



The Mission of Harvest 2.0 is to create Vital Christians in Vital Churches for Changing Communities

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1 • JUNE 2014

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Providing a Safe Place When School's Out

Spring break is a fun, exciting break from the regular school week for students, but not for some parents who are faced with finding an alternative safe place for their children to go amid Chicago's gun and gang violence.

This past spring break Crystal Stokes was thankful to send her three children ages 7 to 13 and her two nieces to Maple Park United Methodist Church on Chicago's south side. "I think this is great," Stokes says about the free Safe Haven program offered at the church. "It keeps the kids from running around and being on the streets. I know they're somewhere safe."

Maple Park UMC was one of nine churches in the Northern Illinois Conference



About 20 children participated in the Safe Haven program at Maple Park UMC which was staffed by church volunteers and MYSI coordinators.

which partnered with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to provide safe havens for the 2014 spring break to more than 200 children. The churches structured the activities, crafts, and curriculum and CPS provided nutritious breakfasts

and lunches for the children—meals some may miss out on while not in school.

"This is a safe place for children to be welcomed, loved and respected as well as to learn how they can be empowered in the midst of

their environment," says the Rev. Adonna Reid at South Shore UMC. "They can also just be kids. The volunteers commented on how there was a spirit of peace and relaxation here for many of the children."

The curriculum theme running through all the safe haven UMC locations was anti-bullying. Children learned about standing up to bullies, conflict resolution, and what to do if they're bullied.

"They've learned a lot and shared a lot while having fun too," says Jeborrah Perkins, Community Outreach Manager at MYSI (formerly Methodist Youth Services Inc.) which volunteered as mentors at Maple Park for the week.

"Some admitted they had been
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It Takes a Tiger Village

They say it takes a village to raise a child. After the announcement of numerous Chicago Public School (CPS) closings in 2013, Urban Village Church (UVC) looked for ways to support the children impacted by the changes and to be an integral piece of the village equation.

Leaders at the UVC Hyde Park/Woodlawn location and member Brandon Byrd, who is a 4th grade teacher at Dulles School of Excellence, put their heads together to come up with an after school program that would meet the needs of 3rd through 5th graders at Dulles.

"Dulles is a welcoming school. With the CPS closures, we welcomed 300 new

students adding to our existing 500 students this school year," says Byrd. "Many of the students live in Woodlawn which is a low income neighborhood. There's a lot of stress with that and some crime."

"We looked at how can we take the lessons from our faith and infuse it in a CPS-friendly way"

Byrd wanted a program that would help build the children's confidence and self esteem. "When we were in the planning stages, we wanted to do something more

than just give supplies and books," says Byrd. "As a teacher, I wanted to offer them character development lessons. We looked at how can we take the lessons from our faith and infuse it in a CPS friendly way."

Out of their conversations grew Tiger Village—a monthly student gathering for art, activities, snacks and small group discussions. UVC Pastor Emily McGinley says each month they choose a different character building lesson based on scripture. "We take that scripture and mold it into storytelling, songs, skits and art projects. We then meet in small groups to talk about the story and break it down. It lets the kids think critically and discover what it

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NEW FAITH COMMUNITIES

What the Net Teaches Us

What makes a new church plant work? There's no single answer and it's often trial and error to see what will make an impact. But in most cases, it starts with a dream and passion to spread the gospel to new people, in new ways and in new places.

As seminary roommates, Eric Blachford and Kevin Clark shared that dream which became reality two years ago with planting The Net Church in Rockford.

"Both of us have a passion and desire to see young adults connect or reconnect with the church," says Blachford.

Eric and Kevin started The Net by cold-calling potential new members and finding unique ways to connect with 20 and 30 somethings. They sent invitations through Facebook, texts and had face to face meetings in restaurants and coffee shops.

"Grocery stores are a good place to start a conversation," says Eric who took every potential meeting as an opportunity to reach someone new.

"We had a lot of rejections," says Kevin. "We probably had 75–100 people on our text list."

But the word started to spread and soon

a core group began meeting regularly for weekly "hot spot" meetings in homes which included social time, meals, Bible study and elements of worship.

22 year old Becca Allowa says Eric kept sending her text messages every week inviting her to a "hot spot" and she finally decided to go to one close to where she was working. "I was nervous at first because I didn't know the people," says Allowa. "But after a couple of times, it was like family. They welcomed me and they didn't treat me like a newbie. They brought me right in."

A friend invited David Gray, 26, to a hot spot and he says it was the personal, one on one meeting with the pastors that helped him connect with The Net.

"I grew up as a Methodist but veered off in high school and college," says Gray. "I think pastors need to be more involved and engaged with the young adults in their congregation. Those in their 20s and 30s are looking for more personal time and nurturing."

Eric and Kevin say they made a special effort to make those personal connections.



David Gray, Kevin Clark, Dustie Patton, Eric Blachford and Mandy Kloefer recently met to share thoughts on how The Net Church has impacted their lives.

"We would just try and get to know who we were sitting down with," says Eric. "We would ask them what they were doing in Rockford, what they were interested in and what they were passionate about."

The invitation would go something like, "We're starting a new church for young adults. We don't have a building but want to start a place where you'll be able to grow and build relationships that are real, deep and authentic."

24 year old Dustie Patton says after confirmation and high school she couldn't

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It Takes a Tiger Village

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means to them personally."

UVC member and actor Isaiah Werner volunteers with Tiger Village and says it's a great opportunity for him to put his theatre degree to use. "To have the opportunity to do music and storytelling with and for kids is really fulfilling for me," says Werner. "To hear their responses and what it means for them personally, especially how they start to think about their everyday life and the choices they'll make has been really cool."

McGinley says one example is the Bible story of the Good Samaritan, and while they may change the names and the context, the premise stays the same. "The idea of having someone pass by without paying attention to you or not helping you up may not be that foreign to these kids, unfortunately. So the story of the Good Samaritan gets the wheels turning and they start thinking about how I can be a good samaritan and help

someone or stand up to bullies."

Byrd says they continue to take themes from the Bible that are applicable to everyone whether you're at church or at school. "I feel like we've done a good job



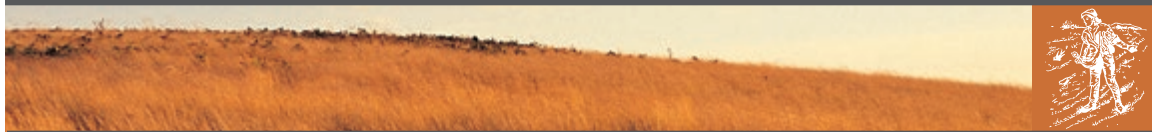
4th grade teacher Brandon Byrd helps lead the monthly after school program at Dulles School in partnership with Urban Village Church.

infusing character life lessons from the Bible into the program, concepts such as forgiveness, gratitude and keeping our Earth clean."

Tiger Village is getting a positive response from the school's principal and parents. Students, too, are eager to return each month working toward incentives in the classroom for the opportunity.

Byrd says with cuts and school closings, programs like Tiger Village wouldn't be possible without community involvement. "Schools are not miracle workers and can't do it on their own. It takes many more partnerships like the one between Dulles and Urban Village Church," says Byrd. "My hope is other churches and local businesses would duplicate this model in other cities. It takes a village to make sure these children have wonderful lives."

For more information on Urban Village Church visit www.urbanvillagechurch.org.



Harvest 2.0—New Faith Communities—Progress Report, Spring 2014

Stand Alone Sites

PROJECT	ACTIVITY	NIC ANNUAL SUPPORT	ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
Brookfield: Compassion <i>Rev. Karl Sokol</i>	Planter appointed in 2011, and struggled to find a meeting space in Brookfield. Compassion is space-sharing with LaGrange UMC and began weekly services on April 13, 2014.	\$30,000	
Chicagoland: Journey Community <i>Rev. Daniel Park</i>	Began in 2008. Weekly worship attendance of 40. Ongoing small groups. Newly formed leadership team is setting a vision for future growth.	Self-supporting	NCJ Korean Mission
Hillside: Xperience Church <i>Pastor Dwayne Grant</i>	After launching in November 2013, Xperience struggles with the challenge of building a critical mass.	\$40,000	
Rockford: The Net	This project has been discontinued. However, people who were impacted by The Net continue to gather in small groups and worship at Cherry Valley UMC. Rev. Eric Blachford has been appointed to Harvard: First and Adlen (Elgin District.)	-0-	
Skokie: Jesus Love Church <i>Rev. Sun Hyung Jo</i>	Young adult 1.5 Korean speaking community in the Skokie area. Weekly worship averaging 55. Small groups are meeting regularly, and more have been added in the past year.	Self-supporting	NCJ Korean Mission
Shorewood New Faith Community	This NFC plant was suspended because the planter was not the right fit with the mission field.	-0-	

Multi-Site Ministries

Batavia: Flowing Grace <i>Rev. Jeffry Bross</i>	This multi-site church now averages 200 persons in worship. The congregation will hold a chartering celebration service on June 1, 2014.	Self-supporting	Batavia UMC
Chicago: G2G (Generation to Generation) <i>Ayla Samson</i>	Youth and young adult programming: arts, anti-violence, community development. Weekly worship targeting 2nd & 3rd generation Latino/Hispanics. Average attendance 35. 200 children and youth participate in afterschool programs.	\$6,000	
Chicago: Urban Village Church <i>Rev. Chris Coon</i> <i>Rev. Trey Hall</i> <i>Pastor Brittany Isaac</i> <i>Pastor Emily McGinley</i>	Chicago Loop site launched in April 2010, and re-launched in River North in 2014. Now averaging 75. Second site in Wicker Park launched October 2010. Now averaging 100. Third site in Andersonville launched September 2011. Now averaging 110. Fourth site in Hyde Park/Woodlawn launched in March 2013. Now averaging 60. There are more small groups meeting than ever before. About 400 persons worship at all four UVC sites!	Self-supporting Self-supporting Self-supporting \$24,000	
Dixon: The Rock NFC	This project is continuing with new leadership as it continues to reach out into the community with monthly events that started in April 2014.	Self-supporting	Dixon First UMC
Wheatland Salem—Oswego Campus <i>Rev. Bob Butler</i>	Ground work began July 2010 out of the closed Oswego Prairies UMC building. Publicly launched in September 2011. Now averaging 200 in worship. Partnering with recovery ministries.	Self-supporting	Partnership with Wheatland Salem UMC

New Faith Community Partnerships

Belvidere: Misión Cristiana Emerge <i>Pastor Cristobal Ramirez</i>	Outreach to growing Hispanic/Latino community in conjunction with Belvidere UMC. Average worship attendance of 42.	\$12,000	Space-Sharing with First Belvidere UMC
Carpentersville: Betel Misión <i>Isamary Velasquez</i>	Growing Hispanic/Latino worshipping community, now meeting at Trinity UMC with a part-time minister.	\$12,000	Barrington UMC
Chicago: Getsemani <i>Refugio Gonzalez</i>	Sharing space with the Ashburn UMC, this Hispanic/Latino new faith community began in 2011 and currently averages 45 persons in worship.	\$6,000	Space-Sharing with Ashburn UMC
Chicago Lawn: Roca Fuerte	Anglo pastor is preaching through a translator, and the congregation is growing. Community outreach and mission through a food pantry ministry.	\$6,000	Chicago Lawn UMC
Elgin: La Luz de Cristo <i>Ruben Rivera</i>	This Hispanic NFC launched on the west side of Elgin with Lay Missioner Ruben Rivera who works full-time as a construction worker. He has become a licensed local pastor, and the congregation now worships 180.	Self-supporting	Space-Sharing with Epworth UMC



New Faith Communities—Progress Report, Spring 2014 (cont.)

New Faith Community Partnerships (cont.)

PROJECT	ACTIVITIES	NIC ANNUAL SUPPORT	ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
Englewood Community Center	A cluster of churches are dreaming of doing ministry beyond the church's walls.	\$12,000	
Irving Park: Misión Hispana <i>Pastor Cecelia Obret</i>	Worshiping community of primarily Cuban immigrants, averaging 35 in worship.	Self-supporting	Space-Sharing with Irving Park UMC
Joliet: Hispanic/Latino NFC	Early dreaming stages of ministering to large population of Hispanic/Latino persons in Joliet. Seeking partnering congregations for project.	\$12,000	
Lake Villa: Cristo Gloria de Dios <i>Juan Dominguez</i>	Ground work began with Lay Missioner Juan Dominguez in 2012, now averaging 65 in worship.	\$6,000	Space-Sharing with Lake Villa UMC
Marengo: Naciones Para Cristo <i>Isamary Velazquez</i>	Moved from Harvard to Marengo with Marengo UMC space-sharing. During the week, Bible study gatherings are held at multiple sites: Algonquin, Harvard, Woodstock, and Marengo.	Self-supporting	Space-Sharing with Marengo UMC
McHenry: Cooperative <i>Rev. Sung Ja Lee Moon</i> <i>Pastor Lori Bee</i>	Two churches (McHenry and Mt. Hope UMC) building on each other's strengths with a focus on youth ministry.	-0-	Local Congregations
Melrose Park: Hispanic/Latino NFC	Laid the groundwork for the early stages of dreaming this project in February 2014.	\$12,000	

Continuing New Faith Communities and Redevelopment

Aurora: First Nueva Vida <i>Martin Lopez</i>	Since re-starting with a lay missionary in 2011, average attendance has grown from 14 to 70 people. Congregation has received First UMC building in Aurora. The congregation is building on the First UMC legacy.	\$12,000	First UMC Building
Chicago: Lincoln-Pilsen Community <i>Pastor Walter Coleman</i>	Replanted from 10 to 80 persons now in regular attendance. Outreach, social justice, community services are driving the growth of this faith community. Congregation is particularly leading in immigration issues related to the separation of families.	\$9,100	National Hispanic Plan
Dolton: Faith <i>Pastor Charles Straight</i>	Intensive leadership development program through coaching relationship with St. Mark UMC (Rev. Junius Dotson) in Wichita, Kansas. Average attendance 80 with continuing development of lay leadership and evangelism.	\$8,000	
Chicago: Edison Park Filipino NFC <i>Victor Melad</i>	This project is in its early phases. Edison Park UMC is reaching out in mission through a new Filipino faith community. GBGM has committed a \$75,000 grant to this project.	\$12,000	GBGM
Machesney Park: New Life <i>Rev. Mark Meyers</i>	Relaunched congregation in 2011, now averaging 75 in worship. July 2010 received their first full-time clergy leadership. Confirmation classes have begun.	Self-Supporting	Building Mortgage
Rockford: Christ the Carpenter <i>Pastor Montel Putney</i>	Outreach to the African American community in Rockford, this congregation has grown from 20 to 60 in worship. Only UM African American congregation beyond Greater Chicagoland. Involved in the community through Vacation Bible School.	\$10,000	

Global Partnership Projects

Chua, Bolivia	New church building completed in 2010 with help from Bupyeong Methodist Church in Korea and the Northern Illinois Conference. This project was completed and dedicated in the fall of 2010. Partnering opportunities continue following construction of the church.		
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■ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Bishop's Appeal to Save Lives

Nearly 90% of malaria's victims are children under the age of 5 and pregnant women, the vast majority in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Thanks to Imagine No Malaria, women in and around Kamina are learning how to prevent malaria during pregnancy by taking intermittent preventive therapy and using long lasting insecticide-treated bed nets.

You can help make a difference with this year's Bishop's Appeal offering at Annual Conference. All gifts will go to Imagine No Malaria. This offering allows us to pool our resources from the pew to the annual conference floor by inviting local churches, ministry groups, and individuals to contribute. This is not an attendee-only offering that's usually taken during annual conference worship, but



rather a chance for a whole congregation to contribute to the heartbeat of the connection. Districts will compete for the coveted traveling trophy and bragging rights.


This year all funds will go to help push our conference toward the last mile of giving for Imagine No Malaria. We are moving closer every day to the \$1 million dollar goal with individual donations, multi-year pledges and fundraising goals set by churches, but we are NOT there yet. As this Sower goes to

'Mawazo, now 31, lives in a small village around Kamina in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She gave birth to her first child a year after getting married. Over the following six years Mawazo had four miscarriages each preceded by debilitating high fever, most likely caused by malaria.'^{*x}



*Excerpt taken from "Protecting Future Generation against malaria" by Judith Santiago, Project Manager for UMCOR Communications.

print, we will have received over \$600,000 in pledges and donations.

The Bishop's Appeal offering is a chance for more churches to donate who have not set a pledge, or to do extra mile giving beyond a pledge. This money will help support the mission work across the continent of Africa, and help us save million of lives from malaria. 

■ NEW FAITH COMMUNITIES

Campaign Update

A year has almost passed since we celebrated the culmination of the three-year Campaign to Benefit Harvest 2020. We celebrated many firsts with the Harvest campaign, including launching the first Bishop's Appeal offering during annual conference, asking individuals to give directly to the conference outside of their church to support a conference initiative, and recruiting congregations to sponsor new faith communities financially.

This was all new for the conference, but it was a necessary step to take in order to continue to support Harvest 2.0 and the new faith community initiative outside of apportionments. Thank you to everyone who made this campaign a success.


Now that the campaign fanfare has quieted down a bit, where do we stand with the individual pledges?

Receipts in 2012 were \$205,767, receipts in 2013 were \$293,771, and we are anticipating \$431,703 over the next two years. 44% of individual donors have completed their pledges.

Congratulations and thank you for

following through with your commitment! As with any capital campaign, there were a number of donors who were not able to fulfill their pledge for a variety of reasons, and there are still a handful of folks who have not yet begun payment on their pledge. We encourage those individuals to think about making even a small payment toward their pledge. Every dollar given to this campaign goes toward helping to assess, equip and resource our church planters, who will in turn, create new worship spaces for people eager to learn more about Jesus Christ and explore their faith.

You can make a payment through the NIC website, www.umcnic.org/harvest, or you can send a check payable to the "Northern Illinois Conference" to the conference offices.

One aspect of the mission of Harvest 2.0 is to strengthen our conference through planting new faith communities of all kinds. This is challenging, risk-taking work, and we need your support to continue to broaden our ministry to our neighbors. Please consider making a gift today and investing in the future of our conference. 

The Net Teaches Us

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find a place to fit in as a young adult in the church. She was happy to reconnect with Eric, her former youth pastor and join The Net.

"I connected with people at The Net and with God," says Patton. "It's really homey having a smaller group. You make friends and it's a family. We all protect each other, and I know they'll carry me if I fall."

Eric says the hot spots helped The Net get started, but mission events like a 5k run and Seeds to Succeed to benefit local schools became greater outreach opportunities.

"We were able to get volunteers to come to these events—people who we invited to hot spots but wouldn't come to those," says Eric. "Our perception is that young adults want to make a difference in the world whether that's locally or globally. That becomes an easier invitation, but you don't say come help my church with this."

While The Net grew and began holding a monthly worship service at the YMCA, Eric and Kevin faced the painful reality that

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“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” —Matthew 22: 37–39

New Faith Communities

- Conference and District Strategy Teams
- Local congregations partnering and parenting
- Focus on Ethnic and Multicultural Starts

Healthy Discipleship: SEED

- Seek
- Engage
- Equip
- Deploy

Community Engagement

- Supporting each other
- Sharing resources
- Cooperating in Ministry
- Urban & Rural Strategy

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Published by the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church

Northern Illinois Conference UMC
Harvest 2.0
77 West Washington Street, Suite 1820
Chicago, IL 60602

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 356
PEORIA, IL

A Safe Place When School's Out


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bullies and learned why it's so important not to be like that. Others opened up and shared how they were bullied and how it made them feel."

Activities at the various locations included basketball, dancing, martial arts, reading, math instruction and crafts.

Bishop Sally Dyck visited and toured the locations during the week offering her appreciation to the volunteers and church leaders. "This only adds to the vitality of these congregations as they will be known for opening their doors to the children in the community," says Bishop Dyck. "The safe haven program also offers a peace of mind for parents."

The nine churches that participated included; Bethany/El Buen Pastor UMC, Elston Avenue UMC,

Englewood/Rust UMC, Faith UMC, G2G UMC, Irving Park UMC, Maple Park UMC, South Shore UMC and St. Matthew UMC. They were selected by CPS following several months of relational meetings between the NIC Urban Strategy Planning Team and CPS leadership.

Seven of the nine churches have agreed to provide half-day Safe Haven programming this summer from June 30–Aug 8 and the goal is to keep growing this partnership with CPS. 



Children created cards and crafts at Faith UMC in Chicago during spring break.



DONATE

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What the Net Teaches Us

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the church was unsustainable and it was time to seek a new direction.

"The Net Church was a dream I never thought I would get to follow," says Kevin. "While it's not heading where I thought it would be heading, I would not change it. I think I take for granted how amazing it is to have a group of young adults who are passionately seeking their faith community together."

For Becca, David, Dustie and the other Net members, they'll continue meeting in small groups and will worship together at Cherry Valley UMC

in Rockford.

"This is not an end and I am really proud of this group for wanting to carry on. I believe it's just a start to something even better," says Eric.

The Net Church experience taught not only Eric and Kevin many lessons which they will take with them as they continue their ministry in new places, but it also shows the importance of personal connections, small group gatherings, mission opportunities outside the church walls and authentic relationships for not only young adults but the unchurched and all who long to follow and know Christ. 