



Children and Family Urban Ministries

A Mission of the United Methodist Church
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Winter 2004

Mattie O'Kelley loved morning glories. They grew wild around her tiny house in Maysville, Georgia: "Just for me," she said. She painted them often. Last spring at the High Folk Art Museum in Atlanta I saw surely one of the more glorious paintings, "Mattie in the Morning Glories." It is a self-portrait of Mattie at the age of 84, with a wild array of morning glories arching over her head and around her shoulders. "Sometimes I wish I had all the morning glories I ever painted and gave a morning glory show in dead of winter," she wrote.

I do, too. In the dead of winter in Iowa we could use some signs of life and beauty. Not that there isn't beauty in the stark outlines of barren trees and the snow freshly fallen. But what can compete with morning glories? The blue of the blossoms like no other, the wonder of opening up anew each day, the wisdom of the daily inward turn, what more could one ask?

It occurs to me that we have our own morning glory show going on at Children and Family Urban Ministries, even in the dead of winter. There are the faces and the gifts of each child, like no other.

There is that amazing quality in so many of our neighbors, despite desperate situations, to face each day anew. There is the call to that inward turn every day in this ministry we share.

Quentin is in the first grade. But his soul feels old and wise. He comes to the Breakfast Club every day because his mom needs to be at work before the school opens. His daily greeting is bright and cheerful, his manners delightful, his gifts endless. For whatever reason, his friend, Monica, has difficulty getting along with most other children. But Quentin often seeks her out to play. It is one of the few things that makes her face light up. He is a fine reader and he loves to read to other children, some who are his age or older. Last month he was just beside himself with joy when little five-year-old Lester beat him at ping-pong. He brought Lester into the kitchen and with a big smile on his face said, "Carmen, can you believe this little kindergartner beat me twice?!" Quentin is a child with gifts like no other, a morning glory among us in this season.

Dooley is in his seventies, a veteran of the Korean War; he grew up in the South, and tells children he didn't learn to read until he was an adult, admonishes them not to miss their chance now. Life has never been easy for him, least of all these days living on a limited, fixed income, struggling with health issues, no rainy day resources at hand. No matter what the crisis of the moment, his response is, "It'll work out, I know it will." His manner is always gracious, his face always welcoming, his ability to face each day anew, amazing. He is a morning glory among us in this season

Daily over 150 people living in poverty on the near north side of Des Moines walk into programs offered by Children and Family Urban Ministries. If we are lucky, the gifts and strengths, the deep needs and difficulties of us all, will turn us inward to that place where we know that we are one, where we come to understand the deep yearnings of God, where we will find the resources to live together in justice and mercy, kindness and grace. What a show that would be in this and every season.

Carmen

Power Hour Comes to the Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club has always been a powerful force in the lives of children and families. A good beginning to the day, some food in one's stomach, making the mind more ready to learn—that's powerful stuff. And now there is more!

Power Hour began with a gift of books for children, some new, some gently used, to take home. It began on the day the books were laid out for children to choose the one they would take home. Carol Keuhnhoff, Breakfast Club Supervisor, declared a day of reading for everyone. You could read to someone, someone could read to you, you could read to yourself, you could listen to books on tape. The beanbag chairs were brought out, the books in the reading corner were available, and the decision about what book you would take home had to be made. Adding an incentive, everyone who read had their name put into a basket and four names were drawn to receive special prizes.

Power Hour was such a success, it will become a regular feature of the Breakfast Club on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. If you would like to help you may volunteer to read or be read to during Power Hour, donate books that reflect the ages (pre-school-7th grade) and diversity of the children, or donate prizes for incentives. Please contact Carol at the CFUM office if you would like to plug into the Power Hour, 282-3242, cfum@dwx.com.

Sacred Child Project Moves Forward

In January eight fifth grade boys began a journey to a deeper and richer life. With the support of their families they made a commitment to be a part of the Sacred Child Project. A collaboration begun last year with "pARTners unlimited," the Sacred Child Project is designed to help boys at a key time in their lives to shape their lives in the knowledge that they are each a sacred child. Artist Judy Morrison will work with the boys two afternoons a week throughout the remainder of the school year. Projects will include storytelling, journaling, drum and gourd making, and a dramatic presentation drawn from each of their cultures. The three sixth grade boys who were a part of the project last year will continue this year as mentors.

The Haven Lives Out Its Name

Last fall The Haven after school program under the direction of CFUM Program Coordinator, Linda Danielson, became even more of a haven for children in grades K-7. In the past The Haven was not offered when school was out for breaks. CFUM made a commitment to change that during the 2003-2004 school year, to provide the needed all day programming for the 40 children enrolled in The Haven.

Because Moulton Extended Learning Center (the school CFUM works with primarily) has a different calendar from the rest of the Des Moines School District, there are several times during the year that only Moulton students are out of school. Those times can present a hardship for families, many of whom cannot afford childcare.

Although CFUM feels strongly that a commitment to all day programming during school breaks needs to be made, such a commitment presents challenges. Additional volunteer staff is needed, resources are needed to fund activities and additional staff time. During the first semester the challenges were met thanks to the creativity of Linda Danielson and the generosity of many, many partners.

Help is now needed to meet the challenges of second semester. All day programming will be offered this semester March 11 and 12, March 29-April 2. If you would like to help please contact Linda at 282-3242 or cfum@dwx.com.

The Wild Girls Make Plans for Women's Gathering

The Wild Girls, the new program for girls in 6-7 grades, is off and running. And the girls are ready to share what they are up to with a wider audience. On Monday, February 23, at 5:30-7:00 p.m. they are inviting women from their families, from school, and from the community to a gathering in the cafeteria at Moulton Extended Center. The girls are planning a reception, and a program including a speaker and a time for them to give voice to their dreams. If you are a woman who is interested in lending your support to the "wild" dreams that girls have for themselves, their community and their world, please contact Carmen at the CFUM office to attend. Inspiration is guaranteed!

Winter Talent Show Will Chase Any Blues Away

On Friday night, February 27, 6:00 p.m. everyone is invited to Trinity United Methodist Church for a long-awaited winter version of the Neighborhood Talent Show!

Come and be wowed by the great gifts and talents of children in the programs of CFUM, their friends, and family. It is an event you will be talking about for years to come! People are still talking about Cornelius and Ricky flipping, Ashley burping the ABCs, Jesse dancing, Rebecca reciting poetry, Kendall drumming, and Jerrica singing "Amazing Grace." Just take our word for it, you do not want to miss this event!

Kitchen Renovation Project Possible

If you have ever served at Supper Club, washed dishes at Breakfast Club, or volunteered at a holiday party or meal, you know that the kitchen at Trinity United Methodist Church, though well-utilized, is due for a major renovation.

High school students from Youth for Tomorrow, volunteering with CFUM, began discussing raising funds to purchase a dishwashing system so less paper products would be used. One thing led to another, the Board of Trustees at Trinity, and the CFUM Board of Directors became involved in the conversation, and the possibility of extensive renovation is being explored. If plans move forward, the cost will be substantial. Opportunities to contribute equipment, labor, money, and encouragement will abound. Please contact CFUM if you have interest in and/or expertise for such a project.

Heeeey! Batter! Batter! Batter! Faith, Hope, and Baseball Returns!

Step up to the plate! Sunday, March 28, is the date for the return of Faith, Hope, and Baseball: A FUNdraiser for Children and Family Urban Ministries at Grace United Methodist Church in Des Moines. The first pitch will be thrown at 4:00 p.m., followed by nine "innings" of music, movie clips, poetry, personalities, and stories all related to that most hopeful of pastimes: baseball. And all for a good cause: the support of that most hopeful of endeavors: making things right for the kids. If you are interested in participating in the program, please contact the planning team: Denny Coon, pastor at Trinity UMC, Bill Steward, pastor at Grace UMC, or Carmen Lampe Zeitler at the CFUM office.

Tickets are available in the CFUM office or at Grace UMC, the cost is \$10. More information, as available, will be posted on the CFUM website, www.cfum.org

The very least you can do with your life is to figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof. What I want is so simple I almost can't say it: elementary kindness. Enough to eat, enough to go around. The possibility that kids might one day grow up to be neither the destroyers nor the destroyed.

Barbara Kingsolver
Animal Dreams

Some Dates for Your Brand Spanking New Calendar

2/27	Winter Talent Show
3/11, 12	The Haven All Day
3/28	Faith, Hope, and Baseball
3/29-4/2	Moulton Spring Break The Haven All Day
4/10	Easter Party
4/25	Glimpses of Jubilee
5/27	Last Day of School
6/21-25	Kids Night Out
7/10	Back-to-School Health Fair
7/22	Tentative start Date for Moulton Extended Learning Center
11/24	Thanksgiving Dinner
12/11	Christmas Celebration
12/24	Christmas Eve Dinner

Thank You, Richard!

Every time the snow falls in Des Moines, Richard Nordin makes his way on foot from downtown to Trinity United Methodist Church to shovel the walks. Children, volunteers, and staff coming to the church building early in the morning for Breakfast Club give thanks for our dear and faithful friend, Richard. We are humbled by your diligent service. Thank you, Richard. You're the best!

Whoever would be great among you must be your servant.

Jesus
The Gospel of Matthew

Collaborations Further the Work of CFUM

One of the most important lessons parents and grandparents, teachers and scout leaders, Sunday School teachers and coaches try to teach children is the value of working together. If that lesson is learned, there is no end to the possibilities.

CFUM has learned that lesson well. It has been nearly twenty years since *Grinnell College* students began Friday Fun Night (Alternative Happy Hour to the college students), a two-hour extravaganza of everything children love to do. And the thing the children most love to do is spend time with the Grinnell students!

Since The Haven after school program began almost five years ago, the *John R. Grubb YMCA* has been a great collaborator. Access to the gym and to the swimming pool has been a great asset to the program. The past two years the Grubb Y has also been a significant collaborator on the Back-to-School Health Fair.

Last year CFUM began a collaboration with *pARTners unlimited* to offer the Sacred Child Project. We are now in the second year of that very exciting collaboration for boys. (See page 3.)

Collaborators abound in the new program begun this year for girls in grades 4-7. Funding and resources to get started were provided by the *Chrysalis Foundation*. At Moulton Extended Learning Center the key collaborator is *Full Service Community Schools*.

These collaborations make so much happen that simply would not happen if CFUM had to rely upon its own resources alone. Working together is where it's at! Lesson learned!

Phenomenal Involvement by Students with CFUM

A great resource for the programs of CFUM are the student volunteers. According to the records kept by CFUM Program Coordinator, Linda Danielson, 63 high school students from Dowling, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Valley and Johnston, along with 169 college students volunteered in CFUM programs during the first semester. The college students came primarily from Central College, Drake University, Grinnell College, Iowa State University, and Simpson College.

In addition to volunteers, CFUM currently employs three Drake University students through a Federal financial aid program that allows students to do work study in local social service agencies. CFUM is responsible for only a quarter of their hourly wage, the rest is covered by Drake and the Federal government. The students currently employed are Susan Anderson, Kearstin Caswell, and Dan Payne. They are invaluable.

Rachel Humphrey, a senior at Simpson College, began an internship with CFUM this semester. Rachel will work primarily with The Wild Girls. The Eli Lilly Foundation helps to fund interns from Simpson.

The relationships that these students build with the children with whom CFUM works are significant. If children can “overhear” the experience of young people staying in school and pursuing their dreams, perhaps they will be more likely to stay in school themselves and dream their own dreams.

Getting the Word Out

As one can see from just a quick glance at this newsletter, the work of Children and Family Urban Ministries is work held by many hearts and hands. One of the most challenging tasks at CFUM is to continue to get the word out—to people whose hearts and hands are already involved and those who might yet be engaged.

This *quarterly newsletter* is mailed to about 700 people. An email version is also available. Please email CFUM at cfum@dwx.com if you would like to receive that version. Please pass the newsletter along to friends, neighbors, church groups, anyone who might want to “get the word.”

This year we are planning to revive the *Newsheet* sent between newsletters to those living in central Iowa, who might be more able to come by for special events and occasions.

Always the CFUM *website* at www.cfum.org is a great source of information. It is a masterful website designed by Turo Dexter. It is updated by CFUM staff with a current calendar of events, volunteer opportunities, and immediate needs. The photos are great also!

Carmen Lampe Zeitler, Executive Director, Linda Danielson, Program Coordinator, and members of the Board of Directors of CFUM are eager to get out and *tell the story* to church and civic groups. Invitations may be made to the CFUM office.

The CFUM Board of Directors is currently seeking a board member that would enjoy the particular task of helping to get the word out. If you have interest and/or skills please contact the CFUM office.

Work Group Season Will Soon Be Here

There's snow on the ground and more than a chill in the air, but seed catalogs are in the mail and another season will come. And come summer, work groups will abound.

That's a good thing for Children and Family Urban Ministries where there is always lots of work to be done. The church building, Trinity United Methodist Church, where CFUM rents space, is probably one of the best-utilized church buildings in the city. In addition to the congregation and ministries of the church, Trinity UMC houses CFUM and Comunidad de Fe "Las Americas." The building is often in need of repairs and cleaning. A lot of programming is carried on in the building year-round. The programs also need help. The neighbors around the building often need help with household repairs or yard work. What one finds here is a veritable work group paradise.

Barb Dinnen, pastor at Las Americas, has agreed to be the contact person for work groups who would like to come to paradise. If you have a notion or an idea or a complete plan for a work trip to Des Moines, please contact Barb for assistance at 515-280-8426.

*Oh, you gotta get a glory,
In the work you do,
A Hallelujah chorus
In the heart of you,
Paint or tell a story,
Sing or shovel coal,
But you gotta get a glory
Or the job lacks soul.*

*Traditional Spiritual
African American*

Can You Help?

Some mornings at the Breakfast Club the chorus seems endless... "I need milk...I need juice...I need hot water for my oatmeal...syrup for my pancakes...salsa for my eggs...scissors...a ping-pong ball...a hat...mittens...tie my shoes please...zip my coat please... look at me jump rope...watch me walk on the stilts..."

The needs and wishes go on and on and on, and so it is with everything involved with Children and Family Urban Ministries. Here are a few of our current needs and wishes:

new microwave
four-slice wide opening toaster
paper towel dispensers for large-roll restroom paper towels
school supplies
single use cameras
Polaroid film
art supplies
drawing paper
glue sticks
modeling clay
jump rope, hula hoops, balls
juice boxes, bottled/canned juice
flavored instant oatmeal (maple & brown sugar is the most popular)
after school snacks
new or gently used books

Please contact the CFUM office if you would like to make a donation of something in this chorus of needs and wishes. Just like at the Breakfast Club, it feels good when you are able to meet a need or grant a wish.

Endings and Beginnings

Children and Family Urban Ministries was clearly overwhelmed by the generosity of friends at the end of 2003. Many responded to the end of the year highlight letter, many made gifts of the season as suggested in the last newsletter, many answered the challenge of the matching gift, many gifts came unsolicited. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, understanding, and generosity. We are humbled by your confidence and inspired by your commitment.

As we begin this new year, CFUM invites friends and donors to become members of the Circle of Dreamers. Pledges of those involved in the Circle of Dreamers help the CFUM staff and board to better plan for the year—what resources we can count on to do the ongoing programs of the ministry. Pledges can be made on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. Donations can be deducted automatically from your checking account. If you are interested in joining the Circle of Dreamers—putting in with the wild dreams God has for God's children in this place, please contact Tony Salem, CFUM treasurer, through the CFUM office.

One gift CFUM received at the end of the year came from American Republic Insurance here in Des Moines. The company has resources restricted for doing good in the community. Maybe your workplace has similar resources, and is looking for suggestions from employees as to how they might be distributed. Just another way one could contribute to the support of Children and Family Urban Ministries.

CHILDWATCH

The Iowa Legislature is back in session. They will make many decisions that will have impact upon children in Iowa; certainly, children who live in poverty.

Many faith-based advocacy groups have made an argument for the involvement of people of faith in the public policy process. Here are some thoughts on why becoming involved with the public policy process at some level is an act of faith. They are adapted from thoughts offered by the Commission on Religion in Appalachia and the South Carolina Christian Action Council.

Why one should be an advocate in public policy:

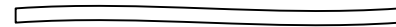
- ✓ The Bible paints a portrait of what a just and equitable society would look like. The Gospel calls us to make that society operative in the world where we live.
- ✓ The churches know something that government does not know. Through its close experience with people, we know the impact of public policy on individuals, families, schools, and communities. We have a responsibility to share that information with policy makers.
- ✓ Public policy and Christian faith work in the same arena—personal and social existence. The public policy process is the place where we engage in the struggle for justice, that is, for structuring an environment that expresses God's regard and intentions for all creation.
- ✓ Advocacy as a person of faith or as a group of faithful people, giving voice to those on the margins and the issues that affect them most, is a faithful imperative passed on to us by the prophets and Jesus.

✓ Some possibilities for advocacy:

- ✓ Register to vote
- ✓ Put the address, phone number and email address of your state senator and representative in a prominent place (above your desk, on your calendar, on the refrigerator) and use them
- ✓ Write or call in support or opposition of issues or bills about which you feel strongly
- ✓ Go to the statehouse and visit with your legislators about where they stand on an issue about which you care
- ✓ Write a letter to the editor regarding an issue facing the legislature about which you feel strongly
- ✓ Arrange for an adult Sunday School class or other church group to discuss an issue facing the legislature

Lobby Day provides an excellent opportunity to join other people of faith in advocating just public policy.

February 17, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Calvary Baptist Church, 606 E. 9th
(behind the Wallace Building on Grand). For further information contact Lana Ross, the Legislative Advocate for the United Methodist Church at 515-283-1996x111 or advocate@iaumc.org.



A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi to come back, but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.

*Marian Wright Edelman
Founder and President
Children's Defense Fund*

The Prayers of the Children

On January 21, Children and Family Urban Ministries was one of the sponsors of A Moral Witness for Children at the Iowa State Capitol Building. One of the elements of the witness was giving the gift of a prayer calendar to legislators. One hundred prayers (one for every day of the legislative session) written by children made up the calendar. The following prayers were among those offered by children in The Haven after school program at CFUM.

Dear God, thank you for the food we have today, thank you for our lives. Please bless the children. God can you please bless where the legislators at the statehouse will make the right decision and don't forget about the children.

Tarena, age 10

Dear God, thank you for everything you have done for us so far. I thank you for the food and I thank you for giving me a mom and a big happy family. I wish that people would get along with each other. I wish everyone helped people that were poor and had nothing. I helped a cat. He didn't have no food pore little one I fond him at my Gama's house and I told my Gama if I could give him some food and she said yes so that is how I helped a cat. I wish that the law makers could be together and make a law for everyone in the earth. So everyone can have shelter, food, clouse and a big happy family

Cynthia, age 10

Dear God, I pray that everyone has a home. Some clothes, and food and good medical supplies. Amen.

Jesus, age 11

More From the Children

Bill and Jean Basinger, friends of Children and Family Urban Ministries and members of Trinity United Methodist Church will be traveling to Iraq in February. After trips to the Middle East with the Educational Opportunities program of the United Methodist Church was cancelled twice in the last year, the Basingers were invited by the Christian Peacemakers Team to join their delegation.

Jean and Bill invited children in The Haven after school program to write letters to Iraqi children. Several children accepted the invitation. Some of their letters follow.

Dear Kids,

Hi. I wanted to tell you that I hope that your family is okay. I know that you don't want nothing to happen to your family. But whatever happens you know that your parent still loves you. I know how you feel because that is wrong having kids in a war.

Rebecca Sandoval, age 10

A Prayer

A special prayer to you to you to be safe we are praying for you and see if you can be safe and God is watching you and so are the angles. So be safe and I pray for your family I hope no one is going to get hurt.

A Note

A note to you that you are safe and have care and be in a special town where no one gets hurt and get out of that town and other people love you like I do and pray for you. You are special God

loves you and he even prays for you so we all hope that you guys have a happy life.

*Sincerely,
Your friend,
Sydney
Age 9*

Dear Kids in Iraq,

We are praying for you. God is watching you. We are thinnking adout you. We hope no one in your flamily dies in the war. I am in the second grade. I am 7.

Corey

Do the best you can! Don't die because this is your life. Thank you Iraq kids.

*Shareece
Age 7*

Dear Kids,

I hope your mom and your dad do not die. I hope if your perants do die I will cry. Please do not let me cry. Please til your partents to not go to the war.

*Janet
Age 6*

Dear Kids in Iraq,

I hope you have fun down there, I hope the war isn't scaring. I hope no one is getting hurt. Here is a little prayer for you.

I hope you have a nice family and a lovely home. You stay safe. Don't be rude just nice. Have a nice town. If you don't have a family just pray to god. If no one loves you God does and Linda does too.

*Love,
Your new friend,
Charnise
Age 8*

P.S. God is watching over you.

Dear Irak Kids,

I hope we don't fight anymore. I wish we can get along so anyone don't get hurt. I know that God is with you and watching you up in the air. I wish if you live here your parents would have a job. I wish that you could make friends with American people to. I wish that God would stop the war with us and you. I wish that Martin Luther King would be alive so he could come to Irak and talk to you.

*Austin
Age 7*

*Out of the mouths of babes...
you have rebuked the mighty,
silencing enmity and vengeance...*

Psalm 8.2

New Year's Prayer

Dear Lord, please give me a few good friends who understand me and remain my friends.

A work to do which has real value, without which the world would be poorer.

A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed.

An understanding heart, a sense of humor, time for quiet, silent meditation, a feeling of the presence of God.

The patience to wait for the coming of these things, with the wisdom to recognize them when they come.

We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or we are going to perish together as fools

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.