. Marcellus, a Haitian ophthalmologist, to give him the boost he needed to be confident in his skills. Scott continued to see patients, and with the assistance of Jill and Haitian translators, over 300 were treated. By serving in the clinic, additional revenue was raised to help keep it in operation after we left.

The work accomplished on the trip was a resounding success. The tasks empowered the Haitian community to continue the work of their people. Christ was worshiped with people of different cultures joining together in faith to serve the people of God. And all of our skills were maximized to leave Jeremie, Haiti better than we found it!

A big thank you to FUMC for the generous support for the work in Haiti. It was a privilege to participate with brothers and sisters in Christ to be his hands in this small corner of the world.



Art & Soul by Sophie Gamble Communications Director of Art & Soul

Merry Christmas Detroit!

Art & Soul, a mission in Detroit, is truly a 'mission'. Volunteers spend almost half their day at downtown Detroit's Central United Methodist Church doing art and socializing with the homeless and needy. "It isn't just about art!" said Sally Meese at the first annual Christmas banquet at the church. "It's about building and nurturing community."

December 19th, a Christmas feast was held in a gym at Central UMC, home to Art & Soul. The room was decorated with ginger bread houses that were made by the Art & Soul community the week before. From cheesy potatoes to desserts, and deep-fried turkeys compliments of Ann and Zeno Windley, a great time was enjoyed by all. At the end of the meal, thank-you notes and holiday wishes were read for everyone to hear. Diva D and Charles, both regulars at Art and Soul for a very long time, read grateful sentiments to the Art and Soul

Home is where you find it
Light a bonfire at night joy to the world
at sight
Hold cold hands with each other warm
cold hearts at this season
Make love the reason of this season

It was the finishing touch on a very successful year for Art & Soul. Earlier in the year, Art & Soul was chosen to compete in the internationally known 'Art Prize' competition in Grand Rapids. They also made "soulful" chairs that were exhibited at a gallery and sold in the church Fellowship Hall. The mission team also partnered with our Hunger Ministry for the annual Hungry Bowls Soup Dinner by creating and selling bowl made by the homeless community.

It is a beautiful thing to see people have hope for a New Year when many New Years in the past might not have been as hopeful. Art & Soul is a successful, helpful, and a simply beautiful mission.



Angel Tree by Angela Marcantonio

Once again we had a successful Angel Tree program in 2011. Over 400 prisoners' children received a gift from their incarcerated parent along with great hope. That's 400 children who feel closer to their absent mom or dad, closer to a local church, and closer to Jesus Christ!

Akeylah is one of the many precious angels whose Christmas was brightened by your generosity. At nine years old, she's the youngest in her family of five. She doesn't remember any special moments with her dad before he went to prison.

But when friends like you purchased and delivered gifts to her she treasured that moment because she felt important to the father she's only known as a prisoner.

"I don't know how to describe it. I was really happy that I got something from him, and know that he's okay" she said.

Akeylah is one of countless children whose lives have been touched by your efforts. This new year, please keep these families in your prayers as they seek to renew their lives through the power of Jesus Christ.

You shared the true meaning of Christmas with so many who have never experienced the love of our Savior. Thank you for serving the littlest victims of crime with your joyful and generous spirit!

CASS (Cass Community Social Services)

What's Happening by Nancy Keesee

We have had some exciting things happening at Cass! We had a **Sing Out For Cass** benefit with the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Choir in December. We also held a Christmas party with Cass basketball, family photos, a hymn sing and a pizza party. The Tuesday Morning Women's class put together 266 Christmas stockings to be given to every man, woman and child who was at Cass on Christmas Eve. Thanks to everyone who participated in these activities.



CASS Mom's Place Christmas party here in the Christen Life Center

Now we will look forward to our **Make a Difference Day** at Cass on Saturday, May 5. We will need many people to help us with landscaping, painting, electrical work, making sandwiches and any other project that needs to be done to help the Cass Community Methodist Church.

Eight of thirteen apartments at the Brady Building will be completed by the end of this month. This is permanent supportive housing where people pay rent and live on their own. This will give easy access to the services at the Scott Building. Some of the renters also work at CCSS.



About Cass Community Social Services

CCSS offers services with and to homeless men, women and children, hungry people, mental ill and/or medically ill individuals, unemployed adults, as well as "at risk" women and children. Cass' programs simultaneously promote making a positive environmental impact and addressing economic justice.

1. We affirm that both human rights and civil rights are due to all people. We recognize that every member of the human family has dignity and worth.
2. We value diversity that includes: age, race, religion, culture, class, education, abilities and disabilities, sexual orientation, and gender.
3. We celebrate creativity and innovation. Great people and organizations are not only instruments of change they are catalysts for change.
4. We think that collaboration is the best way to make a difference. We will stand with anyone who supports our mission.
5. We feel that everyone has something positive to contribute to the community. All people should be encouraged to identify and share their gifts.



Children and Family Ministries by Courtney Essenmacher

On January 13th kids 3 years old through 3rd grade learned about how angels are God's messengers and how they could be angels too, when they gathered and donated hats, mittens, scarves and coats to the Methodist Children's Home. The kids learned and had a ton of fun at this "Fab Fun Friday" which combined missions, snowy crafts, and time with friends.

On , February 4th, families with children kindergarten age and up prepared a hot meal at church and then served it at Cass. Kids made a difference in many ways - by preparing food, packaging and giving a special valentine treat, serving the food that day, and also making thousands of sandwiches to be distributed in the coming days.

During the lock-in March 16-17 - 45 Christians (4th and 5th grade) Lock-In - focused on Habitat for Humanity mission project Sunday, March 18th - Teddy Bear Party to support Habitat for Humanity Tuesday, April 24th - Caring Christian Kids - Spring Fling at Baldwin House with the residents

Upcoming opportunities for children include:

Tuesday, April 24th - Caring Christian Kids - Spring Fling at Baldwin House with the residents.



Cooking with CASS by Mixie Hockman

Are you eager to explore the possibility of mission work but finding it hard to squeeze it into your work day schedule? We have a solution for you. We have started a monthly program called **Cooking with Cass.**

We leave our church at 8:45 a.m. on a Saturday morning and drive to the Scott Center, a homeless shelter which is part of Cass Community Social Services. We work with their staff and the homeless, prepare an evening meal for them, and return to our church by noon. Cass supplies the food, and we prepare it. We have been doing this since October, and it is becoming a favorite for everyone involved. The dates rotate so please check the **Here I Am Lord** kiosk for future dates.

Re-Boot Detroit by Mixie Hockman



Something wonderfully unique happened this fall: a collaboration of efforts between a prospective Eagle Scout and our Missions Ministry.

Parker Roberts needed an Eagle Scout project. He spent a Saturday morning doing a mission project at the Cass Scott Center was told there are never enough winter boots for all the homeless people in Detroit. Parker accepted the challenge, put a proposal together and titled his project "Re-Boot Detroit." He organized his fellow scouts to stencil the logo he designed on drop boxes and place them around the city. He organized a boot camp to clean, add new laces and waterproof the boots. He made arrangements to get socks donated for each pair of boots. And then on a cold December Saturday he went with his family, his scout pack and leaders to the Scott Center and sized and fitted boots to most of the residents at the shelter. He set out to collect 100 pairs of used boots and doubled that number by the time they were disbursed. Hopefully other Eagle Scout candidates will continue with this project. The Missions Ministry, Cass and StreeThreads Task Forces are grateful for this genuine effort of service.