

MLM VISIONS

Grandson Comes First — And MLM Helps

Although he struggles with diabetes and other issues, Kansas City resident Robert Frencher's biggest challenge is raising his five-year-old grandson.

It's also his greatest joy.

"He is special," Robert says. "He's a sharp young man."

Now 55, Robert was recently diagnosed with diabetes although it's likely he had the disease for longer.

"I knew something wasn't right, but I've just been laying it off," he recalled. "They say I've had it for quite a while. They had to keep me for two weeks and now I've have to do this and do that."

"This and that" involves medication that has added to his financial problems. Living in a rental home owned by an out-of-town relative, he soon faced a

choice between other expenses and utility bills. With his sole income currently the small amounts from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families for income, his electricity was shut off in October.

Robert stresses that without the grandson, who was abandoned by both of his parents, he wouldn't have worried about electricity. "With him, it's serious," Robert explained. "If I was by myself, I would just deal with it. But the boy has to have electricity."

After his hospitalization, Robert applied for federal disability payments, but the typical time lag and approaching winter meant he faced a crisis. That's when he came into contact with Metro Lutheran Ministry. In a move typical of its emergency help, *(please continue to next page)*



Robert Frencher and his grandson have electricity, thanks to MLM.

Long Service Leads to MLM Contribution



Nearly 40 years of community service experience led Mary Kay McNeive to select MLM for long-term giving.

An important aspect of Mary Kay McNeive's involvement with Metro Lutheran Ministry began nearly 40 years ago.

"It actually goes back to when I was doing direct social work," Mary Kay recalls. "I was working with clients at Western Missouri Mental Health Center in the early 70s. I was frequently trying to find emergency services for our clients. I found MLM was an organization that was accepting; they weren't afraid of our

clients, and their services were a tremendous help. That really spoke to me."

There was more. A Prairie Village resident, Mary Kay later worked for Kansas City Hospice. There, too, MLM had a presence. "Almost all of the social workers who were involved with hospice in MLM neighborhoods were familiar with MLM," she recalled. "You just knew it was a group you could count on."

When she retired, there *(please continue to next page)*

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

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Grandson Comes First — And MLM Helps

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MLM stepped in and paid the disconnection fee and restored electricity.

“It helped,” Robert said, noting the grandson. “He’s doing fine.”

Robert and his grandson do well in other ways, too. Robert has accumulated some donated electronic games that accomplish two things: The grandson

loves to play them and they make outstanding “levers.”

“I take them away if he’s not doing right,” Robert said, laughing. “I take the game away and he does what he needs to do, then he gets the game back. I just learned that this year.”

In warmer weather, the two also frequent area lakes. “He likes to go fishing,”

Robert said. “He just loves that. He catches monster crappies. I don’t know if it’s luck or what. But that’s all he wants papa to do is go fishing.”

“Papa” does more, of course. “I keep him dressed and get him what he needs. He comes first. I just do what I do.”

Long Services Leads to MLM Contribution

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was more. “I wanted to do some volunteer work and I wanted to work in an urban area. I checked out MLM and decided to see up close how they treat their clients. I volunteered in the food pantry but really, I was also kind of checking up on them! I was very impressed with the care and concern and all of the hard work the staff does. It’s very impressive.”

Mary Kay’s involvement in community service is an even deeper story. She taught for 10 years with the St. Patrick’s Parrish, which was known for its outstanding

educational programs. Later, she and a friend toured Europe on \$5 a day, but when she returned, a need for an income led her to Western Missouri Mental Health, where she became aware of larger community needs. “That really opened my eyes,” she said. “I learned a lot.”

Later, she earned a masters degree at the University of Kansas, where she incidentally met future MLM Director Jim Glynn.

These are among the reasons that when she began looking at long-term financial planning, she selected MLM. She decided to become a member of the

MLM Heritage Society. The group 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 for the needy, ensuring lasting support to help the homeless and needy of metropolitan Kansas City.

“I just think they do a lot of good and I want to see it continue,” she said. “That’s important.”

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

Fall Events Raise Fun and Funds

To say MLM has been busy is an understatement.

Besides the preparations for the annual Christmas Store and Power of Each One event, MLM has recently added several

activities to involve more and serve more than ever before.

These activities include the Sept. 9 Trivia Bowl fundraising event where teams competed for “Trivia Champion,”



Volunteers are already busy preparing for the 2011 Metro Lutheran Ministry Christmas Store. The Christmas Store itself is not until Dec 7-10 but in October volunteers were busy taking applications for families to receive gifts. For more information, visit www.mlmkc.org.

the Sept. 30 Lutheran Services Golf Benefit, the Oct. 1 Youth Servant Event where area youth provided yard clean up and painting for persons who are elderly and disabled, the Oct. 14-15 Midnight Volleyball fundraising event where high school students played volleyball all night, and the Oct. 29 Congregational Servant Event where teams did minor home repair on homes of elderly persons and those with disabilities.

All of these events raise awareness of the needs in the community, not only among MLM’s longtime friends but new friends. Further, these events either serve those in need directly or raise needed funds to help MLM continue in its ministry. To learn more about these events and other activities, including extensive photographic slideshows on each event, visit the MLM website, www.mlmkc.org.

We Are Called To Love And Serve Our Neighbors

Every month three of us take food to low income, homebound seniors.

Of all the things I do at MLM, this is one of my favorites. I get to briefly step inside the world of our urban neighbors who don't have many visitors and are extremely grateful for my knock at the door. I carry the food inside the homes to the kitchen and share a few words with the grandmas and grandpas who live there. Their family photos tell unspoken stories of the people they love. The spartan furnishings of their homes are reflections of poverty.

Betty, one of the grandmothers I visit, is disabled from a stroke. She uses a walker and it takes her some time to open the door. She looks through the curtain first, and I wonder how fearful she must be when she hears noises in the night. I also wonder how many babies she bore and if her husband died. Sadly, she is unable to speak clearly because of the stroke. Earlier this summer when she pointed to her overgrown grass, I understood that another ministry that cuts her grass was unable to because of the oppressive heat.

This month when I visited Betty, she had something important to tell me. She



Jim Glynn: We can't fix all the problems, but we do what we can, one person at a time.

tried to communicate the message, but I couldn't understand even one word. I apologized that I couldn't understand, and she kept trying. I said I had a pen and asked if she could write her message on paper. She shook her head no, probably because she doesn't have control of her hand movements. Finally, she started to cry.

This absolutely broke my heart. Worrying about her health and safety, I asked if she needed help of any kind. She shook her head no. I asked if there was anything I could do for her and, again, she indicated no. However, she was still crying. I expressed my concern for her and said I looked forward to seeing her next month and left. This has bothered me ever since. I would call the state if she appeared in danger of any kind, but she did not.

Betty is one of the reasons why MLM exists. We can't fix all the problems in our community, but we do what we can, one person at a time, to the best of our ability. And we are always trying to do better. In Betty's case, it is a struggle to live alone in a disabled condition. However, it is often better than living in a state-funded nursing home with caretakers who may or may not show kindness. Jesus called us to love and serve our neighbors. That is what we will keep doing.

Sincerely,
Jim Glynn
MLM Executive Director

MLM Named Agency of the Year by Harvesters

Harvesters has selected Metro Lutheran Ministry as Agency of the Year. MLM received the prestigious Circle of Hope Award at a special event Sept. 20.

Harvesters' Circle of Hope awards recognize agencies in Harvesters' network, individuals, corporations, foundations and community organizations for outstanding contributions to hunger relief in the Greater Kansas City area and surrounding communities.

Director Jim Glynn said MLM was proud to earn the honor as the organization celebrates its 40th year of serving the homeless and needy in metropolitan Kansas City. He also noted that one of MLM's earliest accomplishments was

helping to found Harvesters.

"Having founded Harvesters in the 1970s, MLM and Harvesters have a long and respectful relationship," Glynn said. "Currently, Harvesters supplies food for our three pantries, sponsors the Mobile Food Pantry each month and sponsors the Back Snack program that we coordinate in five inner city schools."

Glynn also noted MLM is not the only local organization receiving honors in 2011. Harvesters was named the 2011 Food Bank of the Year by Feeding America, the nation's food bank network.

MLM's recognition was presented at the 2011's Circle of Hope awards Sept. 20.



Karen Haren and Mary McClure joined MLM Director Jim Glynn during Harvesters' presentation of the Circle of Hope Award to MLM Sept. 20.

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

Locations Active

MLM in Clay County has been busy. Coordinator Jeani Wells said applications have increased around 30 percent for one program alone.

In Wyandotte County, Coordinator Yvonne Brown said pantry donations remain low although other contributions have improved. "We need people to come through with food drives," she said.



Kent Sunderland (center), of the Sunderland Family Foundation, joined MLM for a ribbon-cutting Oct. 21 in celebration of MLM's new windows. Over the past five years, the foundation has helped MLM replace one roof, upgrade the HVAC, replace carpet and tile, and buy an electric pallet jack for the warehouse. Director Jim Glynn and executive assistant Leira Tillmon joined Sunderland.

Power of Each One: A Night to Remember



The Power of Each One Nov. 5 featured many stirring scenes, including (clockwise, from top left) Alvin Montgomery telling of his successes; MLM Director Jim Glynn reporting on the organization's status; Scott Sirohm, board president, and Pam Mellegaard, Thrivent representative, talking about ways to help MLM programs; and River Ministries performing their inspirational music.



Ten Thousand Villages at 7947 Santa Fe Drive in Overland Park, will partner with Metro Lutheran Ministry, giving them 15 percent of its proceeds, from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18.