

## THE BOARD OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

The Board of Health and Welfare continues to work to uphold the ministry of Christ and the tradition of John Wesley in the United Methodist Church, with the ministry of health and wholeness. This year, we focused on the mandate from the Annual Conference to make the work of Board and Agencies relevant to local congregations in accordance with the Conference Vision: **To make disciples for Jesus Christ by equipping it's local churches for ministry and providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church, all to the glory of God.**

In our current economic environment, it is imperative that we all work together to love and serve God and our neighbors in innovative and tangible ways as we seek to improve health and welfare in our communities. We continue to look for ways to share and celebrate the health and welfare ministries that are already part of so many of our local congregations. We encourage local churches to serve as resources for health and welfare-related ministries so that we can utilize our unique connectional relationship to improve holistic health in our communities across this annual conference.

In addition to seeking low-cost health and welfare interventions, we continue to oversee the funds provided through the annual Golden Cross offering and grant monies awarded for the purpose of eliminating barriers to worship. Through your generosity and commitment to the Golden Cross Offering, we were able to award \$1552.89 for home maintenance, \$3600 to assist three persons with their medical bills, and four \$1000 scholarships for persons enrolled in healthcare and nursing programs. In addition to the local church offering, we received \$907.48 from the Williams-Walker Trust Fund into the Golden Cross account. We continue to encourage every local church to observe Golden Cross Sunday on the first Sunday in February, each year.

The Programs sub-committee approved a request for \$1000 for large-print Bibles to assist those with visual difficulties from Mount Zion UMC in Kingstree. They also approved a request for \$1500 to co-sponsor the *Dare to Dream* workshop through Family Connections of SC for the purpose of providing education for churches on enhancing worship opportunities for families with children with special needs.

We continue to solicit and review nominations for the Board of Trustees of Epworth Children's Home, Wesley Commons, the Methodist Oaks, the Manor of the Pee Dee, and the Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry. These nominees are presented to the Conference Committee on Nominations and to the Annual Conference. The Board of Health and Welfare liaisons attend meeting of the Boards of the homes, and representatives from each of the homes gives a report to our Board during our bi-annual meetings. It is critical to maintain relationship with each of the homes and we remain pleased with the ministries offered by our homes and communities in these difficult economic times.

There are presently nine housing units allotted for retired clergy; four at the Methodist Oaks, three of which are occupied and one vacant; one at the Manor of the Pee Dee which is occupied; and four at Wesley Commons, which are occupied. The interest from the Elma Hill Endowment Fund helps maintain these retired clergy units. As of December 31, 2008 there was a balance of \$90, 071.75 in this endowment and \$3511.33 was allocated in 2008 for maintenance. The current distribution of funds based on the formula is as follows: The Methodist Oaks (37%), Wesley Commons (42%) and the Methodist Manor (21%).

We remain thankful for the support and cooperation across this Annual Conference for the work of the Board of Health and Welfare, and covet your prayers and your ideas as we continue to live into the Conference Vision. May we be ever mindful that the need for health and welfare ministries becomes even more critical in tough economic times, and that we can make a difference in our communities and in our conference as we seek to live as disciples of the Christ.

Blessings,

Sandra Smith King, Chair