

MISSIONS NEWS

A Lesson from Coca-Cola

By Dick McClain

Several years ago I led a vision trip to the central Asian country of *Kazakhstan*. One of the places we visited was Molodozhnya, a small town that was home to about 10,000 people. We had gone there to visit two young Kazakh believers, Gulfiya and Helena (not their real names), who had been sent as missionaries to Molodozhnya from their home church in a larger city. Molodozhnya was a community with no evangelical witness prior to the arrival of Gulfiya, a young woman who had only met Christ five years earlier. Alcoholism was rampant in this economically-depressed region. The social and economic desolation of the town was matched by its spiritual poverty.

Home for Gulfiya and her new co-worker, Helena, was a small, spartan duplex. In a region where winter temperatures plummet to 40 degrees below zero, the only heat was provided by a small coal stove. The winds that howl across the vast, barren steppes easily penetrated the house through window casings that were no match for their insistent blast. Threadbare rugs and thin vinyl offered little protection from the cold cement floors. Seated on the floor around a low table, my colleagues and I ate a generous Kazakh meal as we listened to Gulfiya share her story.

Her first nine months of ministry in Molodozhnya had proven to be very hard. Seven or eight people had prayed to receive Christ, but fear kept them from meeting as a cell group. The new believers were afraid because of the intense opposition they had experienced in their community. A young Muslim woman who had become a Christ follower had been punished with a severe beating by her uncle. When another woman who sporadically attended the small Orthodox church in town asked Christ into her life, her priest chastised her. He even demanded that she do penance for her sin!

In the face of such challenges, I inquired why Gulfiya had undertaken such a ministry. She reminded me that three years previous when I had preached in her home congregation in Karaganda, she was one of many who had responded to the invitation by committing her life to missionary service. *"Do you remember the story you told about Coca-Cola?"* she asked me. Of course I did.

I had challenged them to adopt Coke's strategy as a model for their ministry. I told them Coca-Cola did not wait until it finished the job in Atlanta before taking their product to other parts of the world. In fact, they never have finished the job in Atlanta, and never will, since there will always be people in Atlanta who choose not to drink Coke.

Wisely, the Coca-Cola strategy has been, every person on the planet within arms' length of a Coke. Coca-Cola understands that to convince everyone to drink their product is beyond their control, but making it available to everyone is within their reach. So they have pursued that vision with a vengeance. And with the most widely recognized brand on earth, Coca-Cola is close to reaching its goal.

"Well," said Gulfiya, *"I couldn't wait until my church had finished its job in our city before bringing the Gospel to Molodozhnya."* In fact, her young congregation had already sent workers to live in more than half a dozen other cities and villages.

Listening to Gulfiya tell her story, I couldn't help but think about people in American churches who excuse their lack of involvement in outreach to other parts of the world by saying, but there's so much to be done here at home. If Coke had adopted such an inward-focused strategy, most of us would have never heard of the product! You can buy a Coca-Cola in Molodozhnya today.

Thankfully, today you can also meet Jesus there. But there are thousands of towns and villages all over the world where you can find a Coke, but not a church or a single Jesus follower. It's our job to change that. And we *can't afford to wait until we've finished the job at home!*

Dick McClain is the president and CEO of The Mission Society in Norcross, Georgia, an agency with more than 200 missionaries serving in 35 countries. The son and grandson of missionaries, Dick was born in China and grew up in India and Hong Kong. Dick married his college sweetheart, Pam, and the couple has three married children and five grandchildren.

YOUTH IN MISSION-

Milk and Honey is an outreach program that provides summer camp to underprivileged kids in Pensacola. We adopt a week and provide lunch, activities, arts and crafts and VBS for approximately 50 students and their families. Milk and Honey is a year round outreach program that student ministries participate in. The week we are adopting is July 12th thru July 16th.

Camp Happy Sands is an organization that provides a summer camp to underprivileged kids by spending 6 weeks of the summer at Perdido Key. The camp consists of swimming, beach activities, arts and crafts, speakers and fishing. For the past four years our youth group has adopted a week in which we provide lunch for the campers and spend the day interacting with them. We bring approximately fifteen middle school students per day and serve approximately 35 campers. The

week we are adopting June 21st thru June 25th.

Ichthus: For the second year, we will be travelling to Kentucky for a Christian music festival. The two days prior to the concert, on June 14th and 15th, our students do local missions work. This year we will visit Bay Breeze Nursing Home, Opportunity House Children's Shelter; United Methodist Children's Home and Loaves & Fishes. We will be providing food, arts and crafts and activities for each organization.

AMAZING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY! Bridges to Circles

What is an ALLY?

Our community's goal is a 50% reduction in the number of people living below the federal poverty level in Escambia County by the year 2020. This impacts 42,935 people currently living in poverty (15.8% of total population) including 16,918 children.

The Bridges to Circles ally has three primary goals:

1. Make an intentional friendship with a family living below the federal poverty line (Circle leader family) and join them in their quest to have enough money, meaning, and friends;
2. Increase awareness of one's own stereotypes and class rules and be willing to face these;
3. Use the experience of friendship with an under-resourced family to advocate within the community for changes in the systems barriers that keep poverty in place.

The commitment of an ally:

1. Attendance at least twice a month on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7:30 pm;
2. 12-18 month commitment to the Circle Leader;
3. After the Circles match is made, allies are asked to participate in the Tuesday weekly community meetings:
 - a. Two weeks for the circle leader to meet with the allies,

- b. One week involves focus groups on barriers
 - c. One week is a Big View meeting with other circles and the Poverty Solutions Team to discuss systemic change around the barriers.
 - d. Fifth Tuesdays are used for an ally support meeting
4. Phone, email and personal contact with your Circle Leader throughout the month;
 5. Allies are asked not to contribute financially to their Circle Leader

Support allies receive:

1. Orientation sessions
 - a. Bridges out of Poverty introduction to the rules of class
 - b. Hands-on ally training on how to build a circle for both allies and participants
2. Regularly scheduled ally support sessions
3. Collaboration with the other allies on the circle; no one is left in isolation
4. Staff to answer questions, assist with resource development, provide mentoring, and assist with conflict resolution
5. An ally's family is welcome to attend the Tuesday meetings and participate in the activities for children and you.
6. The support of the entire Bridges to Circles community and Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team

For more information, contact the Bridges to Circles office at 429-7296 or richardsh@cc.ptdiocese.org.

GBUMC ADVENT ANGELS PROGRAM was presented the 2010 Spirit of Prevention Award for the dedication and continued support of prevention efforts in the community by providing food and Christmas gifts to the program families for over six years. The Spirit of Prevention Award is given by the Board of Directors of the Community Drug and Alcohol Council, Inc. to recognize outstanding efforts in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, other drug abuse and violence in Circuit One. Vida Straley, the volunteer coordinator of the Advent Angels program was given the award at the CDAC annual luncheon on June 2nd, 2010. Way to go, Advent Angels!



NAVARRE DAY RESOURCE CENTER will provide assistance to the homeless and eminently homeless in South Santa Rosa County. The first meeting was held at the Navarre Tourist Information Center on October 13, 2009 under the leadership of Brunie Emmanuel, Executive Director of the EscaRosa Coalition on the Homeless (ECOH) and Janis Wilson, AmeriCorps VISTA. Two Committees were set up: Facilities Committee (Chairperson, Patti Mankoff, realtor from Coldwell Banker) and Programming Committee (Chairperson, Olga Batova – GBUMC). The group of concerned citizens and representatives from local churches, charities and businesses have been meeting monthly and had the very first volunteer training on May 13th.

In order to volunteer at the Navarre Day Resource Center the following is required:

- Signed Statement of Intent
- Interview process
- ECOH volunteer orientation
- CPR and First Aid training (within two weeks after volunteering)
- Two references furnished
- Signed consent for criminal background check
- Resource and referral training

The Navarre Day Resource Center will start a pilot program at Navarre United Methodist Church, three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 8:00 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. The opening date is June 28, 2010. Volunteers will be asked to work at least one 2-hour shift at a time. Two-three volunteers will be working during each shift.

Several trainings are offered in June:

June 14th – free 5-hour CPR training (pre-registration required) – starts at 12:00 p.m. at 7552 Navarre Parkway, Harvest Village, Suite 47, phone 939-7368

June 15th – Resource and Referral training – starts at 1:00 p.m. at the ECOH office in Pensacola — 2601 W. Strong St. (a 4-hour training on resources available in both counties).

June 23rd – Navarre Day Resource Center Volunteer on-site brief orientation at 9:00 a.m. at Navarre United Methodist Church.

For additional information please contact Olga Batova at 850-932-3594 or obatov@gbumc.org.

“There should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you” (Deuteronomy 15:4, NIV)





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

In Memory of THE BIKE LADY:

Each year a group of local bicyclists gather for a 100-mile ride on Memorial Day and this year they decided to dedicate this ride to the memory of the homeless cyclist affectionately known as the "Bike Lady," Elizabeth Allmon, who was struck by a car last June and killed as she was pedaling along Highway 98 in Navarre. According to group organizer, Gary Maddock, "We've always ridden a century on Memorial Day, but last year a homeless woman, in Navarre was killed while riding her bike on June 9th. So this year it was a combined Memorial Day/Bike Lady 100". A bike helmet was passed around for donations. All contributions will go to the EscaRosa Coalition on the Homeless for use at a new Day Resource Center in Navarre to help pay for transportation needs such as bicycles, bus passes, gas vouchers, or cab fares for individuals needing such assistance. "This ride," said Janis Wilson, an AmeriCorps VISTA (volunteer in service to America) with the local homeless coalition, "is a great way to help our neighbors in need. The hundreds of local families experiencing homelessness today need help with transportation to work, to doctors, or to get food at a local food pantry or grocery store, and these donations can assist. In the year I have been working on this project I have been truly amazed with the compassion and generosity of so many in Santa Rosa County and the many accomplishments of the EscaRosa Coalition on the Homeless." In less than a year, as Elizabeth's story unfolded revealing her true identity as a lovely lady with a college degree in computer science, accomplished concert pianist, and a single mother with two sons, many people in the Navarre community have been moved to find solutions for the needs of others like Elizabeth and plan to open the new resource center in Navarre in June.

Upcoming Events:

- June 14** — free CPR training for volunteers at Navarre Day Resource Center
- June 14** — Ichthus (page 2)
- June 15** — Resource & Referral training
- June 19-25** — Peru Mission Trip
- June 21-25** — Camp Happy Sands
- June 23** — On-site orientation for volunteers of Navarre Day Resource Center
- June 28** — Navarre Day Resource Center opens its pilot program
- June 28-July 6** — Mission to Honduras
- July 12-15** — Milk and Honey (page 2)
- July 17-23** — Peru Mission Trip
- July 18** — Blood Drive @ Fairpoint
- July 14-24** — Russian Walks to Emmaus
- July 26-August 3** — Mission to Belize
- August 29** — Blood Drive @ Soundside
- October 17** — Blood Drive @ Fairpoint

*(Call the church office for event details)
850-932-3594*