

New cabins lodging Canyon campers



Photo by Holly McCray

DEDICATION IS APRIL 18 — We'll celebrate completion of the latest major building project at Canyon Camp, near Hinton, at 1 p.m. that Saturday. The Foundation Cabin, above, and the Paul & Ann Milburn Cabin already are welcoming lodgers. Plan to take a tour and enjoy hamburgers and hot dogs after the service. **Turn to page 6.**

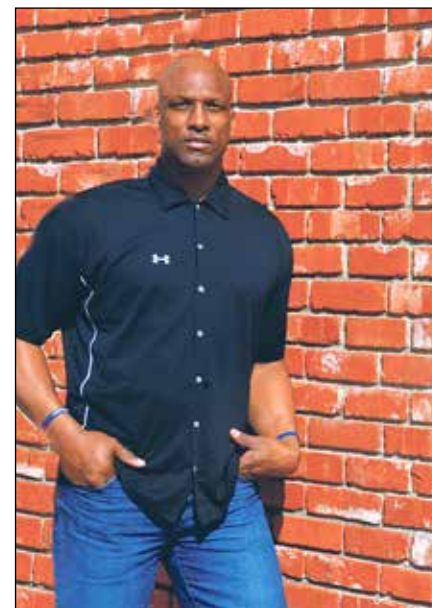


Photo provided by Roadrunner Press

Alton Carter, youth director at Stillwater-First, is "The Boy Who Carried Bricks." He speaks April 17 at the Circle of Care banquet.

Hope persists despite violent childhood

Author's message for Circle of Care kids: dream, overcome, change

By **HOLLY MCCRAY**

The monsters of Alton's childhood weren't imaginary ones lurking beneath his bed at night. Very real, they erupted any time of day.

They were his family and foster caregivers.

Alton Carter will tell his remarkable story of survival when he speaks April 17 at the Friends of Children Banquet for the Circle of Care. Simultaneous evening events will be held in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Today Carter directs the youth ministries of Stillwater-First United Methodist Church. He is a husband and the father of two teen boys. He's a graduate of Oklahoma State University.

When you learn about his early life, you want to cheer for the man he has become.

His mother, single, disappeared for days. Starving, Carter and his siblings would go dumpster-diving for food.

A nasty uncle forced the children to wrestle one another and to line up and drink alcohol.

See *Childhood*, page 4

\$15.4 million links churches to bigger achievements

But Apportionment giving slips again

By **HOLLY MCCRAY**

The 505 churches of the Oklahoma Conference gave a total of \$15,441,608 to the connectional work of the Church in 2014.

That's a 92.66 percent collection rate for Apportionments. These funds enabled a vast array of ministries, far exceeding what one United Methodist church can accomplish alone.

By giving 100 percent to all Apportionments, imagine how much more Oklahomans can accomplish for the glory of God in 2015:

- **Equip** more laypeople to become bivocational pastors and to be church youth leaders. (In 2014, the Academy for Youth/Children's Workers educated 15 such leaders, and 19 people enrolled in the Part-Time Local-Pastors Academy.)

- **Assist** newly released inmates with re-entry into society through Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries. (In 2014, CJAMM decreased the recidivism rate for its Exodus House graduates and expanded programming for New Day camps by adding mountain biking, rock climbing, etc.)

- **Reach** more people who don't participate in church life through *New People New Places* grants to 24 churches.

- **Grow** more disciples in churches with



fewer than 50 worshippers.

(In 2014, "Living the Lord's Prayer" regional events helped 285 people from 69 churches develop spiritual practices. In February 2015, about 130 youngsters attended Confirmation Retreats, which add to discipling by churches with few youth members.)

- **Engage** more young adults in the life of the Church. Oklahoma soon will have five US2s, young adult missionaries, serving in various roles.

- **Develop** new church communities and strengthen existing ones through Congregational Development by:

- Resourcing 10 projects, two new and eight ongoing, that are making new disciples at a rapid rate. Two projects reported 45 professions of faith since the beginning of the year.

- Awarding scholarships to church planters to attend the annual School of

Congregational Development.

- Providing resources to reach people of Asian heritage, especially through Edmond Chinese International UMC, Korean-language churches, and the Chinese student ministry at the University of Oklahoma.

- **Recruit and educate** clergy through the efforts of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) by:

- Providing Continuing Education opportunities to more than 600 clergy, for a total of 7,215 hours of training.

- Preparing 11 clergy to be ordained, and 18 to be commissioned as Provisional Members.

- Awarding scholarships to 32 students at six seminaries.

- Helping full- and part-time Local Pastors attend Course of Study School. (In 2014, BOM assisted 29 in this goal.)

- **Transform** more lives through camping experiences.

"Young campers learn new skills, make new friends, hear the voice of God, and respond to that call. That's too important. I don't want to turn a child away because there's not enough money," said Ed Parker, Camps executive director. (In 2014, the Conference's three facilities hosted 18,536 campers of all ages.)

See *Money*, page 8

UMW giving tops 2014 Pledge

A large toy frog is mascot this year for Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Women, rallying them to "Fully Rely On God (FROG): Leaping into UMW's Future!"

The women already are jumping with joy (pun intended): total mission giving in 2014 reached \$333,720.25.

That exceeded the year's Pledge to Mission of \$295,000. The financial feat was announced when the Conference Leadership Team met March 7, at OKC-Cornerstone UMC.

Cindy Hull, Conference UMW president, provided this update.

• District UMW teams are working to make the transition from 12 to eight districts as of 2016. Each new district will organize at the Conference Annual Meeting, Oct. 2-3 at Woodward-First UMC. All local units are asked to send at least two women to the meeting.



• District Officer Training will be Oct. 24 at Sunny Lane UMC in Del City.

• Canyon Camp will be the setting April 24-26 for the Spiritual Growth Retreat, with the theme "Continuing On ... Growing Up in God's Freedom."

Judy Horne, Conference UMW musician, is the leader for this weekend. A member of OKC-Village UMC, she is a certified spiritual director, offering both group and individual sessions.

All participants are asked to bring with them pictures or tokens representing impacts on their lives. The retreat will be three days of sharing, praying, singing, and worshipping together.

• United Methodist Women of both the Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences will co-host the South Central Jurisdiction UMW Quadrennial Meeting on April 15-17, 2016, at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

Theme will be "A Fresh Wind Blowing." The program will offer Bible study, worship, break-out sessions, and hands-on mission projects. Directors and Program Advisory Group members for the next quadrennium will be elected.

• Info and registration for UMW events are on the website www.okumc.org/umw.

Employment

Campus Minister: University of Central Oklahoma. Full-time. Email Derrek Belase at derrekbelase@yahoo.com

Dentist: Neighborhood Services Organization, Oklahoma City. Part-time. On-call to assist dental team with basic and emergency care. Must be licensed in Oklahoma. Contact Lisa Kelley at Lkelley@nsookc.org or 405-236-0452 ext. 303.

Head Chef: Mount Sequoyah Retreat & Conference Center, Fayetteville, Ark. Full-time. Email resume to Emily Gentry at emily.gentry@mountsequoyah.org

Youth Director: Tulsa-Faith. Full-time. Email resume to James Lambert: jlambert@faithtula.org

Accompanist: Midwest City-St. Matthew. Organ and piano skills needed. Email resume to smumcspre@gmail.com or call Barbara at 550-0852.

Administrative Assistant: Part-time. **Janitor:** Part-time. OKC Southern Hills. Email resume to Connie Gibson, conniejgibson@att.net

Youth Minister: Bristow UMC. Part-time. Katie Hill, 918-367-3227, pastorkatiehill@gmail.com

Youth Director: Sand Springs UMC. Half-time. Send resume to Pastor, P.O.

Box 336, Sand Springs, OK 74063, or to dtabberer@sandspringsumc.org

Youth Director: First United Methodist Church, Sayre. Full-time. Contact Mike Blevins at mikeblevins@cablone.net or 580-928-2100.

Administrative Assistant: Sapulpa FUMC. Full-time. Submit resumes by fax to 918-227-0646 or by email to allen@sapulpafumc.org

Director of Music Ministries/Worship Leader: OKC-First Church. Full-time. Email Pastor Mark McAdow at SPRC@FirstChurchOKC.com

Internship: OKC-Church of the Servant is looking for a college student exploring a call to ministry. Internship runs through May; could continue through the summer. Email Sang Nguyen, snguyen@churchoftheservant.com

Business Manager: Moore-First. 30 hours per week. Mail resume and cover letter to SPPRC at 201 W. Main St., Moore, OK 73160, or email them to info@moorechurch.com.

Youth Ministry Director: Fort Smith (Ark.) First UMC. Email Robert Cloninger at rcloninger@fsumc.org



Youth Service Day: 160 offer help

On March 7, the OCU campus welcomed more than 160 United Methodist youths and their sponsors from across the state for Youth Service Day. Photos: Young people from First UMC in Coweta stock the food resource center at Skyline Urban Ministry. Annually, OCU's Youth Service Day engages church youth groups through campus tours, lunch together, service projects at nearby schools and nonprofit agencies, and worship. This year, Semaj Vanzant Sr., senior pastor of OKC-The Christ Experience UMC, preached, and that church's praise team led music.



OCU student mission benefits Belize school

While most students were spending their Christmas vacation enjoying a break from classes, a team of students from Oklahoma City University traveled to Belize to be in mission.

The team of seven, led by OCU vice president for University-Church Relations, Charles Neff, included five students, Madeline Boehlke, Emily Kersten, Beatriz Martinez, Sylvia Hayes, and Olivia Coil; and one parent, Steve Hayes.

The centerpiece of the eight-day trip was six days of construction work at the Methodist School in Burrell Boom, a small village just outside Belize City. Team members worked together to build a concrete block railing for a second-story landing. It was part of the school's efforts to complete an addition that will

add three new classrooms to help educate local children ages 5 to 15.

In addition to their work, the team had the opportunity to tour Mayan ruins, explore the Belizean rainforest, and spend time with local families in their homes. Each evening, prayers and reflections helped the group process their experiences from that day.

"The trip was a wonderful experience," said team member Olivia Coil, a junior youth ministry major. "We learned so much about their culture and made lots of new friends. Their hospitality is just amazing!"

OCU already has plans to return to Burrell Boom next winter to help complete the classroom project.

Nominations of outstanding laity sought for Bishop Milhouse Award

Each year, OCU presents the Bishop Paul W. Milhouse Award. It recognizes those who demonstrate outstanding leadership in the community, their local United Methodist church and their annual conference, in addition to being an advocate for the partnership between OCU and the church. The award has been presented annually since 1982.

The University-Church Relations Office welcomes nominations at any time for this annual award. Please contact Charles Neff with the name of outstanding laity you know who express their faith in concrete ways in their community and in support of OCU. Rev. Dr. Neff may be reached by email at cneff@okcu.edu or by calling 405-208-5060.

The Oklahoma United Methodist
Contact
1501 N.W. 24th
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

Moving to a new address?
Call 405-530-2075
or send an email to
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Photo by Derrek Belase

FAREWELL WITH FLAIR — A high-energy final conference for the Stillwater District blessed churches' members and clergy on Jan. 24. Historical reflections honored the devoted churches that have served Christ for decades. The conference also trumpeted the potential to further grow God's kingdom as the Oklahoma Conference realigns in eight districts on June 1. Cheerleading during the music-saturated program were Superintendent Tish Malloy at left, Bishop Robert Hayes Jr., and other district leaders.

First meetings for new districts

As Oklahoma continues transitioning to eight districts, participants at these upcoming inaugural conferences will worship together, elect leaders, set budgets, and take action to incorporate.

Following the Cimarron District Conference & Celebration, a get-acquainted luncheon with catered meal will be held. Meal cost is \$10.

Cimarron District:	April 11
Woodward-First UMC.....	10:30 a.m.
Northern Prairie District:	April 12
Perry UMC	3 p.m.
Crossroads District:	April 18
OKC-Church of the Servant	10:30 a.m.
Wichitas District:	April 19
Lawton-Centenary UMC	3 p.m.
Lake Country District:	April 25
McAlester-First UMC.....	10:30 a.m.
Heartland District:	April 26
Norman-McFarlin UMC	3 p.m.
Council Oak District:	May 3
Tulsa-First UMC	2 p.m.
Green Country District:	May 3
Claremore-First UMC.....	3 p.m.

For more information, contact your current district superintendent.



Strength for the journey: A collection of ideas and thoughts from our bishop

No Man's Land is God's land

"Once you enter the land that God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance and take it over and settle down, you are to take some of all the first fruits of what you grow in the land that God, your God, is giving you, put them in a basket and go to the place God, your God, sets apart for you to worship Him." (Deuteronomy 26:1-2, *The Message*)

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

Throughout the month of March, I have been visiting our United Methodist churches in far northwest Oklahoma, including those in the area commonly known as the Panhandle. I am surprised to learn many Oklahomans have never explored that part of our great state. You owe it to yourself to become better acquainted with this intriguing region.



Bishop Hayes

History recounts the establishment of the Panhandle as part of Oklahoma Territory. In 1854, Kansas set its southern boundary at the 37th parallel; Texas found itself unable to advance northward because

of the Missouri Compromise.

That left a narrow parcel of land — 167 miles long and only 34.5 miles wide — unclaimed by any state or territory.

Thus it was named No Man's Land. It was crisscrossed by nomadic Plains Indians and cattle trail drives.

In the mid-1880s, drought caused people to leave their farmlands in western Kansas, and those settlers drifted south to this rugged sliver of the Plains. The area became part of Oklahoma Territory with the Organic Act of 1890.*

Methodists long have been part of this region's history.

In February 1888, Mary Westmoreland Hitch and her sister petitioned the Methodist Mission Board in Kansas to send a preacher to Coldwater Creek, near what eventually became Guyton, Okla.

In her letter, Mary wrote, "We keenly feel the need of a spiritual shepherd and counselor, and even though we are 140 miles from the nearest railroad, our home will be the preacher's home."

Such was the tenacity of the people called Methodists 125 years ago. Their persistence in ministry remains alive and well today.

What has impressed me most as I've traveled this month is an undeniable truth: Our brothers and sisters in northwest Oklahoma possess an unshakable faith, deeply

rooted in their love of God. They are strong and spirit-filled, trustworthy and courageous.

They have renewed my faith and revitalized my spirit!

Even in that once-overlooked place called No Man's Land, I have found people of God holding on to the faith and traditions given to them by their grandparents and parents. In tiny towns and rural whistlestops, surrounded by homesteads and farmlands, they praise God in beautiful houses of worship that were fashioned and built by their hands.

In my March visits to Woodward, Mooreland, Alva, Boise City, Kenton, Gate, Forgan, Beaver, and Fairview, I have discovered the harvest continues for Christ, sprouting from seeds of faith planted in 1889 by Rev. E.F. Reser — the first circuit-riding preacher who volunteered for this mission field, in response to Mary Hitch's letter.

These trips echo my earlier visits to Catesby, Gage, Hardesty, Hooker, Laverne, Lenora, Seiling, Shattuck, Tyrone, and Vici.

I have experienced the blessing of tremendous hospitality. I saw genuine Christian love on faces, felt it in handshakes and hugs, heard the sincerity in the prayers and songs of the people called United Methodists!

And one spiritual practice I have witnessed in some rural congregations has moved me to tears.

Following the wheat harvest, church

members bring bags of processed grain to the altar to be blessed.

It doesn't matter if the harvest was plentiful or scarce. The farmers bring the firstfruits of their fields, and the pastor presents what is received as an offering to God.

Following the service, that wheat is used throughout the year to bake the bread for Holy Communion!

These United Methodists truly practice giving God the best of themselves and all they have. Now I know the secret to survival of the Christian witness in far northwest Oklahoma!

The unknown regions of the world in the late 1300s were represented on maps with mere words, such as "Demons be here!" and "Dragons and fiery scorpions dwell there!" But European mapmaker John Franklin systematically erased those words when he saw such maps, replacing those ominous statements with "Here be God!" and "There dwells God!"

God dwells in far northwest Oklahoma! Even in No Man's Land, you will find God's people, carrying forward the work of the ages, strong in the faith and true to the God who led them there.

(* Kenneth R. Turner, "No Man's Land," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, www.okhistory.org).



Photos by Ellen Wehn

PILLOW CASES FOR FOSTER KIDS —

A united effort by children at several Tulsa-area churches created colorful travel bags from pillowcases, for foster children served by the Circle of Care's Child Share program. They used fabric markers to decorate some pillowcases and tie-dyed others. Rope was inserted to make a drawstring. The project was directed by children's ministry directors at four churches: Verdigris, Jenks, Tulsa-Faith, and Tulsa-Boston Avenue. The directors meet monthly to share ideas and plans, said Ellen Wehn of Verdigris UMC. The bags were consecrated in worship before delivery to the Child Share office. Above: TV reporter Rick Wells interviews Skyler Yoder of Verdigris, left, and Sylvan McClure of Jenks while they work. At right: Ian Meador leads the Verdigris congregation in prayer; beside him, sister Maren said the "Amen." Watch the news video on Tulsa Channel 6's website.



Childhood:

Continued from page 1

Roaches not only infested places the family lived. At school, the insects crawled out of Carter's clothes.

Violence, alcoholism, and crime rampaged in his family. Oklahoma Department of Human Services caseworkers came and went. Nothing changed.

When he was 11, a desperate Carter ran away from home ... and to DHS for help. That's startling. News media seldom report that families ask the agency to intervene in their lives.

Carter, who turned to the state for shelter, was sent first to a juvenile detention center!

Years in foster care inflicted other terrors on the boy. A brutal man operated a group residence for boys, at a ranch.

Punishments included bear crawling, the man kicking those who struggled. Another form of his discipline: moving armloads of bricks for two hours, with a quota required for that timeframe.

Despite all, this neglected, abused child held on to dreams of change. His siblings and cousins "grew hard," Carter described. But he chose differently.

Actions by a few compassionate people helped him endure and then avoid the statistical expectations for a foster child in adulthood.

Carter describes those people in his book, "The Boy Who Carried Bricks" (The RoadRunner Press). This personal story is both unflinching and hopeful.

He writes of the "bread crumbs" of kindness that fed his spirit. Those nuggets nourished his dreams of a better life and helped him achieve it.

Today Carter tells his story to encourage others, both those suffering and those who can help.

"I want to help people find strength to overcome whatever (challenges them). I feel like I am making a difference for people who are hurting," he said.

"Dream; realize you can overcome; change. It's OK to ask for help. It takes all of that."

As the church's youth director, he builds relationships, "and through that you can talk about God," he said.

"God will put people there to help you."

The Circle of Care is among those. The support of Oklahoma United Methodists makes possible the help extended by that agency to hundreds of at-risk children and youths each year.

For information about the Circle of Care banquet: 405-530-2081, www.fof.circleofcare.org. Carter's life intersected with the Circle when a CoC official recently heard him speak to an audience in Ponca City.

(On March 13, "The Boy Who Carried Bricks" ranked No. 1 for Amazon in the category Teen & Young Adult Homelessness & Poverty Issues. A portion of sales goes to the Inspire Foundation.)

Ardmore welcomes CoC foster help

By MARSHA MILLER
The Ardmoreite

The numbers tell the story. According to data compiled Feb. 20 from Department of Human Services Child Welfare statistics, there are only 47 foster homes in Carter, Johnston, Love, Marshall, and Murray counties. That number is nowhere close to the number of children needing the safe and loving care of a foster home.

It's a problem that blankets the entire state.

State Rep. Pat Ownbey of Ardmore said, "The answer in dealing with the thousands of children who need the support only a foster home can give isn't found in government. It begins with people who sincerely want to be a part of the solution."

Answering the call for a non-government solution is the Circle of Care, with its program called Child Share. Don Batson, president, said Child Share recruits, trains, and provides ongoing support to foster parents.

The nonprofit program began in Ardmore with a kickoff family carnival Jan. 31.

Ardmore is the third city to have the program, which is expanding this year from Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Child Share provides lots of assistance, from helping potential foster parents complete the application process without frustrating long waits and red tape, to long-term support.

"Getting these children into a loving home promptly is so very important to the child's well-being. At the same time, these families must be ready for the challenges these children bring with them," Ownbey said.

Contact a foster care recruiter:

- **Oklahoma City:**
Angela Baker, 405-463-6626
Angela.baker@circleofcare.org
- **Tulsa:**
Andrea Wade, 918-794-3876
Andrea.wade@circleofcare.org
- **Shawnee:**
Patricia Collar, 405-693-7795
Patricia.collar@circleofcare.org
- **Stillwater:**
Julie Miller, 405-312-6640
Julie.miller@circleofcare.org
- **Ardmore:**
Heather Doherty, 405-312-8663
Heather.doherty@circleofcare.org
- **Grove:**
Mark Westfall, 918-453-3503
Mark.westfall@circleofcare.org
- **Ponca City:**
Becky Hightower, 580-716-1625,
Rebecca.hightower@circleofcare.org
Carlan Kindred, 580-789-0106,
Carlan.kindred@circleofcare.org

"My experience with this wonderful program is that this ministry offers great training and then stays beside these families by supporting them during the time the child is in the home."

Child Share has opened an office at Ardmore's First

United Methodist Church.

"My family and I first became aware of the need for good foster homes about 4 1/2 years ago," said Bebe Lodes. "Our daughter and son-in-law received an email from their minister about an 18-month-old little girl who needed emergency foster care. That little girl has been adopted and is now our grandchild.

"From that point on, every article we read or news story we heard opened our eyes to the tremendous need for quality, Christian-based people who were willing to serve as foster parents."

The program is open to all, not only United Methodist families.

"Our foster homes are diversified," Batson added. "Couples can be approved. Singles can be approved, and there is no age requirement. Case management remains with DHS.

"What we provide is a special support system."

And Child Share is not only for potential foster parents in Ardmore.

"We return calls as soon as possible from people interested in the program, and within a 50-70 mile radius we try to be in the home in an hour to talk," Batson said.

He encouraged those interested to talk with Child Share foster parents or staff. Civic and church groups can host question-and-answer sessions.

You can reach Ardmore's Child Share family specialist, Heather Doherty, at First UMC, 580-223-5390.

(Reprinted with permission, *The Ardmoreite*, Feb. 22, 2015)

Lydia Patterson school erases barriers in students' lives

By SAM HODGES

United Methodist News Service

Dayna Barrera seems typical of a bright, accomplished U.S. high school senior.

She's filled one bedroom wall with inspirational slogans jotted on multi-colored sticky notes. Her nightstand holds books by John Green, a best-selling author of young adult novels.

But Barrera gets to class by leaving the country. Each weekday, she's up before dawn to go from her home in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, into El Paso, Texas. There she attends Lydia Patterson Institute. This United Methodist high school is a ministry of the South Central Jurisdiction, which includes Oklahoma, and gets Apportionment support.

The journey takes 45 minutes on a good day. It means a standing-room-only ride on a city bus, a walk over the Rio Grande River via the Stanton Street Bridge, and shuffling through the pedestrian line at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection port of entry.

"Sometimes they ask a lot of questions. Sometimes they don't," said Barrera, 18, in a March interview. "It depends on the officer."

Whatever the hassle level, she arrives grateful. Barrera has a full scholarship offer from Ohio Wesleyan University and a large offer from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Overcoming poverty

For more than 100 years, Lydia Patterson Institute has been a beacon for young Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, giving them English language fluency and a sturdy, faith-based education that often brings transforming opportunities.

Juárez is a city beset by poverty and other social ills. But roughly 98 percent of the institute's graduates go on to college, with the 2014 senior class attracting some \$1.5 million in scholarships.

The alumni ranks boast physicians, lawyers, engineers, teachers, artists, diplomats



By 6:30 a.m. each weekday, Dayna Barrera is out the door to travel from her home in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas. She's expected to be the school's 2015 valedictorian. This portrait is in her home.

Photo by Sam Hodges, UMNS

— and United Methodist clergy, including retired Bishop Joel Martinez.

"We became more than just a school," said Socorro Brito de Anda, president of Lydia Patterson. "We became a refuge, a safe haven for the students."

These days, some 400 students attend the school, in grades seven through 12. Most of the younger students get intensive English language training, and all upper-grade classes are English only.

About 70 percent of the students make the daily trek from Juárez, with others coming from El Paso or other nearby U.S. communities. Of the Juárez group, some were born in the United States and have U.S. citizenship, while others are Mexican citizens and need a student visa to cross.

Many students are on financial aid. Scholarship students must work a campus job, an arrangement that allows the school to get by with a minimal support staff, including one maintenance man.

Bequer Gomez, an 18-year-old senior from Juárez, makes sure all restrooms have toilet paper. He's happy to do any job that keeps him in the school.

"Lydia Patterson has become my home," Gomez said. "It's developed my leadership

skills, my character."

Gomez is one of about 50 students in the lay ministry internship program. That's given him summer work at the Oklahoma Conference office in Oklahoma City and at Marvin UMC in Tyler, Texas.

Christian classes required

Four courses in Christian education are required, as well as weekly chapel attendance. Students also must wear uniforms and mind their manners.

"Grades and success are important to these kids," said Alfredo Gurrola, who teaches science at Lydia Patterson Institute after 32 years teaching in the public schools.

SWOSU campus ministry wins grant

A \$12,000 grant from the denomination's Young Clergy Initiative will make possible a new internship program by the Wesley Foundation at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

The campus ministry at SWOSU will begin this new program with the first class of student interns in Fall 2015.

Every year churches contact United Methodist campus ministries in their search for energetic, thoughtful students to step into local-church leadership roles. Many call looking for youth directors, but others need help in children's ministry or musical talent.

At times a perfect match results, but sometimes the college students find work in the church to be far different than expected, explained Elizabeth Horton-Ware.

Whether it is balancing school work and church schedules, the challenge of mentoring someone in the faith may burn out a college student who is still defining a personal understanding of God, still discerning that

student's role in God's kingdom-ministry.

Rev. Horton-Ware said these were the thoughts behind the vision by the SWOSU Wesley Foundation for a new internship program. She is the Wesley Foundation director.

Student interns have long been part of this campus ministry, but the new format will require interns to serve 10 hours a week in local-church settings throughout the academic year.

The churches will provide mentors to guide the interns through their work in the congregations. In addition to that mentoring, interns will receive a weekend full of training and discernment. Monthly meetings will bring together all interns and the campus minister for training and group processing, with financial support throughout the process.

The \$7 million Young Clergy Initiative Fund was created by the 2012 General Conference and is administered by the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Friends of Children Banquet

Friday, April 17, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Please join us as we celebrate the mission, work, and impact of Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.

Two Locations:

Oklahoma City	Tulsa
Quail Creek Country Club	Southern Hills Marriott

The presentation will be the same in both cities.

Using telecommunications technology, Circle of Care's supporters across the state will be united on this evening of celebration and hope. The program will include testimonies from clients and 2014 ministry highlights!

Sponsorship opportunities: call 405-530-2081

- **Statewide Sponsor**
\$10,000 – Two tables (8 seats each)
Name printed in both programs, program mention, and invitation to pre-event reception
- **Table Sponsor**
\$1,000 – One table (8 seats)
Name printed in local program, and program mention
- **Individual Dinner Reservation**
\$50 per person
- **Event Sponsor**
\$5,000 – One table (8 seats)
Name printed in local program, program mention, and invitation to pre-event reception



RSVP at:
FOC.circleofcare.org
or 405-530-2081



Canyon Camp's landmark bell sits near the Paul & Ann Milburn Cabin. Through the big windows of the central meeting room, you'll glimpse the red sandstone walls of the canyon rising behind the new building.

Attend dedication April 18 at Canyon

By HOLLY McCRAY

The upcoming dedication of Canyon Camp's new cabins, on April 18, confirms this is a milestone year for Oklahoma United Methodist camping ministries. You're invited to the celebration.

More great moments to come:

- On June 1, Cross Point Camp will officially dedicate its two new cabins.

- Funds totaling \$480,000 have been secured to build a medical station at Camp Egan.

Ask Canyon's manager, David Combs, to name his favorite part of that cabin project.

His answer won't be the building design or furnishings. He immediately acknowledges the many individuals and groups whose donations funded the construction and furnished the spaces.

Some of them will attend that Saturday dedication ceremony, at 1 p.m. Then hamburgers and hot dogs will be served. The public is welcome. To assist meal planning, RSVP to the camp office, 405-542-6967, by April 13.

On Jan. 1, the Paul & Ann Milburn Cabin and the Foundation Cabin opened their doors.

The first lodgers were a youth group from OKC-Church of the Servant and the young people attending a North/South Oklahoma City Districts' program, according to Combs.

The new cabins are design twins. Their red exteriors match well with existing buildings.

At 3,000-plus square feet, each has a large central meeting room and two wings for lodging 30 people total.

In the meeting room, walls of windows at front and back admit lots of natural light. Six ceiling fans circulate air. A kitchenette provides refrigerator, microwave, sink, and plenty of electrical outlets.

In each wing, red bunks sleep 15 people, and the gleaming bathroom is outfitted with four mirrored sinks, four toilet stalls, and three showers. United Methodist Men of Lost Creek and Stillwater-First, directed by Tom Kirby, built the bunk beds.

Canyon Camp's oldest buildings were constructed about 60 years ago.

According to Combs, "What can we build that will last another 60 years?" was a

key question for trustees.

"The design is very well thought out," Combs said.

The metal exterior is virtually maintenance-free, he said. The metal roofing will outlast shingles. Windows are double-pane.

Separate mechanical units heat and cool each wing. "You could have a group stay on just one side, and won't need air or heat going in both," Combs explained.

Access to the meeting room and two additional bathrooms is directly from outdoors. Guests don't walk through the sleeping areas to reach them.

A tour of Canyon Camp reveals more improvements. An electric utility cooperative has built an emergency access road to the lighted cross atop the canyon walls. And soon a long, paved sidewalk will stretch beside much of the main camp road, on the grassy field side.

The United States Department of the Interior has designated Canyon as a National Natural Landmark. The church camp facility, southeast of Hinton, is about an hour's drive west of Oklahoma City.

Sign-up begins for summertime camps, retreats

March served up Spring Break for Oklahoma schools ... and that signified the summer church-camp season soon will follow.

It's time to sign up your student for those faith-based adventures, June through July, offered by United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries.

The schedule this summer is built on the current 12-district structure of the Conference.

You can register for summer camp online, or use the forms printed in the separate booklets "Summer 2015 Youth Camps" and "Summer 2015 Children's Camps." Those two publications were sent by U.S. mail to churches, last summer's campers, etc.

- A retooled website — www.ok-camps.org — directs you through online enrollment.

- District camp information is found on the final pages of the "Youth Camps" booklet.

- Both booklets include forms that must be completed, such as health information and CYME/JEM recommendations.

Digital communication tools offer even more access to UM camping news: [Facebook.com/OkCamps](https://www.facebook.com/OkCamps), [Twitter.com/Ok_Camps](https://twitter.com/Ok_Camps), [Instagram.com/Ok_Camps](https://www.instagram.com/Ok_Camps), and oklahomacamping@okumc.org.

Ed Parker, Camps executive director, said a committee chaired by Devon Krause of Elk City is developing plans for 2016, when an eight-district system will be in effect.

Parker said six characteristics "drive everything we do." They are:

- safety ("That's No. 1 with parents");
- mature, well-trained staff;
- opportunities for skill development (Do you know the J-Stroke, a canoe technique?);
- building friendships;
- fun; and
- spiritual growth.

In the Camps office at the United Methodist Ministry Center, Oklahoma City, Katie Wonderly is registrar and Mary Seay is new administrative assistant.



Photos by Holly McCray

The two new cabins are identical. Here are interior views. Light floods the central meeting space. Bunks form an interesting pattern; each bed has a built-in storage shelf. Each shower stall is outfitted with two curtains, to separate washing and dressing spaces.

The global church

Penalty for helping — Courtney McHill couldn't be prouder of her flock at McMinnville (Oregon) Cooperative Ministries for welcoming homeless people to camp there.

But the city of McMinnville, Ore., has had complaints and wants the homeless encampment closed by March 31.

If the church doesn't meet the deadline, it will get a court summons. It could be fined up to \$500 a day for violating ordinances that restrict temporary housing, according to the city manager.

Both sides say discussions are under way to avoid court.

Rev. McHill, a UM elder, co-pastors the church, a joint effort of United Methodists and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Hotline busy — In 2014, the Upper Room Living Prayer Center received 273,580 prayer requests. Many were received and answered by United Methodist Men volunteers.

For the third year in a row, Alabama West Florida Conference UMMen were the top contributors to the ministry, based in Nashville, Tenn. UMMen nationwide contributed \$20,980, which enabled the ministry to respond to 2,400 prayer requests by e-mail; 39,593 requests at the website, and 231,287 by phone.

Call the Prayer Center, 800-251-2468, between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. CDST.

Coffee break outreach — Bringing up God in casual conversation can be quite a challenge. Lakesha Groover and Andrew Ryoo came up with a way to try to make that less stressful.

They co-pastor Mosaic Ministries in three New Jersey cities. They handed their congregations \$10 gift cards to Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts, asking the members to go out, meet people in coffee shops, and share beverages and conversation about God.

"We wanted to provide people a practical way of starting conversations about faith in the world," Rev. Groover said.



Photo by Kathryn Spry

Emily and Rachel Krogman dig at Hillcrest UMC, Nashville, Tenn. Seventy-five volunteers from the church and community planted 250 native trees as part of a Creation Care effort March 14. Earth Day is observed worldwide on April 22.

Game on — On a sunny afternoon, women gather on the makeshift ball field that is the training area for the St. Peter's UMC netball team.

"We have excelled in the sport since it was introduced in 2011 at the annual conference of the (Zimbabwe East Conference) women's union," Coach Tabitha Ruzvidzo said. Netball, popular in many places outside the United States, is an offshoot of basketball.

Participation has not only encouraged the women to stay fit and healthy, but also has contributed to growth in St. Peter's congregation.

Denominations in discussions — Baptists and Methodists seem the least likely to become entangled in theological disputes or battles over turf and members. Pulpit swaps and shared ministries are increasingly common.

But historically, the two traditions were

often bitter rivals, said Bill Leonard, professor of Baptist studies and church history at Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

"They used to have debates on the frontier over infant baptism, falling from grace and, in the case of Calvinistic Baptists, whether Christ's death on the cross was only for the elect," Leonard said.

Representatives of the Baptist World Alliance and the World Methodist Council have met twice, with three more meetings planned.

7 social media tips — Extend your church's welcoming ministry online. Here are suggestions.

1. Ask congregants to check-in or post to social media. Give them permission to share special moments or quotes on various social media platforms.

2. Create tweetable links to share.

3. Create tweetable quotes. Use a free service like Pullquote to turn a 140-character quote into a Twitter image that is easily retweetable.

4. Make sharing easy on your site. The free service Share This generates a code that adds a sharing bar to the side of every page.

5. Make Instagrammable slides.

6. Post a teaser video.

7. Advertise hashtags and account names.

Church trial — In Longmont, Colo., a recent Church trial found clergyman Filimone Havili Mone guilty of disobeying the order and discipline of the Church, and his membership in the Rocky Mountain Conference was terminated. He retains his ordination in the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga.

Rev. Mone formerly pastored Tongan UMC, Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2012, concerns arose about suspected sexual abuse at that church. It was found that Mone had failed to report the abuse to authorities in a timely manner, in violation of church and state law.

In 2013, Mone was tried in city court and negotiated a plea for failing to report abuse of a child.

Briefly

a small group of fellow students at Oxford University in 1729 with John Wesley as their mentor. Ingham's journal provides an intimate look at the life of the first Methodists and will be a guide for us along the way."

Rev. Northcutt recommended, "This is a great resource to follow up for churches that have completed 'A Disciple's Path.'"

OCU won't raise tuition

Tuition and fees at Oklahoma City University will not increase for the 2015-16 academic year, President Robert Henry announced Feb. 5.

Undergraduate, graduate, and law school tuition and fees will remain flat.

Many financial aid opportunities exist at the United Methodist-related, private university. More than 90 percent of undergraduate students receive such assistance.

Funds go to OIMC

The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) has received a \$3,300 Human Relations Day grant for a project titled "Honoring Us for Who We Are: Created by God."

The OIMC advocacy project focuses on Native American mascot issues and the history of state-sponsored violence against Native Americans, according to information from the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). Education on the *United Methodist Social Principles* will be one aspect of the work.

At its spring meeting, GBCS approved almost \$120,000 in grants to UM ministries around the world.

Human Relations Day is one of six churchwide Special Sundays.

Calendar

Camp Egan Golf Tournament

April 13

White Hawk Golf Club, Bixby
jpluver@okumc.org, 918-456-6489

LEAD III

Leadership seminar for clergy

April 16-17 at OCU

"Conflict Transformation"
Presenter Dianne Peters
www.okumc.org/Lead

ECU Wesley Preview Night (for high school juniors/seniors)

April 27, 7 p.m.

Wesley Foundation
East Central University
201 S. Francis, Ada
RSVP by April 16 to Janey Wilson,
ecuwesley@gmail.com,
580-436-3400

Public lecture by Tex Sample

"To Seek Justice: Community Organizing as Discipleship"

May 5, 7 p.m.

McFarlin UMC, Norman
RSVP to Jill Perrin,
umc1@coxinet.net, 405-603-8622

Oklahoma City University Commencement

May 9

- Baccalaureate service, 9 a.m.
- Undergraduate ceremony, 11 a.m.
- Graduate ceremony, 3 p.m.

www.okcu.edu/commencement

"Celebrate Saint Paul!"

Seminary dinner

May 14

McDaniel Student Center, OCU
With presentation
of Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr.
Leadership Award

Saint Paul at OCU Commencement

May 29, 4 p.m.

Smith Chapel, OCU
Speaker David Wiggs,
senior pastor of Tulsa-Boston
Avenue UMC

OIMC Gala

Oct. 8

The Reed Center, Midwest City
• Banquet and silent auction
• Benefits Oklahoma Indian
Missionary Conference's
endowment for pastoral leadership

www.umc-oimc.org/
benefit-gala-and-silent-auction/

The Foundation and the OKC Thunder partner for a life-saving cause

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation is once again partnering with the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball team to bring the OKC Thunder Nothing But Nets Night on Friday, April 10.

As the OKC Thunder take on the Sacramento Kings, Oklahoma United Methodists will take on the deadly disease malaria. When game tickets are purchased through the Foundation, a portion of the ticket price will go to Nothing But Nets. Each ticket purchased through the Foundation for the April 10 game will buy one life-saving bed net.

Game night tickets still are available for \$41 or \$53 and can be purchased by calling Barbara at the Foundation at 405-896-5003.

The game is an opportunity for church youth groups, Sunday school classes, UMM, UMW, and other groups to have a fun night out and support a worthy cause. Only a limited number of tickets is available.

Through ticket sales and other contributions, the Foundation raised more than \$45,000 since the first Oklahoma City Thunder Nothing But Nets basketball game in 2011.

With the money raised, Nothing But Nets, an organization founded in part by The United Methodist Church, has provided more than 4,500 life-saving bed nets for children and families in developing countries, to prevent the deadly disease malaria, especially in Africa.

Nothing but Nets is supported by many organizations, including The United Methodist Church and the NBA. Visit www.nothingbutnets.net for more information.

If you are unable to attend the game, you can still contribute to Nothing But Nets through the Foundation. Call our office at 800-259-6863 or go online to www.okumf.org/services/onlinegiving



THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION
4201 N CLASSEN BOULEVARD, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73118-2400
WWW.OKUMF.ORG • 800-259-6863



Money:

Continued from page 1

In January, Treasurer Brian Bakeman told the Council on Finance & Administration (CFA), "Most people think about Apportionments in the same light as operating budgets. It is usually easier to raise specific dollars for mission or special projects than it is for operating budgets."

In a *Contact* interview, Tom Junk concurred. "These images are easier for people to get in their minds. It's harder to paint the picture for what Conference administration does."

However, "without administration and the structure of the Church, we don't have the platform and mechanisms to respond when there is need."

Junk chairs the CFA, and he has served about a year as a director of the General Board of Global Ministries, including the UMCOR emergency committee. This member of Tulsa-First Church sees directly how Apportionments support God's work at all levels of the denomination.

Perhaps the examples in this story give some clarity to where Apportionment money goes in Oklahoma.

"I think as the successes of the *New People New Places* initiative become apparent to us, and as new disciples are made because of those

View and download a 1-page "2015 Conference Apportionment Guide" at www.okumc.org/ApportionmentInformation

By SALLY WILLIAMS
Member, D.D. Etchieson UMC

According to some surveys, United Methodists average giving 1.7 percent of our income to God. We usually tip servers in a restaurant 15 percent. Is there something wrong with this picture? Here are some simple ways of giving:

There are 5,280 feet in a mile. If we committed to at least 1 mile a year of:

- Pennies: 16 pennies per foot = \$844.80 for a mile of pennies.
- Nickels: 14.5 nickels per foot = \$3,828.00 for a mile of nickels.
- Dimes: 17 dimes per foot = \$8,976.00 for a mile of dimes.
- Quarters: 12 quarters per foot = \$15,840 for a mile of quarters.
- Paper dollars: Two \$1 bills per foot = \$10,560 for a mile of dollar bills.

(Reprinted with permission, the OIMC Advocate, March-April 2015)

projects, that our stewardship is going to be encouraged," Junk said.

Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. consistently vows "to finish strong" in all areas. At the January CFA meeting, he questioned the ongoing decline in Apportionment receipts.

"We're affecting these wonderful ministries we have across the state," said Rev. Bakeman.

Several ministries, including Circle of Care and Cookson Hills Center, typically receive more than 100 percent of their Apportionment requests. But even those receipts fell in 2014.

Circle of Care Apportionment support slid below 93 percent, missing the agency's \$700,000 budget by

about \$49,200. Receipts for the Oklahoma City University Apportionment were reported at 85 percent, leaving a budget hole of \$145,291.

Annual Conference delegates approved a lower Conference budget for 2014, which in turn lowered the total Apportionments requested from churches (\$16,663,047). And among Oklahoma's 30 largest churches, based on their assigned Apportionments, all but four gave 100 percent that year.

Still, the overall 92.66 percent collection rate — \$1.2 million less from all churches — was the lowest in 10 years.

(Statistics provided by Adam Leathers, CJAMM director; Diana Northcutt, director of Discipleship; Sarah Nichols, director of Young Adult Mission & Service/Project Transformation; and Chuck Nordean, director of Clergy & Congregational Development.)

Passages

ADLER – Rev. Nancy Lee Adler, 63, of Bixby died March 3, 2015, in Tulsa.

Serving almost 25 years, she pastored churches in Lookeba, El Reno, Comanche, Snyder, Laverne, and Tahlequah.

Survivors include her son Neill and daughter Mandie.

Service was March 8 at Bixby-First UMC. Memorial gifts to: Oklahoma UM Clergy Crisis Fund.

PERRY – Rev. Robert Thomas "R.T." Perry, 80, of Tipton, died March 4, 2015.

Between 1991 and retirement in 2004, R.T. served churches in Alfalfa, Westville, Jay, and Cache.

Survivors include his wife, Reva; four children, Robert Perry, Ronnie Perry, Donna Altom, and Denise Knight; and three stepchildren, Mitchell Hines, Mark Hines, and Rhonda Hines Hukill.

Service was March 8 at Tipton-First UMC. Burial, with full military honors, was in the Tipton Cemetery.

WILLIAMS – Florence Lund Williams, 93, died in Nashville, Tenn., on Feb. 7, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. T. Poe Williams, who died in 1984.

She had worked as a director of Christian Education and later for UM Discipleship Ministries (formerly the Board of Discipleship).

Survivors include sons William LeRoy Lund, Steven Francis Lund, and Timothy Westcott Lund; and stepdaughters Laura Williams Sarkisian and Twyla Williams Hulme.

Service was Feb. 11 at St. Mark's UMC, Murfreesboro, Tenn. Memorial gifts may be made to that church's Building Fund.

Robert Mark Blacksten died March 11. He was the father of Rev. Brandon Blacksten, pastor of Hydro UMC.

Carolyn Joy Terrell died March 12. She was the mother of Kristin Terrell-Wilkes, Office of Mission coordinator at the United Methodist Ministry Center, and mother-in-law of Rev. Jack Terrell-Wilkes, pastor of Spencer/Urban Mission.