

MLM VISIONS

A New Beginning with Help from MLM

Genesis Joyner is an MLM consumer who agrees she probably epitomized the word “lost.”

“I lost my vehicle,” she recalled. “I lost my home. I lost my job. For a while, I even lost my kids.”

Genesis quickly notes her problems were “partying, alcohol and drugs.” But she knows exactly when things started to change.

“May 24 2008 was my day of reckoning,” she explains. “I was sitting outside a shelter, very ill, unable to move and with no money. My children weren’t in my care. It was bad, but now I know I had to go all the way to the bottom to start back.”

Genesis still smiles when she remembers what happened next. “I told God that if you don’t do something, then I quit. But he said, ‘I have a surprise for you.’”

Out of nowhere, a couple walked up and asked about her problems. They took her to a shelter for battered women. Although she wasn’t battered, they took her in. “I wasn’t battered, except by the devil,” she says today.

Genesis’ recovery was far from an overnight event. She spent two weeks in a mental hospital, with symptoms that included depression and an inability to eat. Later, she moved to a shelter but

“They told me about the things that were possible. I learned to be independent.”



A new beginning for Genesis Joyner and her daughters Serenity, Trinity and Destiny. Thanks to volunteers and donors of MLM, the family is back together and moving forward.

her time limit soon expired.

Fortunately, someone directed her to Metro Lutheran Ministry where the next chapter in her life began. “They told me about the things that were possible,” she said. “I learned to be independent.”

Genesis is especially grateful for her MLM

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Sally Fahrenthold: making sure the work continues at MLM.

Heritage Society Ensures Efforts Continue

You might say Sally Fahrenthold doesn’t know when to quit.

Now a retired pastor living in Wichita, Sally spent more than 13 years helping create MLM, its programs to help those in need, and several efforts that spun off to continue as independent programs on their own.

Sally served much of her time with MLM as director of Emergency Assistance

and Advocacy, as well as associate director. She helped develop the original community centers that continue today in Clay and Wyandotte counties.

“A lot of things grew out of it,” she recalls. “Many things we started are now separate—Harvesters, Kansas City Community Gardens and the Warmth and Light Coalition, for example.”

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MLM works hard to minimize expenses.
Ninety percent of designated gifts go directly to programs.

New Initiative Helps Keeps Kids Healthy, Learning

A pilot Emergency Medication Assistance program through MLM's Clay County center has begun subsidizing qualifying prescription purchases for students in need in the North Kansas City School District.

The program was initiated by St. James Lutheran Church and underwritten by a \$1,000 startup contribution. MLM contributed another \$5,000 from several funds while the HyVee Grocery pharmacy at North Oak and Englewood Road also cooperates.

"This partnership is allowing students with assessment from the school nurses and MLM criteria, to provide certain prescriptions at no cost to the families," explained Lon Waterman, director of student and family services with the school district. "It's designed to help those who

"This program fills a huge gap. We have a variety of children who are on various medications and when their family loses insurance or has a problem, this affects the child's health and their ability to concentrate in school."

are having difficulty getting medication. We're thrilled because these things often impact the students' ability to focus and learn."

Individual medication varies, but cost is a key factor in need noted Jeanni Wells, coordinator of MLM's Clay County center. "The first student involved in the program was diabetic and needed a specific type of kidney medicine. But a 30 day supply of that one medicine was \$440." In many cases,

duplicate doses for many medicines are needed—one for the family at home and another for emergencies at school.

Families and children qualifying for the program often have one or more parents who has lost a job and, with it, insurance.

"This program fills a huge gap," Lon said. "We have a variety of children who are on various medications and when their family loses insurance or has a problem, this affects the child's health and their ability to concentrate in school."

The school nursing staff, HyVee and MLM all helped, but St. James provided the key impetus, Jeanni said. "They were doing the program themselves. They wanted us to be involved because of screening but they set the whole thing up. It really is a great program."

Sally Fahrenthold Joins Heritage Society by Making a Planned Gift

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Sally went on to serve several positions within the church, eventually moving to Wichita 18 years ago, and finally retiring. Yet she never lost her interest in MLM, its mission and how it goes about it.

"I've always maintained an interest in working with congregations and working together to meet the needs of the community," she explained. "I'm very enthusiastic that this work has continued and I want to see it continue in the future."

That's one reason Sally has become

involved in the MLM Heritage Society, living stakeholders who have notified MLM that they have made a planned gift to MLM. These gifts ensure funding for MLM programs even after the donor's life of support has ended. This provides MLM services a critical continuity and ensures their lasting help to the homeless and needy of metro Kansas City.

"That ministry is very significant to me and it's a wonderful expression of Christian faith," is how Sally puts it. "It meets valid, very significant human needs

effectively. That's why I have personally invested in seeing that it continue by designating that my contributions will continue."

Sally is not boastful about this generosity. "It's not a bragging thing," she laughed. "I don't really want to call attention to what I've done. But it's something that I'm interested in and I want other people to be aware of it."

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

Family Finds A New Beginning With Help From MLM

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caseworker. "He was an awesome man of God, and so is everyone else there," she explains. "They found this apartment. They helped me move. They got me bus passes to get to a job. They even adopted us for Christmas."

"Us" includes Genesis' daughters who are now back with her: eight-year-old Destiny, six-year-old Trinity and one-year-old Serenity.

This might seem like the end of the story, but Genesis believes the miracles

continue. She hopes to generate work from home utilizing her experience as a legal secretary—although an initial lack of equipment seemed a major obstacle.

"I didn't have anything to work with," she said. "Now I have a whole office center thanks to a woman who had a computer she wasn't using. Then one day I walked out and there was a printer sitting on the trash. You bet I believe in miracles."

It is also obvious that Genesis has a good work ethic, working from the age of

11 when she first began delivering papers to retail and administration. She also hopes to minister to men and women who, like her, have been battered mentally or physically, although her first priority is giving her children the lessons she missed.

"God taught me that if I don't teach my children, they won't learn to love the right way. No one taught me that. I'd always had those qualities, but had never used them until I got to know God."

Focused Efforts Help MLM To Move Forward

I know that if you are reading this letter, you are already interested in helping others through the wonderfully effective vehicle we call MLM. You have made “helping others” a priority. That is awesome! There are terrific examples of the countless hours you and other volunteers give freely as we follow God’s command to love and serve. But, as we devote time to that necessary work, I am struck by how many times I see the same faces using the same hands to help and serve; and that has caused me to reflect on some of the organizational “reorganizing” that is afoot, which I want to share with you.

One of our MLM Board goals this year is to lay the groundwork for a “Friends of MLM” group – targeted at young profes-



Vicki Westerhaus: focusing on the priorities in life.

sionals in their 20s and 30s. Board member Laura Pace is spearheading this effort to get young people and young families involved in MLM activities, so they can interact with MLM clients and understand the needs in our community.

Board member John Nycklemoe is heading up a similar charge aimed at expanding MLM’s base of support. John is working

on a plan to compile “MLM Monthly Mission Updates,” which will share MLM’s accomplishments during the past month and list opportunities for service in the coming month.

Our hope is that these new initiatives can and will help our clients have more “hands in service” and expand the collective community knowledge about MLM.

These programs can sow the seeds of people to help and eventually replace you and me – with new volunteers and eventually with their children.

*Blessings to you,
Vicki Westerhaus, President,
MLM Board of Directors*



LeRoy Zimmerman recently turned his recognition by the Kansas City Royals into a gift to MLM.

Spring Events Start With A Fling!

The annual MLM Spring Fling will be held Saturday, March 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church, 9101 Lamar, Overland Park.

Spring Fling is the major fund-raiser to support the MLM Christmas Store. It is a fun-filled day with a pancake breakfast, silent auction, games for the

kids, baked items, candies and crafts to purchase.

There will also be nachos and lunch served. There will also be a coloring contest this year for the children. All the children are asked to bring back their coloring sheet by noon on Saturday March 6 to Bethany Lutheran Church to be entered in the contest.

The MLM Christmas Store is one of the larger Christmas stores in the Kansas City area, serving 1,000 families (more than 3,000 individuals) in 2009. There were 540 individual volunteers at the MLM Christmas Store this year (about 623 different times that volunteers came to serve).



January’s MLM Volleyball event was a huge success, and similar events include Middle School Dodgeball Friday, April 23 from 5 to 9:30 p.m. For more calendar events, visit www.mlmkc.org/news/eventCal.html.

Honor Turns To Gift

Long-time MLM board member and volunteer LeRoy Zimmerman was recently honored by the Kansas City Royals—and in the process contributed to MLM programs.

At the Kansas City Royals Banquet Jan. 14, LeRoy received the new Dan Quisenberry Humanitarian Award. For the award, LeRoy received a \$5,000 check to be awarded to the charity of his choice. Even though he is involved in many organizations, he chose MLM to receive the funds.

LeRoy served 31 years with Lutheran Family Services in St. Louis, personally experiencing the challenge of finding enough volunteer and congregational help.

“I know how difficult it is to be on that side when you are dependent on congregational and volunteer help,” he said. “I’ve got the time and I enjoy it.”

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

Breakfast Ministry Offers Opportunity

Metro Lutheran Ministry has begun a new Breakfast Ministry program that takes place every Saturday and needs volunteer help.

The midtown area presently doesn't have a breakfast program where needy families can get a hot nourishing breakfast. So this breakfast ministry serves a growing need. If you can bring a group to help please visit our website at www.mlmkc.org and click on "Saturday

Breakfast Ministry Program" at the left-hand side of the home page to sign up.

Metro Lutheran Ministry is looking for volunteers to help with this program. Groups will come to Metro Lutheran Ministry (3031 Holmes Kansas City MO) at 7 am to start serving breakfast

from 8 am to 9:30 am (groups would be on the road by 10 am).

The groups will be serving breakfast to low-income individuals in the midtown area of Kansas City. Volunteers can call (816) 931-0027 or use the online signup at www.mlmkc.org.



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