

## *Never Giving Up—With a Little Help from MLM*



*Arthella Williams has no doubt that MLM  
“...is the best place.”*

Arthella Williams could easily consider herself **A** cursed, but she uses the word “blessed” more than most.

A breast cancer and double heart attack survivor, she is especially grateful for the assistance she received from MLM that helped her overcome problems almost as great as her health: financial troubles that at one point left her homeless.

The most recent challenge came last fall when she was helping her sister cook a meal. “I told her, ‘I’m getting real light headed’ and I couldn’t

function,” she recalls. “I remember handing her the spatula, and then I woke up under her kitchen counter.”

As bad as that was, it was a small miracle she was not home alone. “She and her daughter called 911 and took care of me,” she noted. “That’s why I say God is good like that. The doctors told me it was a heart attack and if I’d been out much longer, I wouldn’t have made it.”

Much of Arthella’s life has included such “half-full, half-empty” experiences. A U.S. Army veteran and former bank employee, she worked more than 18 years with the U.S. Postal Service, the Treasury Department and Department of Defense. In her last position, she was handling appropriation transfers that often involved millions of dollars. But when downsizing began, it’s possible her experience counted against her.

“I always liked computers and money,” she laughs with her typical sparkle. “But when they decided to downsize, they started with those who had the most time in. That was me. Another year or two and I’d have had a pension.”

Left with little more than Social Security disability, she soon found herself without employment and trouble finding a new position, in part because of carpal tunnel, which had developed from years of keyboarding.

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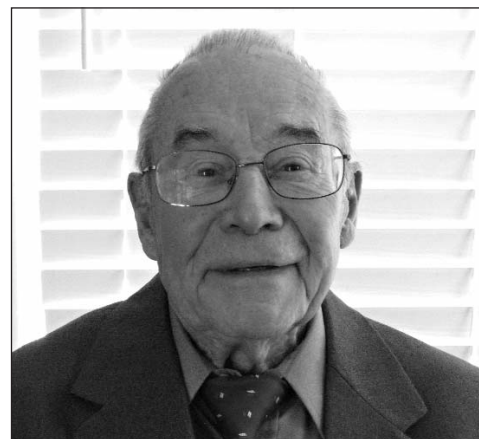
## *Their Involvement Continues*

Between them, Lester Pebley and his late wife, Lillian, were involved with Metro Lutheran Ministry for a combined total of 60 years. Lillian’s involvement began not long after the organization first formed. Lester began volunteering with MLM after he retired as a maintenance coordinator with TWA in 1985.

“We were interested in MLM for a long time,” Lester explained. “We worked on Christmas Stores and hauled groceries. We just saw it as a great organization from the beginning.”

Of course, things do change. Lillian passed away in 2005,

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*Les Pebley wants to see his support of  
MLM continue.*

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“They used me up, then got rid of me,” is the closest she comes to anger.

Her work did teach her a lot, however. While with a bank credit card processing center, she saw many who got into trouble because of bad credit. Even a predecessor was discovered to have pocketed money that wasn't his.

“I ran into a lot of people who got turned around,” she said. “You watch people who destroy their lives when they could have just worked and earned what they needed.”

As part of her work with appropriation transfers, she also became familiar with service organizations. “Some of those organizations help me now,” she said. “I'm grateful for that.”

One of her worst experiences also led her to MLM, which has proven to be her best help ever. “When I lost my last job, I

was homeless and living in a parked car,” she recalled. “Then the car was repossessed and I was on porches, in and out of relatives homes. I ended up going down to City Union Mission, but you can only stay there 30 days. A woman gave me a list of other places and one was MLM. It's been the best.”

Collaborating with the Bishop Sullivan Center, MLM is helping her catch up on her rent and, through the organization's food pantry and other services, helping her make ends meet. “I tell everyone MLM is the best place,” she said. “They care. They help people and they care.”

She admits to receiving other help as well. She was scheduled for tests to see if the cancer has returned, but has opted to delay those at least for now. “I've turned everything over to the Lord. I know that may sound silly, but I'm just going to see what the Lord is saying. If I have any

pains, I'll go. But until then, I'll just let the Lord tell.”

She's optimistic, too. “I made mistakes,” she agreed. “Especially when I was young. I lived life hard. But my mother, the projects, the military and the Lord have taught me discipline. I'll make it.”



*MLM's April 8 Middle School Dodgeball was a big success. Even those in the stands enjoyed the day.*

## Breaking Bread Teaches Lessons for Church Volunteers

The simple act of sharing food at an MLM breakfast mission has taught members of an area church unforgettable lessons.

“I think what we see is how important this ministry is,” explains John Nycklemoe. “We see that the need is very real.”

A member of the MLM Board of Directors, John was familiar with the organization's work, but when he first learned of the Saturday breakfast ministry, he saw an opportunity to involve others from his church, Advent Lutheran. The effort has proven inspirational, even for team members who are also active in

other philanthropic efforts. Whether through the visible reality of hunger in Kansas City or the obviously sincere “thank you's,” the ministry's importance is driven home.

“The first time, they just loved it,” he said. “We meet at the church at 6 a.m. but no one is late. Everyone is ready to go.”

And even after just two Saturdays, the seven-member team is already learning to recognize some of the clients, as well as gaining appreciation for MLM's small, fulltime staff.

“Our being there helps them focus on other things,” he explained. “And it's evident that this is one of the ministries that MLM does that we'll do as much as they need us. It's really powerful. Powerful and impactful.”

John hopes other congregations will become more involved as well. “It's a lot of fun,” he added. “I hope the member churches continue to bring volunteers down and learn what the ministry is about. It's great.”

## Their MLM Involvement To Continue

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and mobility issues soon made volunteering difficult for Lester. But he learned there were other ways to help MLM continue its services for the neediest of the needy in metropolitan Kansas City.

Lester received information about an organization called the MLM Heritage Society. The society is comprised of living stakeholders who have notified MLM that they have made a planned gift to MLM. These gifts take many forms, but for MLM they help provide a critical continuity to services to the needy, ensur-

ing lasting support to help the homeless and needy of metropolitan Kansas City.

“I looked it over quite a bit,” Lester recalled. “It looked good to me.”

Originally from Johnstown, Pa., Lester knows his gift through the Heritage Society will continue into the future. “Especially the way the economy is, they need something to count on,” he explained. “That long-term support is more important than ever.”

For more information on the MLM Heritage Society, contact Jim Glynn at (816) 285-3117.

## *MLM Helpers Make a Difference for Tens of Thousands*

Let me tell you about Susan Sims. She is one of many faith-filled volunteers who come to serve our brothers and sisters who live in poverty. Like many of us, she made a New Year's resolution to improve her life in 2011. Unlike most of us, she followed through with hers. Susan's resolution was to find a place to volunteer, and a role that would have meaning.

Susan and her husband, Randy, receive the MLM newsletter. She picked up the last copy and gave Suzanne Bartling a call. As many of you have already discovered, Suzanne is great at matching motivated people with meaningful volunteer opportunities. At that time we needed help in two of our food pantries; St. Luke's in Kansas City, Kansas and Midtown on Holmes St. in Kansas City, MO. Instead of picking the one closest to her home, she picked both!

Soon I began hearing from Yvonne Brown at St. Luke's about the great new volunteer who had been coming faithful-

ly to help in her pantry. Yvonne said everyone really liked her, and she appeared to enjoy serving MLM's guests. One day I saw her on a Wednesday in MLM's pantry on Holmes St. It was clear that she enjoyed what she was doing. Susan easily engaged each guest in conversation in a way that made him or her feel special. When asked about her new role as a volunteer, Susan said one of the most gratifying aspects about being a volunteer is that the people she serves are so grateful for her help. She leaves each time feeling like she has served God by serving others.

Each year MLM assists over 30,000 families in Kansas City with a full time staff of 13. Last year 5,700 volunteers like Susan came forward to participate in MLM's ministry. Some fixed homes for low-income seniors. Some served breakfast on Saturday morning, distributed food to people who stood in line overnight or helped at MLM's Christmas



*Jim Glynn notes the incredible outpouring of volunteers helps MLM's 13 staff members serve tens of thousands.*

Store. Many of them also gave financial gifts that provide for the resources that MLM distributes. We thank all of our volunteers for the privilege of working beside you. You inspire us!

Respectfully,  
Jim Glynn, Executive Director

## *He Helps People Stay in Their Homes, Remain Independent*

Arlin Buyert of Prairie Village has a simple explanation for his generous volunteer service with Metro Lutheran Ministry.

"I wouldn't feel good about being on the golf course every day," he laughs.



*Arlin Buyert helps others keep their homes.*

"I've got a little 'do-gooder' streak in me."

His do-gooder streak may be more than little, however. Working with perennial volunteer Leroy Zimmerman, Buyert has helped scores of elderly residents who otherwise might find it impossible to remain in their home and who would face a real possibility of homelessness.

"We've helped a lot of elderly people, especially women who own their homes but can't keep them up," Arlin explained. "They don't have the money to keep them up, and they don't have the money to live anywhere else."

He sees a pattern that is all too common. "We talk to them while we're working, and it's often a similar situation," he said. "They bought the house back in like 1958 and then about 10 years ago, their husband died. They may get a little Social Security but that's about it. They can barely buy food and pay utilities, but

they don't have any money to do repairs."

Fortunately, they do have Arlin. Much more than a would-be golfer, Arlin ran an Atlanta construction company for 10 years. That work, which focused on new home construction and improving older ones, followed a lengthy corporate career with a telecommunications company.

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*"with God all things are possible." —Matthew 19:26*

## **Save the Dates**

- Sept. 9 Trivia Bowl
- Sept. 30 Golf Benefit
- Nov. 5 Starlight Theatre Fundraiser

For more information on these and other MLM events, visit the MLM website at [www.mlmkc.org](http://www.mlmkc.org) or call (816) 931-0027.



*The 2011 Spring Fling not only raised funds for December's Christmas Store, but provided a lot of fun.*



*Marilyn Maye greeted fans after the May 1 Joy of Singing concert. Joined by the Castle Singers of Wartburg College, Maye performed on the Stage at Rose Theatre at Rockhurst High School. The event was for the benefit of Metro Lutheran Ministry.*

## **MLM Welcomes New Board Members**

Metro Lutheran Ministry has welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors, Latrice Davis and Delea Oglesby.

Latrice is an attorney by profession who is employed with the federal Administration of Children and Families office of Head Start. She oversees organizations receiving Head Start grants in the agency's Region 7, which includes Missouri and several adjoining states. Although her career is not linked directly to MLM, her background makes her familiar, even expert, in several related areas.

"It's a good fit," she said. "I'm really

looking forward to working with MLM and helping all I can."

Delea works with the Internal Revenue Service and has volunteered with MLM. "I'm very familiar with their food pantry and job services," she noted. "It's a great organization. It's very diverse, which they need to be, but they are especially open to everybody, which is great."

Delea added that she has been especially impressed with the MLM staff and other volunteers. "I believe that what really makes a difference there is the sincerity," she said. "They love what they do and that makes all of the difference."