

Metro Lutheran Ministry: With vision, purpose and compassion since 1971.

With abiding faith in the intrinsic value of all God's children, Metro Lutheran Ministry connects those in need with food, housing, health care, education, employment services and other resources in order to nurture greater hope, health, opportunity and peace.

Hard Work Bringing Family a New Future

Kellen Overton and her fiancé, Antonio Lora, have seen some of the biggest challenges life can bring. They're still living some of them, but they're also making changes and seeing improvement.

With four children aged five years to nine months, the couple was unemployed and homeless. Although they were able to find housing in a building owned by a relative, they weren't making "real" progress in any sense.

"We needed a safer environment for the kids, and we wanted to find work," Kellen explained. "We had a lot of things we needed to do."

They had contacted another organization, Avenue of Life, and then were referred to MLM and Case Manager Kia Price. Price connected them with several programs, including Wyandotte County's Impact Wednesday, a collaborative effort involving several organizations working to help families.

"We thought we'd just find out about their resources, and it's been tremendous," Kellen said. "We've still got work to do, but things are a lot better now."

For starters, they're in their own apartment, and Antonio has found work. "MLM helped with getting the kids in school," she added. "They provided money for some gas, and they even helped find us a place and put down a deposit."



Kellen Overton and Antonio Lora have a lot of responsibility to juggle, but with a little help from MLM, the two are in an apartment and finding employment. Their children are Joshua, 4; nine-month-old twins Alkil and Khalil; and Layla, 5.

The couple has been working in other ways as well. They've consistently attended classes offered by Impact Wednesday on topics such as employment, housing, personal finances and budgeting. "We've learned a lot," Kellen said. "I had never heard about something like this. Ever since we contacted MLM, they've been there for us."

(please continue to next page)

Experience, Compassion Lead to MLM Support

As a retired banker with over 33 years of experience, Paul Drown knows a good thing when he sees it. For both Paul and his wife, Shirley, their list of good things definitely includes Metro Lutheran Ministry.

"We're acutely aware of the good works that MLM does in our community, and we're fortunate to be in a position where we've been blessed," he recently explained. "With good financial planning, we can let some of those blessings help MLM after we're gone."

An active couple who enjoy traveling and

nearly constant volunteer service, the two have been increasingly involved with everything from MLM's Saturday Breakfast Ministry to the organization's Family Empowerment program. But whether it's cooking pancakes on Saturdays or helping create a program to assist MLM clients learning financial responsibility, the value of MLM is a constant.

"We've seen what MLM can do," Paul explained. "It's important for that work to continue."

(please continue to next page)

Experience, Compassion Lead to MLM



Paul and Shirley Drown have worked for years as MLM volunteers and recently became Heritage Society members.

(continued from Page 1)

When the couple recently completed estate planning with the Missouri Synod, they identified MLM as a recipient of their funds when they are gone. “Hopefully, that’s a ways out there,” Paul laughed. “But we’ve done our planning, and now we’ve made the statement that this is how we want these funds distributed. It’s a commitment.”

Community commitment is not new to Paul

and Shirley. Residents of Olathe, they are also deeply involved with an orphanage in Guatemala and have been active with the Boy Scouts of America. Shirley works for Lee Apparel, and the two have an adult daughter who resides in St. Louis with her husband and two daughters.

“We think it’s important to set this down,” Paul concluded. “MLM does good work, and it needs to continue.”

Heritage Society gifts to MLM take many forms, but all of them help provide a critical continuity to services for the needy, ensuring lasting support to help the homeless and needy of metropolitan Kansas City. For more information, contact Jim Glynn at (816) 931-0027.

Hard Work Bringing Family a New Future

(continued from Page 1)

The programs are giving the family important tools. “They’re showing us how to help ourselves,” Kellen said. “Every week is a different class – where to find job opportunities, how to get your finances organized, how to look at housing applications.”

There’s more. “When it was cold, they found long-sleeve shirts for the kids,” she

said, smiling. “They would help out with that as well. We really appreciated it because we knew we were on a path to getting better.”

Even all of this is only a start. A Navy veteran, Antonio has started working in security and, when the weather allows, landscaping. “My dream is to get into home construction,” he said. “That’s something I learned in the Navy. But I

am working now and that’s good.” Kellen is training for a customer service job while taking care of the children and continuing with MLM classes,

Clearly, things are looking up, but all of their worries are not over. “When someone gives you a chance, you don’t want to let them down,” Kellen concluded. “That’s our only real worry now.”

Blessings Abound and MLM: A Match Made in Heaven

Blessings Abound thrift store is a valuable partner for Metro Lutheran Ministry, with growing contributions that are increasingly important for programs to help those in need.

Blessings Abound contributes 100 percent of its proceeds to MLM and other

Kansas City nonprofits, as well as redistributing quality used furniture to a number of agencies. Supported by hundreds of volunteers, Blessings Abound provides critical funding from customer purchases of “gently used” goods that range from books to furniture.

The store also partners with organizations throughout Kansas City such as the domestic violence shelter Safehome.

Blessings Abound is located at 10325 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS, 66212. To learn more, call 913.648.0700 or visit www.blessingsaboundkc.org.

Thrivent Choice, Action Teams Offer Opportunities to Support MLM

“Thrivent Choice” dollars and Thrivent Action Teams are ways members can support MLM.

With Thrivent Choice, members can allocate funds to the charity of their choice. Members become eligible based on insurance premiums, contract values

and Thrivent volunteer leadership.

For more information on Thrivent Choice, visit www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice.

Action Teams are volunteers who plan a fund-raising event that targets some-

thing about which they are passionate. Leaders gain approval for their effort in advance.

For more information on Action Teams, visit www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/.

Efforts Bring Huge Difference for People in Metro KC

One of the joys of working at Metro Lutheran Ministry (MLM) is welcoming volunteers and seeing them truly enjoy their experience serving the poor and homeless. It may be hard to believe, but each year over 2,000 unduplicated volunteers participate in the ministry. The vast majority of them volunteer many times, often in more than one program or event.

Recently, a man who had just celebrated his 75th birthday contacted me. He spoke of how grateful he was to have lived for three-quarters of a century. Rather than receive birthday gifts, he decided to give thanks by volunteering at MLM. After considering several options, he chose to ride along with me and help deliver food to homebound seniors. He chose well, as this is one of the most enjoyable things I get to do.



Jim Glynn: Volunteer service illustrates important truths.

At MLM we get to know many seniors who come regularly for food. A little-known fact is that many inner-city seniors live on a Social Security check of

\$800 a month, or less. They had low-wage jobs during their working years, and the homes they were able to buy were in redline areas of the city where housing values did not appreciate.

Most of the seniors on my food delivery route have survived the death of a spouse and live alone. They open the door with a big smile and enjoy the chance to visit. My world is very different than theirs, but for a short time we are children of God on the same journey.

Not surprisingly, my volunteer friend enjoyed the experience. He wants to join me each month. Good for him, good for me and, especially, good for the seniors on our route.

Respectfully,

Jim Glynn, Executive Director

New Element of "Cool" for Hot Summer Breakout!

The MLM Summer Art Exhibition and Community Stage will be a new addition for this year's Summer Breakout. The event will feature visual art and

music created by congregation members and their families. If you're a painter, photographer, woodworker or musician (or know one), please visit the Summer

Breakout page on the MLM website or contact Kelly Seward at ((816) 285-3141 or kellyseward@mlmkc.org for more information.



Summer Breakout will add music and art to the proven fun for this year's event June 7.

Metro Lutheran Ministry
3031 Holmes
Kansas City, Missouri 64109

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 224
KANSAS CITY, MO

Save the Date!

- **Orchard Open House:** Saturday, April 22, 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Explore the orchard and enjoy some delicious treats! MLM Orchard and Community Garden, 2824 Highland, Kansas City, MO.
- **Heritage Society Luncheon:** Wednesday, May 17. Enjoy a special luncheon with fellow members of the MLM Heritage Society. Invitation only.
- **Summer Breakout:** Wednesday, June 7, 5-8 pm. Food trucks, family fun, silent auction and art! Proceeds benefit the MLM Christmas Store. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7815 W. 119th Street, Overland Park, KS.

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



Young volunteers joined children whose parents are improving their financial savvy for fun and games during a recent Saturday at MLM.

Kids Help Kids While Parents Learn Financial Planning

MLM organized a volunteer pilot program involving area children Saturday, Feb. 25.

Youth from two church partners brought games and crafts to engage children while their parents were in the Dave Ramsey Family Empowerment class. Young people from Holy Cross Lutheran in Overland Park and Salem Lutheran in Lenexa played with children during the four-hour Financial Peace class that families attend as part of the empowerment program.

"I feel they genuinely bonded with our kids, and they showed a great deal of caring," noted Cassie Sipos of MLM.

Dykman Series Continues Success

For over 30 years, MLM's Dykman Lecture Series has presented some of the most influential theologians and social justice leaders of our day.

On Feb. 10, Dr. Kristen E. Kvam joined the roster, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 Theses by exploring his unique view of redemption. The series honors Loyd Dykman, one of MLM's founders and longstanding board president.



Speaker Dr. Kristen E. Kvam with members of the Dykman family.