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**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.

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## *It's Never Too Late to Find a New Future*

Mary Frazier has an expression she uses to describe good things in life: God winks.



*Mary Frazier has overcome real challenge, thanks in part to MLM. She also learned something important: "You have to change inside."*

She calls MLM a "God wink."

"It's been a true blessing," she said with a steady gaze. "The help is here."

At 52, Mary has seen her share of challenges, many of which she stresses were her doing. She was in and out of prison several times. Slowly, she realized that something had to change.

"I was a mess," she said. "I knew that this time I needed to work on myself. I had to change."

A resident of St. Louis, Mary knew that returning to that city would be a mistake. She heard Kansas City offered many opportunities, although at first that didn't seem true.

"For many months, I bounced around," she said, recalling long walks on winter streets searching for a job. "I had 'the roommate from hell' and a program that just didn't work for me." She didn't give up hope, however.

Late this winter, she came into contact with True Light Ministry where MLM holds its Saturday Breakfast Ministry. True Light found room for her in an independent living program and also led her to nearby MLM. There, she found the financial management program led by Jacob Bosch.

"He helped me," Mary recalled. "I found that MLM is a place where they believe in you. They help you with a lot of things; they help you find

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## *A History of Service Leads to Heritage Society*

Dianne and Dick Ready of Overland Park have a lot of history.

They'll celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in June. Dianne, who has worked 30 years for Bayer Corporation's animal health division in Shawnee, will soon join Dick in retirement. His followed a 35-year career as an employee counselor helping companies create employee assistance programs. They have two adult children, a son and a daughter, and three grandchildren.

Lifelong Lutherans, their involvement with

Metro Lutheran Ministry is equally long.

"When the kids were in Sunday school, back in the early '80s, we were looking for different activities for them to do," Dick recalled. "We got involved with MLM activities, but we were so enthralled by the work they do that we've been involved with them in many ways ever since."

The couple currently volunteers for Saturday morning breakfasts in both Jackson and

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## *It's Never Too Late to Find a New Future*

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resources better than anyone, but they also believe in you.”

First came a job. Mary had earned a nursing assistant certification while in prison. Shortly after meeting Jacob, she got a position with a nursing home in the Waldo area. MLM was even able to secure bus passes so she could get to work.

Thanks in part to Jacob's financial advice, she also realized that just any bus route would not work. Her initial route had her changing buses near a 7-11 store where she was often tempted to buy cigarettes or other “small” items. “I realized that wasn't working,” she notes with a laugh. “It's only a couple of dollars a day, but that adds up. So I

changed my bus route, and now I'm not standing in front of a 7-11.”

Another big step will occur June 1 when she moves into a new apartment with initial help from MLM. It's only a 10-minute walk from her job, where she's also applying for additional, part-time work in the nursing home kitchen.

And while things are clearly changing for the better, Mary doesn't take anything for granted. She is working to get her driver's license back and next year hopes to

*“I found that MLM is a place where they believe in you. They help you with a lot of things; they help you find resources better than anyone, but they also believe in you.”*

*– Mary Frazier*

buy a good used car, so she can go to school and earn a degree in nursing. Eventually, she would even like to write a book to help others avoid her mistakes or overcome them if they don't.

“I want people to know that MLM is a place that if you're serious and focused, the doors will open. They give you hope because they see something in you.”

Mary is making the biggest steps on her own. “I realized I had to change,” she said. “I had to grab hold of opportunity. You have to change inside.”

## *A History of Service Leads to Heritage Society*

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Wyandotte counties, for food distributions and more. “It's just become a normal part of our family and the way we serve,” Dick said. “I cannot imagine a better way to serve.”

The couple took their belief in service one step further recently by joining the MLM Heritage Society, a group of living stakeholders who have made a planned gift to MLM.

Like other society members, the Readys didn't make the decision without a lot of thought. “After we talked and prayed, we realized the best gift we could give each other is to give a gift in our will to the society,” he said. “I told (executive director) Jim Glynn, ‘Thank you for the wonderful opportunity.’ It's just wonderful work. I can't say enough about it.”

They also volunteer extensively with Blessings Abound, the Overland Park thrift store that each year contributes thou-



*After years of serving as MLM volunteers, Diane and Dick Ready of Overland Park have chosen to include MLM in their long-term financial planning. Gifts like theirs are crucial to MLM's long-term stability.*

sands of dollars to MLM and other programs.

“That's just another way we can contribute,” he concluded. “Volunteering and doing those things we can – and having fun with our grandchildren. It's hard to beat that.”

Although Dick and Dianne's oldest grandchild is graduating from college, they still enjoy basketball, soccer and other activities with a 12-year-old grandson and 10-year-old granddaughter. “You cherish the time you spend with them,” Dick noted. “Being a grandparent is God's gift for getting older.”

Heritage Society member gifts take many forms, helping MLM provide a critical continuity to services for the needy and ensuring lasting support for programs that help the homeless and poor in Metropolitan Kansas City. For more information on the Heritage Society, contact Jim Glynn at (816) 931-0027.

## *Why The Right Foundation Is Important*

As any architect or engineer will tell you, a solid foundation is essential to any building. Once the foundation is laid, supports are put in, permitting the rest of the structure to be completed.

We all recognize and readily adhere to the idea that a foundation is imperative. We would never buy or rent a home for our family if the foundation was damaged or unstable. We would not put our family or ourselves at risk.

In Luke 6, Jesus explains the difference between a wise builder and a foolish one. A builder who is wise hears the Word of God, applies it to his life, and as a result, stands firmly through turbulent times. However, because the foolish builder doesn't obey or apply God's principles and instructions, he's ruined when a raging storm hits his life.

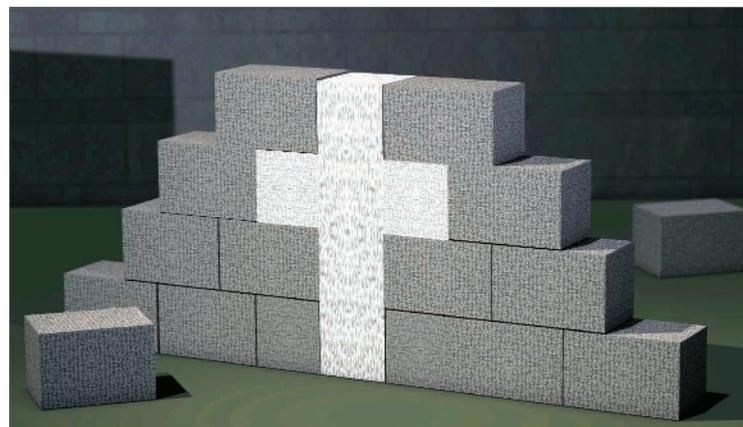
As a follower of Christ, your spiritual foundation is vital to your life, both here on earth and in eternity. Following God and submitting to His wisdom enables you to build a solid foundation based on God's values. And this won't only benefit you; others will reap the blessings as well.

MLM was formed in 1971 on a firm Christian foundation to serve the unmet needs of the poor. For over 46 years, MLM has been fulfilling its mission: "With abiding faith in the intrinsic value of all God's children, MLM 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." We believe our organization is built on a strong foundation with our Savior at its heart.

Our mission has been blessed with financial support from wonderful sponsors, including many of you. Thank you! Your ongoing support of our operating ministries is vital and greatly appreciated. As we look to the future, we invite you to also become part of strengthening the MLM financial foundation, thereby helping us prepare for the storms of life, which inevitably come.

Several years ago, MLM formed a separate entity whose sole purpose was to provide support to MLM and help ensure our mission and ministry remain strong for years to come. That entity is the MLM Foundation. The premise of the foundation is no different from that of your house or your faith...it is to provide support and peace when the struggles of life inevitably occur. Today, with a firm commitment from the MLM Foundation Board to distribute five percent of the fund's assets annually, the MLM Foundation provides MLM with approximately \$40,000 of unrestricted funds.



So what would a strong "foundation" look like for MLM? Ultimately, the distributions from the MLM Foundation would provide funding for all the administrative costs of MLM, thereby allowing 100 percent of every donation to serve our clients. For this reason, MLM will be focused on growing the MLM Foundation in the days, months and years ahead.

Just as you build your foundation, in faith and for your home, in order to protect and provide for your family, please consider helping us strengthen the MLM Foundation for the protection and peace of those who do not have the resources themselves. If you would like more information, please contact Tom Daniels, MLM's Finance Director at 816-285-3118.

Blessings,  
Tim O'Neil, President,  
MLM Board of Directors



### *100th Ramp Completed!*

This last March, Edwina Thompson watched LeRoy Zimmerman and MLM's Minor Home Repair Team talk about their work building wheelchair ramps on KMBC News.

Edwina took a chance and called MLM, hoping the team could build a ramp for her house, too. Edwina's severe arthritis – and steep exterior stairs – often left her homebound. The team designed and constructed one of their most complicated ramps to date...a fitting challenge for ramp No. 100!

Congratulations to the Minor Home Repair Team for changing the lives of so many over the last four years!

At left, Edwina and her grandchildren enjoy the new ramp that will make a dramatic difference in their lives.

**Metro Lutheran Ministry**  
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## *Save the Date!*

**July Mobile Food Pantry:** Saturday, July 14, 8:30-11 a.m., MLM, 3031 Holmes. Help distribute fresh produce to those in need.

**School Supply Packing Party:** Saturday, Aug. 11, 8:30-11 a.m., MLM, 3031 Holmes. Help distribute fresh produce through MLM's Mobile Food Pantry and pack school supplies for neighborhood children. RSVP online or call Amy at 816-285-3154.

**MLM Volunteer Celebration:** Sunday, Sept. 23, 5-7 p.m., Roe Park, 10400 Roe Avenue, Overland Park. Join MLM for fun, friends, and fellowship! RSVP online or call Amy at 816-285-3154.

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

## *New Program Targets Families in Need*

A new MLM program will serve a growing population of metropolitan residents who are in need.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and United Way of Greater Kansas City lead the effort. They selected MLM as only the fifth organization in the metro to serve as a Financial Opportunity Center. Part of a nationwide initiative, FOCs help low- to moderate-income people build smart money habits and focus on their financial bottom line.

Built on long-term, positive results, the work involves a combination of three key services: employment placement and career improvement; financial education and coaching; and access to income supports. FOCs provide low-income individuals with personal career coaching and job placement programs, financial and credit literacy training and access to income supports.

"When people receive at least two of those services, 50 percent are more likely to get a well-paying job than those who

only get one service," explained MLM Director of Operations Starla Brennan. "The results go up dramatically when you cover those three areas."

The work is intense, requiring from 12 to 18 months with in-depth services that target fundamental changes in family knowledge and actions. FOCs target those who may have a job, but not necessarily a good one, a group often missed by many services.

"We're very excited," Starla said. "To be able to bring this to our community is amazing."

MLM's Jacob Bosch and Laura Wittmer have been overseeing financial support and employment areas, respectively. "Participants will be learning about their financial well-being and what they can do to affect their outlook," Jacob said. "They'll be looking for new, better, ways to make money. They will receive supports and counseling that are germane to their specific circumstances."

Continuity is also important, along

*"When people receive at least two of those services, 50 percent are more likely to get a well-paying job... The results go up dramatically when you cover those three areas."*

with making a visible difference in people's lives. "The goal is have a seamless client experience," Jacob added. "While there will be several staff members engaged in their lives, the type of work being done is centered around their personal goals."

MLM's Financial Opportunity Center won't officially begin until later this spring, although half a dozen families have been involved since an earlier "soft opening." The work is centered in Jackson County, although hopes are to eventually expand the work to Wyandotte and Clay counties.

"It's a big effort, but it will bring major impact," Starla concluded. "People will be put in a position to seek better jobs with higher earnings, to manage their money better, and more. It's going to bring results."