

JUNE 2009

GOD COLORS

A NEWSLETTER OF UNITED METHODIST COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES

Donna Ratzlaff is Honored



A Celebration of Service

by Betsy Kenas, UMCM Board Member

On Sunday, June 7, 2009, Anona United Methodist Church was host to a wonderful celebration of service honoring **Donna Ratzlaff** on the occasion of her retirement as **Director of United Methodist Cooperative Ministries, where she served tirelessly and selflessly for 18 years.** The event was well attended by all those who were touched by her, who loved her, and who wanted to wish her well. Pictured (L-R) are Patricia Mayeux, Donna Ratzlaff, and Pastor Nancy Mayeux.

District Superintendent, Rev. John Powers, welcomed Donna as she arrived, wheelchair-bound, but beaming. **Bonnie Swan**, member of **UMCM Board of Directors** and former Chair, read a heartfelt letter from the Board and presented her with gardening items, which will be put to good use as Donna tends her garden at her home in North Carolina. I know that God will give Donna another garden to tend as well; not only the one that she will till and plant by her house, but the garden of her new community where she can continue to **"nurture people to make them bloom,"** as so aptly stated by **John Ekers, President of UMCM Board.**

Helen Sweatt read a tribute to Donna and presented her with the **Deaconess Lifetime Retirement Pin**, commemorating her **33 years of service.** **Rev. Larry Rankin, Conference Director of Global Mission & Justice**, thanked Donna for her **"home missionary" work**, for being a **"voice for the voiceless and an advocate for the helpless."** These statements so completely define the character, the personality, the "God Colors" of Donna - she will be profoundly missed, but never far from our thoughts and prayers. **Ellie Myers and Roberta Lau** presented Donna with a **"Faith Steps" quilt**, which was constructed during the District United Methodist Women's Spiritual Life Retreat in Leesburg. It was made up of cloth footprints, lovingly decorated and signed by attendees. It was designed to not only keep her warm on chilly North Carolina nights, but to remind her of all her past and future "faith steps" in the Lord and of the love and good wishes of her UMW sisters.

Several people gave testimonies of Donna's tireless dedication and of all the lives touched by her outreach. Letters from area churches and UMW units were read. **Bishop Timothy Whitaker** stated that **"her retirement is a loss to the church,"** but we all know that our loss will be someone else's gain - many other people will be blessed by being included in her "garden" to be tended.

Donna then thanked her staff and introduced Pam Qualls, the new Director of UMCM, who will soon be walking her own "faith steps" in the Lord. When asked for some parting words of wisdom, Donna immediately responded, **"KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON!"** And that about sums up her life as Deaconess as well as her upcoming retirement. And they are wise words for us all, for there is much work to be done to give **voice to the voiceless and advocacy for the helpless.**

As Paul wrote to the Galatians in chapter 6:7-8, "you will reap exactly what you plant... If you plant in the field of the Spirit you will gather the harvest of eternal life." (Good News Version)

So, Donna, enjoy sowing flower and vegetable seeds in your new garden and seeds of love and compassion in God's garden. You will reap the rich, life-giving harvest from both. Goodbye, God bless, and "keep on keepin' on."

Donna's Personal Thank You

In Deepest Gratitude

"Thank You" seems so small to all who worked tirelessly to make June 7 a very special day in my life. I am deeply grateful to Suzie Hutto, UMCM Board Members, the Gulf District UMW, and all my friends and supporters for all of your love, prayers and care in giving me a day I will always cherish and remember. Thank you for all of your support.



Grace and Peace,

Donna

Outstanding Tutor Jim Oakley

ESOL Tutor at Wesley Memorial UMC



Kudos to UMCM's outstanding Tutor, **Jim Oakley** from Wesley's ESOL program, for his dedication every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. **Site Coordinator Emily Bowen** raves about Jim's patience in the area of diction and pronunciation when coaching his students. While in the Navy, Jim was stationed in Spain, and he recalls the many people who patiently taught him Spanish. "They were especially careful with my diction." Today Jim teaches with that same approach. "**We have fun, that's the best part,**" chuckles Jim, who has taught for one full year. He credits **Emily** and **Volunteer Tutor Betty Ashley** for Wesley's success. Pictured (L-R) are Olda Melichar, Ben Nguyen, and his wife Kim Hoang, and Jim.

Hats off to Jim Oakley!



Graduation 2009

After-School Tutorial Program

Ginny McPherson, Director of [PASS+ After School Tutorial](#)

congratulates UMCM's **Executive Director Donna Ratzlaff** (right) at their **PASS+** graduation ceremony on May 19. The students and staff presented Donna with a new Bible, prayers for a speedy recovery from her upcoming surgery, and a special scripture, which sums up her career.

"Be a shepherd of God's flock that is under your care, not because you must but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not greedy for money but eager to serve." Pet.5:2-4

The tutors joined the teachers for a PowerPoint program, presentation of awards for **ESOL/FLT Parents** and special recognition for the successes of the children who have attended the

PASS+ Program.

Above are former students, Stephen and Efraim, who proudly display their autobiographies at the end-of-the-year awards ceremony. The boys have improved their academic skills as a result of the [PASS+ After-School Tutorial Program](#). Below are the staff, teachers and volunteers.

Great job, team





Preschool End-of-Year Events

Children of The World Preschool Graduation

Our **Preschool Director, Alicia Gomez**, proudly reports that **18 children** are officially graduated from Preschool and ready for Kindergarten. The little ones graduated June 2 at 5:30 PM in the first graduation ceremony held in the Fellowship Hall of the [Hope Lutheran Church](#). Alicia says, "I was amazed that 100% of the parents were in attendance!" She attributed the successful year to the consistent parent involvement and great cooperation amongst staff and volunteers. Alicia recounts the many activities of the past year which focused on community and cultural events.



Congratulations Alicia, Staff, Volunteers and Parents!

Seaweed Café – A Story-Telling Event

Literacy volunteers **Rosemary Uebel, Suzanne Conti, and Betty Ashley** hosted a story-telling event for Preschool children and their parents on May 21. Featured was volunteer Aleshea Harris (below right) a professional actress, who dressed as a pirate and presented the story in a beach-decorated room. Perched on beach towels, the children discussed sun safety. Each one received a visor, sunglasses and sunscreen samples. They concluded with a pirate dance. Also in attendance were **Pam Qualls, Emily Bowen, and Jan Setzekorn**.

Thank you, ladies!



Pasadena ESOL International Banquet

Graduates and Tutors Celebrate Achievements



ESOL students and volunteer tutors from our [Pasadena Community Church](#) (UMC) literacy site gathered with family members, friends, and UMCM representatives on Sunday, May 17, for the second annual **International Banquet**. **Cris Wolfe, Volunteer Site Administrator** (pictured below, back row, second from right) spearheaded the event and awarded certificates to the participants. At left, **Phan Pen Holcomb** from Thailand, accepts her award. At right, volunteer tutors Judy Frank and her niece Katie Wolfe enjoy the food and fun.



Students and tutors served a delicious variety of foods from around the world as each member of the class brought a dish that is native to his or her country. Sushi, tamales, and Russian salad shared space on the table with baked beans, Brazilian cheese puffs and General Tso's chicken. Classes are held at the **Fellowship Hall at Pasadena Community Church**. Tutors were recognized for their hard work and dedication to the program.

Thank you, Pasadena ESOL Family!



Pictured above are some of the students and Volunteer Tutors of Pasadena's ESOL Program. Back row (L-R) Tutors Katie Wolfe, Sanders Anderson, Peggy Gay, Cynthia Faulhaber, Cris Wolfe, site coordinator, and Emma Jean Losh. Front row (L-R) Tutors Judy Frank, Myrna Irwin; students who moved up a level - Olga (Russian), Juan (Mexico), Aristeo (Mexico), Phan Pen (Thailand), and Viktorija (Lithuania).



BlueCross BlueShield of Florida

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UMCM Literacy Awarded Grant

UMCM Literacy has been awarded a grant by **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida** and the **Florida Literacy Coalition**. The **\$5,000 grant** was awarded at the **25th Annual Florida Literacy Conference** May 6-8 in Clearwater. The focus is to help students acquire information and resources that will help them navigate the medical and health system to make informed health decisions. **Jan Setzekorn, Director of [UMCM Literacy Services](#)** says, "Living in this country with limited English can be extremely frightening. I can think of nothing scarier than being in a hospital or doctor's office and not being able to understand what is being said." This grant will enable us to teach people to understand and communicate in the most critical of times. Pictured (L-R) are **Sharon Hackney of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, Greg Smith of Florida Literacy Coalition** and **Jan Setzekorn**.



Congratulates to UMCM Graduates!

Five High School Graduates

We are very fortunate to be able to work with some outstanding young people who chose to be ESOL tutors or FLT aides to earn their **Bright Futures and IB service hours**. Our sincere congratulations go to the following five graduates!

Steve Milian, Palm Harbor, East Lake Library tutor
Jeffrey Meier, St. Petersburg, Pasadena Community Church tutor
Miraj Patel, Clearwater, Union Street FLT aide
Vincent Rivas, Largo, Pinellas Park Library tutor
Michelle Zhang, Clearwater, Union Street FLT aide



If you, or someone you know, wishes to accumulate volunteer hours for **Florida Bright Future's Scholarship Program** or become a volunteer for **UMCM's After-School Tutorial Program** or **ESOL program**, please contact **Pam Qualls at 727-442-6881 Ext 5**.



Preschool Summer Camp

High School Student Assists at Preschool

Alicia Gomez, Director of **Children of the World Preschool**, reports that summer camp is in full swing with volunteers busily assisting with the many hands-on activities and field trips in the first Preschool Summer Camp. The summer program began on June 8 and ends on July 3. Pictured at left is **student volunteer Omar Flores**, assisting with a creative project using recycled material. The following units to be covered in classroom activities and field trips:

Art Projects with Recycled Material
Sea Life

Science and Cooking
Fourth of July Celebration

Do you know a student who would like to volunteer in one of our UMCM learning programs? Contact **Pam Qualls** at pam.umcm@verizon.net, or call call **727-442-6881 Ext 4**.

Would you like information for fall enrollment to our **Preschool**?

Contact **Alicia Gomez** at **727-526-0017** or e-mail umcmpreschool@verizon.net

Parents and Children Together

Toymakers of East Lake Bring Story to Life

In a fun activity designed to teach the benefits of reading to children, Doriscell Feazell, child enrichment specialist, read to preschool-aged children and their parents about the types of transportation on our busy highways and byways. Then, due to a wonderful donation from the **Toymakers of East Lake**, the children received their own handmade car, truck, or train to take home. To learn more about the **Toymakers of East Lake**, an outreach ministry of **East Lake United Methodist Church**, check out their website at www.toymakersofeastlake.org.

If you'd like to volunteer in a future **Parents and Children Together (PACT)** activity, email pam.umcm@verizon.net



Florida Literacy Conference

UMCM Tutors Make Strong Showing

Several UMCM volunteers and staff were on hand for the **Annual Florida Literacy Conference** held at the Belleview Biltmore in May. Seven literacy staff members from UMCM attended the Health Literacy Training -- **Emily Bowen**, **Rosemary Uebel**, **Jay Beyersdorf**, **Pam Qualls**, **Betty Ashley**, **Suzanne Conti**, **Wynn Wargo** and **Janet Setzekorn**. At right are Tracey Tyber, Emily Bowen and Jan Setzekorn. For more information to become a trained ESOL volunteer, see UMCM.info.

Tutor Opportunities in Fall

Make a Difference in Someone's Life

Jan Setzekorn, Director of Literacy Services, announces three new ESOL locations. If you are interested in one of the following opportunities to tutor, please email jan.umcm@verizon.net.

1. **Hudson Branch Library**, 8012 Library Road, Hudson
2. **Head Start**, 516 S. Huey Ave., Tarpon Springs
3. **Tomlinson Adult Learning Center**, 296 Mirror Lake Dr.N., St. Petersburg



Summer Needs List

Program Needs

- * Color laser printer (about \$650.) folding machine, copy paper
- * Gift Certificates to Wal-Mart, Sweet Bay, Winn-Dixie and Publix
- * Computer Needs: Laptops or notebook computers with VISTA or XP, CD-DVD drives, memory sticks or cards (2 GB or more), USB (with or without mics)

and headphones

Summer Camps

- * Food needs: fresh apples and bananas, health bars, gallons of Hi-C or other fruit drink, individual boxes of fruit juice, fruit/pudding cups, large cans of fruit, jars of peanut butter and jelly, canned chicken, boxes of crackers, as Triscuits, large cans of soup; such as chicken and rice, tomato and vegetable, frozen pizzas, loaves of bread (we can freeze), large bricks of cheese, and microwave popcorn
- * Clorox wipes, paper towels, small bowls, 5-oz cups (not foam)
- * Money or gift cards to purchase items for cooking class
- * Garden tools/gloves
- * Sewing machine, air popcorn machines

Collaborative Food Pantries: nonperishable food items and cash for perishable items.

If you need someone to pick up your items, please call us at 727-442-6881. For more information check out [Needs List](#) and [how you can help UMCM](#).

During these difficult times, your donations (what ever the amount) are deeply needed and appreciated. If you wish to donate to the ministry by check, please send it to UMCM, 1625 Union St., Clearwater, FL. 33755, or via credit card on [Network for Good](#), a secure site. Thank You!

Please contact Nancy Currens at nancyc.umcm@verizon.net or 727-442-6881 Ext 4. with your newsworthy events and pictures for our monthly newsletters.



UMCM thanks Jake Voreis for many volunteer hours to edit UMCM's newsletters.

