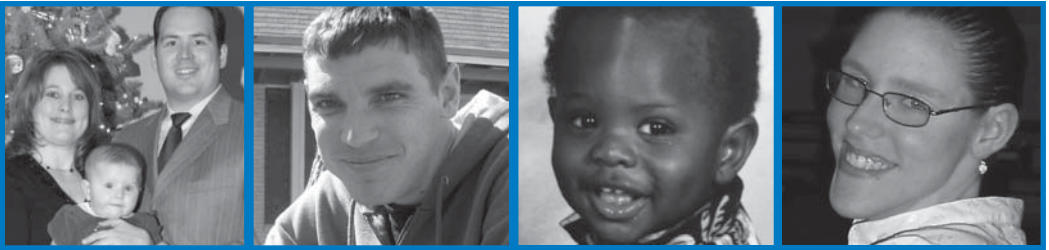


Blue SKIES

SUMMER 2008



Methodist Mission Home

Giving God's Children a Faith, a Family, a Future

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A Closer Walk with Thee

Retreat leads young adults with disabilities closer to God.

It was a weekend of fellowship at Methodist Mission Home (MMH) as students of Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHH) participated in the annual Walk with Jesus retreat from April 18-20.

Walk with Jesus is a transformational three-day event designed to help students get closer to God and experience the gospel through prayer, activities, camaraderie, and discussion. This was the 12th year MMH participated in this event alongside volunteers from the San Antonio and Austin areas, which included United Methodist Church members, seminary students, ministers, interpreters and a psychologist.

“Walk with Jesus was something different the students could do for the weekend,” said Rev. Gina Symons, chaplain at MMH. “They experienced something very special.”

Established in 1974, SCHH was founded as a transitional education center for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Today, SCHH has expanded to serve more diverse disabilities, including cerebral palsy and autism. For more than 30 years, SCHH has assisted hundreds of young adults with disabilities to learn the vocational and life skills they need to achieve their personal best.

During the weekend, in a series of discussions ranging in topics from time management to learning how to share your faith, students took important steps in overcoming some of the emotional issues that had been weighing on them. In one activity called TRASH (Totally Releasing All Sins to Heaven), the students learned how release their guilt (or throw away their “trash”) by writing their confessions on a piece of paper and discarding them.

“It teaches them there are obstacles in life that they can overcome,” Symons said. “It lets them



SCHH student Kevin Bowen prays for a volunteer at the Walk with Jesus retreat at Methodist Mission Home.

open up.”

For SCHH student Louis Johnson, Walk with Jesus came at the most opportune time. The week before the three-day retreat, Louis’s dog Sammy, whom he had raised since she was a puppy, passed away. Louis had been very upset during the week but was able to find comfort by talking with friends and volunteers at Walk with Jesus.

“It helped me express my feelings with other people,” Louis said. “It was good for me. People understood where I was coming from.”

See Walk with Jesus...Page 2



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FROM MY HEART

“Be the change you want to see in this world.” - Gandhi



These words of wisdom resonate in our heart and in our Home. Methodist Mission Home reaches out to people who may feel lost, isolated and have nowhere else to turn. We open our doors to all who may enter. This issue of “Blue Skies” highlights the stories of the neighbors we serve – young adults with disabilities experiencing our Walk with Jesus; Shelby, a birthmother who makes a courageous and loving decision for her baby girl. Also featured, is a member of our MMH team, Mona McDonald, who has helped us deliver our promise for 31 years.

We are located in San Antonio, yet our ministry is far-reaching into neighborhoods across Texas and beyond. Methodist Mission Home is here to work with you and your church to meet the changing needs of people in your neighborhood.

At MMH, your neighbors are OUR neighbors...

- Pregnant teens and young women facing an unplanned pregnancy
- Special needs youth making a transition plan from high school
- Childless couples waiting to welcome a child into their family
- Teen parents struggling with one or more children
- Parishioners seeking to volunteer in mission ministry

Methodist Mission Home is your resource to bring hope and joy to the children, youth and families who need help in their journey. With your prayers and contributions, we can be the change in transforming our neighborhoods, communities and world – Giving God’s Children a Faith, a Family, a Future.

A heart full of hope,

Jennifer Sample
Executive Director

Walk with Jesus inspires SCHI students



SCHI student Kerna Bethelmy signs her prayer to one of the volunteer interpreters.

In another activity called the prayer circle, the students sat in a circle and were prayed for by each volunteer. Once the volunteer finished praying for one student, the circle

would rotate and the volunteer would pray for the next person in the circle. When the circle was complete, students and volunteers exchanged places and students were given the opportunity to pray for the volunteers.

“[The prayer circle] helps students get a closer relationship with the Lord,” Symons said. “It gives them confidence to pray.” SCHI student David Armel agrees. He says before going to the Walk with Jesus retreat, it was easy for him to become frustrated.

Now, by letting Jesus into his heart, he has learned that fully relying on God is the best remedy for any problems life throws your way.

“[Walk with Jesus] felt good and inspiring,” David said.



■ Family Services served 70 pregnant teens and young women considering adoption: 21 resided in our 13-bed Maternity Center. Twenty-eight babies and children were placed with loving adoptive families through Domestic Infant, International and Older Child adoptions. Sixty adoptive families were served.

■ Family Services provided post-adoption and related services to 342 adult adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents and other relatives.

■ The “Is Parenting Harder Than You Thought?” initiative trained 97 professionals working with at-risk youth, trained 22 teens in Parenting Alternatives and received seven intake calls.

■ Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHI), served 63 students and increased the monthly average served from 34 to 35 per month. Our customized transitional education for young adults with disabilities helped students to achieve their personal best through vocational and life skills training.

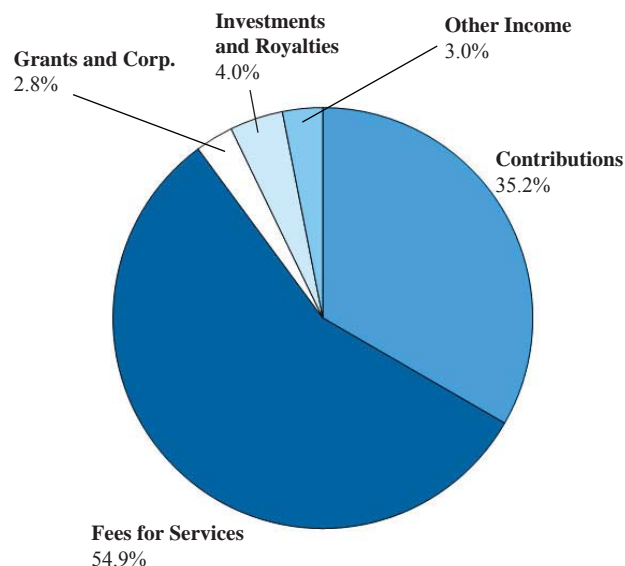
■ The Genesis Cooperative, a self-supporting collaborative of five nonprofit agencies on the MMH campus, served youth and young adults with disabilities, pregnant teens and young women, some of whom were homeless, women recovering from substance abuse and their children, and adults who are deaf/blind.

■ In collaboration with San Antonio Food Bank, 22 SCHI students were provided with basic culinary training. With this training, students are able to find job placement in a commercial kitchen.

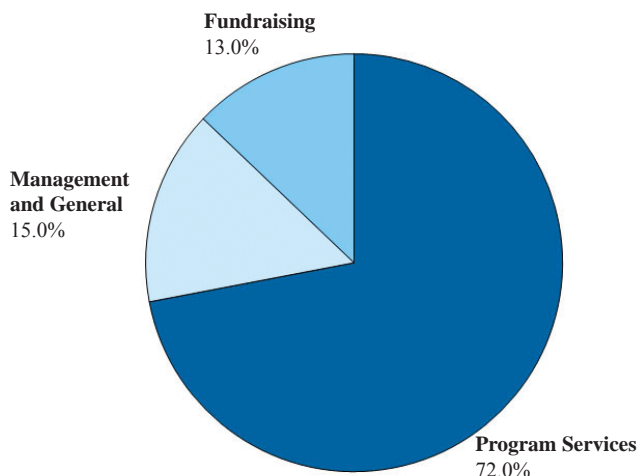
2007 Donations

Church donations by Conference*

Southwest	78,629
Northwest Texas	75,392
Texas	72,935
North Texas	49,431
Central Texas	21,706
New Mexico	14,058
Rio Grande	1,634
Church Total	313,785
Indiv. Gifts/Board	532,634
Foundations/Corps.	87,917
Bequests	155,800
TOTAL DONATIONS	1,090,136



*MMH does not receive apportionments



Sources of Revenue

Contributions	1,002,219	33.3%
Fees for Services	1,699,634	56.5%
Grants & Corp.	87,917	2.9%
Investments & Royalties	123,202	4.1%
Other Income	92,816	3.1%
TOTAL REVENUES*	3,005,788	100.0%

Expenses

Program Services	2,082,486	72.0%
Management & General	437,797	15.1%
Fundraising	372,132	12.9%
TOTAL EXPENSES*	2,892,415	100.0%

*Includes 95,665 Revenues and Expense for Capital Campaign

TOP GIVING CHURCHES

TOP 30 CHURCHES WITH LESS THAN 500 MEMBERS

First UMC

Canadian, Texas
Rev. Monte Kreis

\$51,000

Christ UMC

Stockdale, Texas
Rev. Carolyn McGuire
\$10,000

Wimberley UMC

Wimberley, Texas
Rev. Laura A. Merrill
\$5,725

College Mound UMC

Terrell, Texas
Rev. Larry D. Davis
\$3,400

First UMC

DeKalb, Texas
Rev. Tony E. Hoefner
\$2,378

Friendship UMC

Sherman, Texas
Rev. Elizabeth K. Besterfeldt
\$2,152

First UMC

San Augustine, Texas
Rev. James L. White
\$2,100

First UMC

Royse City, Texas
Rev. Steve Richardson
\$1,977

First UMC

Spearman, Texas
Rev. Neely C. Landrum
\$1,750

First UMC

Lockney, Texas
Rev. Brian K. Adams
\$1,428

Axe Memorial UMC

Garland, Texas
Rev. E. Ben Read
\$1,356

First UMC

Johnson City, Texas
Rev. Judith M. Baskin
\$1,340

Lakehills UMC

Lakehills, Texas

Rev. Winfield S. Herren
\$1,303

Industry UMC

Industry, Texas
Rev. Timothy D. Abel
\$1,150

Aldersgate UMC

Carrollton, Texas
Rev. Woody Weilage
\$1,110

First UMC

Forney, Texas
Rev. Arville E. McLain
\$1,110

Texico-Farwell Hamlin

Memorial UMC
Farwell, Texas
Rev. Randall Partin
\$1,100

McKenzie/Forest Hill UMC

Honey Grove, Texas
Rev. Ann J. Barton
\$931

Grace UMC

Palestine, Texas
Rev. B. Thomas Haygood
\$925

St. Andrew's UMC

Carthage, Texas
Rev. Doug Wintermute
\$900

Monthalia UMC

Cost, Texas
Rev. Paul Smith
\$859

First UMC

Mulshoe, Texas
Rev. Monty J. Leavell
\$857

First UMC

Normangee, Texas
Rev. Daniel R. Barrett
\$843

Kessler Park UMC

Dallas, Texas
Dr. Timothy E. McLemore
\$800

Saltillo UMC

Scroggins, Texas
Rev. Joyce A. Stone
\$800

Lake Palestine UMC

Chandler, Texas
Rev. Richard A. Prather
\$790

Golden Acres UMC

Pasadena, Texas
Rev. Marlene P. Martin
\$749

Gaddis Memorial UMC

Comfort, Texas
Rev. D. Lynne Lockett
\$719

Magnolia UMC

Magnolia, Texas
Rev. Patricia Wehn-Glowski
\$710

First UMC

Dimmitt, Texas
Rev. Derrel Evins
\$700

TOP 30 CHURCHES WITH 500 OR MORE MEMBERS

Alamo Heights UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. David J. McNitzky
\$33,690

Trietsch Memorial UMC

Flower Mound, Texas
Dr. John S. Allen
\$8,045

University UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Charles W. Anderson
\$7,021

Marvin UMC

Tyler, Texas
Dr. John C. Robbins
\$6,636

Lake Ridge UMC

Lubbock, Texas
Rev. Bill J. Couch
\$6,101

Coker UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Barbara R. Galloway-Edgar
\$4,815

John Wesley UMC

Houston, Texas
Rev. James W. Foster
\$4,686

Trinity UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Jeanne D. Devine
\$4,283

First UMC

Fort Worth, Texas

Rev. Timothy K. Bruster
\$4,000

Tarrytown UMC

Austin, Texas
Rev. Robert E. Hall
\$3,358

First UMC

Boerne, Texas
Rev. Fred E. Martin
\$3,220

Crosby UMC

Crosby, Texas
Dr. Barbara G. Harrelson
\$3,189

First UMC

Jasper, Texas
Rev. Richard P. White, Jr.
\$3,000

St. Paul UMC

Amarillo, Texas
Rev. Loyce M. Dickerson
\$2,972

First UMC

Gonzales, Texas
Rev. Pamela Kilpatrick
\$2,965

St. John's UMC

Albuquerque, New Mexico
Rev. David Edwards
\$2,917

Plymouth Park UMC

Irving, Texas
Dr. William E. LaBarr
\$2,913

Windcrest UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Gregory A. Hackett
\$2,865

Lakewood UMC

Houston, Texas
Rev. Chappell Temple
\$2,700

First UMC

Rockwall, Texas
Rev. Joe C. Pool
\$2,663

Memorial Drive UMC

Houston, Texas
Rev. Charles B. Simmons
\$2,500

First UMC

Palestine, Texas
Rev. Scott A. Dornbush
\$2,449

IN HONOR OF

J. Noble Atkins

Rev. H. L. Atkins, III

Bible Explorers of Acton UMC

Bill Avera

Sherri Burdette

Phil Bandel

UMW FUMC Artesia, N.M

Rev. Steve Chappell

Jim, Jane, & John Burkholder

JoAnn Cleckler

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Fryer

Trudy Fryer Divine

Camey Fowler

Carolyn & Geoff Fowler

Clark Terrell

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Kay Orsak

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The Eugene Robertsons

Kurt, Kate, & Anna Wall

LaVerne Wall

Jim & Susie Watkins

Joshua & Lauren Watkins

Eric McKinney

Giavanna Patricia-Rose Wingfield

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Dr. & Mrs. Kelsey Gibbs

Dr. James P. Addison

Charles & Dorothy Tipton

Mildred Barnes

Mr. & Mrs. Keith Ormston and Family

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Anonymous

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James Cox

Rev. Pamela & Jason Dykehouse

James Edward Cox

Gaby and Steve Hill

James Cox

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James Cox

Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Cumberland

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Walter Henicke

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Bea Pearce

Betty Leighton

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Tom Pray

Trudy Lonsberry

Mrs. Dorothy Riedel

Carrie Jane Loftis

Jesse Denning Sanders

Roy and Faye Madison

Marvin and Patricia Sanders

Helotes Hills UMW

Velma Schaefer

Cheryl, Phil and Andrew Suter

Kelly Christine Suter

Mary Ann Swartz

Stanley Swartz

Jess and Mary Turner

Joe Earl Turner

Mr. George C. Crain

Joseph H. Webb

Lillie & Lisa Flowers

Conley Wofford

Mrs. Richard Zedicher

Richard Zedicher

YOUR LIVING LEGACY

The gifts you make in your estate plan can carry on your charitable support long after your passing. An estate plan allows you to choose the type of legacy you would like to leave. There are several ways you can include a legacy gift to Methodist Mission Home in your estate plan:

- Designate Methodist Mission Home as a beneficiary in your will
- Make a contribution to the Methodist Mission Home Endowment
- Establish a fund named for your family
- Designate a gift of insurance
- Create a charitable remainder trust
- Make a contribution to the Methodist Mission Home Capital Campaign



Please consider making a gift to Methodist Mission Home in your estate plan. For more information contact Mike Countryman, Planned & Major Gifts Director at 1-800-842-5433.

GENESIS COOPERATIVE

EASTER 2008

Genesis Cooperative is a self-supportive collaboration with several nonprofit agencies located on Methodist Mission Home's 25-acre campus. These diverse programs share resources and create synergy. Together we enrich the spiritual and physical lives of the people we serve and establish an interactive and interdependent community.

Genesis Cooperative is made up of HandsOn, Volunteers of America's LIGHT program, Northside Independence School District's LEAP program, San Antonio Food Bank's Community Kitchen, and Methodist Mission Home's Southwest Center for Higher Independence.

In celebration of Easter this year, Genesis Cooperative partners worked together to create a festive Easter celebration, which included an interactive Easter service conducted by MMH Chaplain Gina Symons and a Easter Egg Hunt.



The Easter Egg Hunt at MMH was a great way for Genesis Cooperative residents to enjoy the outdoors.



HandsOn Public Relations and Operations Manager Maria Elias helps search for Easter eggs.

TOP GIVING CHURCHES (cont.)

Fellowship UMC

Trophy Club, Texas
Rev. Daniel D. Humbert
\$2,415.27

First UMC

Marble Falls, Texas
Rev. Ralph D. Mann
\$2,327.00

Kingwood UMC

Kingwood, Texas
Rev. Joseph W. Fort, Jr.
\$2,180.00

Laurel Heights UMC

San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Jon D. Lowry
\$2,021.54

Acton UMC

Granbury, Texas
Rev. George Sutton
\$2,005.00

First UMC

Lake Jackson, Texas
Rev. Charles G. Geller
\$1,965.34

White Rock UMC

Dallas, Texas
Rev. George C. Fisk
\$1,760.00

First UMC

Garland, Texas
Rev. Gene Wisdom
\$1,750.00

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a way to change lives through community service? You can make a difference in our Home and with the people who live here by volunteering to work with **The Hearts and Hands Club**.



- Earn service hours for school
- Get references for college and job applications
- Train for specific skills
- Work as an intern
- Individuals and small or large groups welcome

Please consider becoming part of the Hearts and Hands Club. For more information contact Mary Luna, Volunteer Coordinator at 1-800-842-5433.

BIRDIES FOR CHARITY

What is Birdies for Charity?

Birdies for Charity is a fundraising program designed by Golf San Antonio to give community nonprofit organizations the opportunity to generate contributions through the Valero Texas Open Golf Tournament.

As a participant, Methodist Mission Home receives 100 percent of the donations made in our name. In addition, your donations help us become eligible to apply for a \$100,000 grant at the end of the year.



What is a "Birdie Pledge?"

In golf, a birdie is a score of one stroke under par (the expected score) for any hole on the course. By pledging one cent or more for every birdie made during the Valero Texas Open, or by making a straight donation of \$20 or more, you can directly help Methodist Mission Home. When all birdies are counted after the golf tournament, multiply that number by your pledge amount.

For example: In 2007, 2,294 birdies were made, which means that if you pledged one cent your total contribution equaled \$22.94. A two-cent pledge equaled \$45.88. A three-cent pledge equaled \$68.82...and so on.

What is the Birdies Club?

A Birdies Club member is any person or business that pledges 50 cents or more per birdie or a straight donation of \$1,000 or more. Club members will be recognized on site on a Birdie Club member sign and receive four tickets and a parking pass to the tournament.

With a possible date change to the Spring 2009 tournament, we want to give you the chance to plan ahead and make your 2008 and 2009 commitments at the same time. Stay tuned for more about 2009.

**For more information about Birdies for Charity
or to receive pledge forms for your office
or group, call Mary Luna at (800) 842-5433.**

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Adopted from MMH in 1982, Shelby Spinosa gives the gift of life she received to another family.

Before coming to stay in Methodist Mission Home's Maternity Center, Shelby Spinosa, who recently gave birth to a daughter last month, had been at MMH once before almost 25 years ago.

"I was nervous coming back here," Shelby said. "It was really hard because I was adopted from here."

In 1982, Shelby was adopted from MMH by Frank and Norma Spinosa.

"Since I was adopted from here...it kind of made sense for me," Shelby said. "When I came back here I just thought it was surreal."

Having gone through the adoption process as a birthmother once before (she placed her son for adoption when she was 18 years old through another agency), Shelby said she felt comfortable in choosing a family she thought would best take care of her newborn.

With a four-year-old little girl already at home and a relationship that did not work out the way she had hoped, Shelby felt placing her baby for adoption was the best thing to do. She didn't think it would be fair to raise a child in a situation she says is not as stable as she would like.

"I was actually planning to keep the baby, but I can't do it on my own right now," Shelby said.

After talking with her



Shelby Spinosa (right) and adoptive parents Kelly and Landon participate in an Entrustment Ceremony in MMH's Perry Chapel.

parents and a family friend who is a Methodist pastor, Shelby turned to MMH for guidance.

"I knew I wanted to get away from everything and come here and get counseling and do adoption the right way," Shelby said.

As with her first placement seven years ago, Shelby says she is very close to the adoptive family she chose for her daughter and considers them friends.

"I see them every chance that I can and they see me every chance that they can," Shelby said. "The family I chose is amazing. I'm really happy with my decision."

When Shelby was adopted in 1982 adoptions were closed. As a little girl, she wondered why her mother placed her for adoption. Now adoptions are open, so she never worries her children will have those same thoughts. Shelby is still



A new gift of life is given to Kelly and Landon at MMH.

part of her son's life, although not as his mother. She looks forward to the same positive experience after placing her daughter.

"All my life I was like, 'Why didn't [my mother] want me?' But once I placed my son through the open

adoption process I kind of figured out why people do it. It's not because they don't want you, it's because they want a better life for you."

Along with receiving the counseling and care she felt she needed, Shelby said she was surprised when she found out about MMH's post-adoption services.

Since she was adopted from MMH, Post-Adoption Counselor Mona McDonald could look into her case file and, if mutually agreeable, get in contact with her birthmother to see if there was a chance they could meet for the first time.

"I didn't know they would be able to find my mother," Shelby said, adding that she almost fell out of her chair when Mona showed her a picture of her mom that was in her file from the early '80s. "That thought never crossed my mind."

It's still something she and Mona are discussing. However, she is grateful this opportunity is available to her. She also thanks MMH for offering her the services she needed to become less anxious about the decisions she would have to make for her child.

"I already feel lighter and don't feel as stressed," Shelby said. "I know coming back to MMH was the right decision. My parents are happy I'm here. Now I know where I came from. It's like closing a chapter in my life."

AROUND CAMPUS

Mona McDonald retiring after 31 years of service at MMH



So many adoption files, so many memories over the last 31 years for Methodist Mission Home post-adoption counselor Mona McDonald.

After more than three decades of dedicated service, post-adoption counselor Mona McDonald will be retiring in June from Methodist Mission Home.

Mona started her career at MMH in 1977 after working in the adoption field in North Carolina. She started as a part-time case worker working with birthmothers and adoptive parents and then became a full-time adoption counselor. When a post-adoption position became available at MMH in 1996, Mona jumped at the chance to help adoptees reunite with their biological families.

“Post-adoption has been very rewarding,” Mona said. “What you are doing is putting pieces back together.”

Blue Skies is the official newsletter of Methodist Mission Home. Your comments, suggestions and ideas for future issues are most welcome!

Please write:

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Methodist Mission Home
6487 Whitby Road
San Antonio, Texas 78240

Call:

(210) 696-2410 ext. 177

E-mail

kiko@mmhome.org

Or visit us on the Web at:

www.mmhome.org

If you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, or have changes to your address, please fill out the return envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Make sure to check the “change of address” box.

Please note: We use our mailing list for internal use only and do not sell or release names to other organizations or businesses.

Mona says in some cases, she has had the privilege to reintroduce an adult adoptee to his or her birthmother 25 years after she worked with the birthmother to place that child for adoption.

Over the last 31 years, Mona estimates that she has helped reunite more than 350 adoptees with birthmothers. Still, she says, that is a small fraction of people when you consider that MMH has placed over 5,600 children with adoptive families.

“There is such a need for post-adoption work,” Mona said. “There are so many people out there who want to know but don’t know they can do it. I’ve had people tell me they never feel completely whole until they are able to find out about their birthparents.”

After retiring, Mona plans on visiting her five children, 13 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, who live across the U.S., and more time traveling around the world with her husband John. Their next trip will be a cruise to Hawaii in the fall.

Upon Mona’s departure, Methodist Mission Home will continue their post-adoption services. For more information call 1-800-842-5433.



SCHI students and MMH staff planting a tree at Woodlawn Park for Earth Day. Young men of SCHI looking dapper for their Valentine’s Day dance.



Methodist Mission Home
Giving God’s Children a Faith, a Family, a Future

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San Antonio, Texas 78240

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(210) 696-2410

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