

By Sue Dondlinger

Kansas West Conference capital campaign director

As fast as money has been received from churches, pastors and other individuals, we have distributed it to the specified ministry areas of the “Bridges to the Future” campaign. It is truly thrilling to know that God’s work is already being done with the monies.

\$340,000 has been given to Camp Horizon near Arkansas City. This money, combined with \$18,000 of the camp’s own money, was used to completely pay off the Horizon debt, rendering them totally debt-free now. Their debt was incurred with unexpected sewer and wastewater expenses that came about because of the construction of a new dining hall. Paying off this debt not only lifts a weight off the camp’s board of directors but frees up \$3,000 per month that had gone for the bank loan.

So, what can you do with \$3,000? With part of it, they have hired a full-time camp secretary. Having someone to answer the phone, handle paperwork and run the office has lifted a lot of work from the directors’ shoulders. They also spent some of it to improve their Internet system. And, last of all, they plan to buy a new lawnmower for the camp. The directors have been holding their breath this summer, hoping that the old mower would make it until fall.

Horizon already has plans for total bathroom renovations in December and for a new sewer system by May. Those projects will require additional Bridges money.

Camp Lakeside near Scott City is being sent \$70,000. Over the last few months, Lakeside has done a number of renovations to the campsite. They combined already designated funds at Lakeside with money from Bridges to accomplish all these efforts.

Lakeside has completed their new wastewater management system. This was necessary because their former septic system had outlived its usefulness and could not be expanded. The new system handles twice the former capacity.

During the remodeling and addition to their dining hall, Lakeside was able to construct a much-needed retaining wall. This will prevent the drainage problems that have occurred when run-off water came into the hall. They also added a concrete loading and parking area west of the dining hall.

The concrete work will conclude when the road up to the office area and the office parking area are paved this fall.

Lastly, the Bridges money, combined with previously designated funds has paid for re-routing of the electrical systems around the campsite. Years

of haphazard and piecemeal electrical additions had caused a disorganized and costly electrical system.

The Center for Small Membership Churches will receive \$55,000 that will be used in 2008 for revitalizing smaller congregations. Rev. Carl Ellis, center director, will be using that money to work with three specific programs. Plans are under way for Ellis to work with three small churches in each district to help them develop their plans, hopes and dreams over the next several years.

Ellis also will be directing the Certified Lay Ministry program, which prepares people to effectively serve a small-membership church as their pastor. Through an academic program, students will be prepared to provide care and leadership for the congregations and communities.

The Center for Small Membership Churches also will sponsor the new ABIDE program to renew small-membership churches. This program uses the L3 Incubator process and shapes a model specifically for small-membership churches. Initially, 10 small churches will be participating in the program.

Emporia State United Methodist Campus Ministry will receive \$29,700 to help them with small and large renovation projects. Emporia State Campus Ministries currently has a functional concrete building just to the west of the campus. They have recently purchased a dilapidated building behind their center that they plan to tear down. More than half of the money will be used to help with the purchase price of that building.

In addition, Rev. Kurt Cooper, campus minister, is working to make their existing building more attractive and more noticeable as a United Methodist center. So, they will use part of their Bridges money to make a bigger, better sign in front of the building. They also will be stuccoing their building in order to make it more visually appealing.

Fort Hays State University Protestant Campus Ministry was sent \$45,000 in the spring. This money was from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation grant of \$50,000 to the Bridges campaign and is being used to renovate restrooms and add an elevator to their dining/meeting space in the basement of the building. Getting the necessary building approvals for this work delayed construction, but it will be done this fall. More than \$700 also will be sent to Fort Hays Campus Ministry, given to the campaign by the Hays District United Methodist Women. This money will quickly be used to add a new dishwasher, new ceiling tiles and make other improvements to the kitchen.

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WICHITA—On Jan. 20, the United Methodist campus ministry—K-State Wesley—had their first worship in a new building. Rev. Matt Stone, campus minister, described the worship as “incredible—intimate and warm, with a fire in the fireplace, a great worship band and enthusiastic students.”

More than 60 students from K-State volunteered to move furniture into the building on Jan. 19. They also cleaned floors, windows and bookcases. Some of the student volunteers were United Methodist students who worship at the campus-ministry center, but many other students were sharing their time to volunteer on Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday and had no United Methodist affiliation.

Bridges to the Future funds from both the Kansas West and Kansas East conferences will help pay for this new building. The Kansas West Conference approved \$200,000 for it. More money will be given over the next few years as it is received. The new ministry center is located just off campus at 1001 Sunset Ave. The building formerly housed the Delta Tau Delta fraternity and is situated in the heart of student apartments, houses and fraternities. The location provides the opportunity for mission and outreach to students living off-campus and to those living in a large residence complex less than three blocks away.



The front room will serve as part of the area for worship in the new K-State Wesley building. (photo by Britt Bradley)

Stone has a vision for the center as an opportunity to do cutting-edge ministry. More specifically, they will be able to house the student-leadership team in the new building and allow the ministry to grow out of the community that student leaders share together. The purchase of this building allows the K-State Wesley board to pursue a model of ministry that hasn’t been explored for a long time. The students will be able to live together and do ministry together, building a community that will allow them to witness to the Gospel in a powerful, meaningful way.

Beyond the housing capability, there are other features that make this property a valuable resource to the K-State Wesley campus ministry. The industrial-sized kitchen and large dining hall will enable them to feed hundreds of people with community meals, hold fellowship opportunities and serve in mission. The backyard includes a basketball court, patio and 48

parking spaces that may provide revenue through parking-rental fees.

Students and board members are proud of their new facility. They are aware that there is not another campus-ministry house on the K-State campus like the K-State Wesley building. By late spring, they will have a large, lighted sign in front of the house that communicates the United Methodist presence to all who pass by.

“A building of this size and in this great location lets students know that something is happening, that the United Methodist Church is making an investment in K-State campus ministry,” Stone said.

K-State sophomore Kyle also is excited about the building.

“It is often very easy to feel alone or lost among more than 20,000 students. The Wesley House and program provided me with an outlet to get plugged in. It has welcomed me, grounded me and allowed me to continue growing in my faith during my time at K-State. We need to do everything we can to provide this kind of connection for students not only at K-State but all across Kansas,” Kyle said.

Renovation of the new K-State Wesley building will take shape in three phases. By late summer, they plan to have the first floor completely useful for worship, small groups, dining and housing the campus minister. Shortly after that, they plan to have the first-floor dorms converted into office space to house the Kansas State University United Methodist foundation office and for possible rental space. The final phase should be complete by the fall of 2010, so students can move into the second- and third-floor dorms.

“The students love it,” Stone said. “They want to be there every day, working and making this space their own.”

Presently there are 60 active K-State Wesley participants. The new house and enthusiasm will allow the program to involve hundreds of students each year.