

Springboard

What's your story?

"What's your story?" was a phrase I heard a lot in the 1970s. Sometimes



it was said sarcastically, but often it was an honest question. What are you about? What do you believe? What

are you trying to accomplish?

I had the privilege of joining Heartspring in 1997. Over the last 19 years, I have learned the stories of so many folks who wanted to make a difference in this world, who wanted to help people, and who wanted to spread God's love and message in a powerful way.

In this issue we discuss the power of planned giving. While there are many aspects to planned giving, in essence it is a specific plan to leave a future gift. This can be done through a bequest in your will, via a charitable annuity or trust, and by using other tools. Many have taken advantage of these giving vehicles — whether their estates were large or more modest — to make a significant difference in the lives of countless Methodists in our conference over the years.

For instance, Marshall Abernathy, a retired teacher from Hughes Springs, made an estate gift in 1990 that was pivotal in making the Foundation fully self-sustaining, allowing us to do even more good in and around the conference.

Evie Jo Wilson, a member of St. Paul's UMC Houston, wanted to support evangelism. She created multiple

continued on page 3

5215 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002
713-533-3780, 800-521-9617

1511 Judson Road, Suite A, Longview, TX 75601
903-753-8305

office@heartspringmethodist.org
www.heartspringmethodist.org

Spirit

The gift that keeps on giving *Abernathy's generosity touches many lives*

AFTER RECEIVING AN INHERITANCE, Marshall Abernathy felt called to support the church financially in a significant way. As a retired teacher and devout United Methodist, he wanted to be a good steward of his gifts and graces.

Living in Dallas in the early 1980s, Abernathy called his church to ask how it might use a large gift he was considering, about \$8,000, which would be closer to \$25,000 today. His pastor suggested using the funds to have the choir robes cleaned and/or put it toward lowering the church's debt.

Neither of those options appealed to Abernathy as the right fit for his gift. Next he reached out to First UMC Hughes Springs, the church his parents had attended for years. Senior Pastor Rev. Allison Cambre's suggestion of improving the church landscaping piqued Abernathy's interest.



As Cambre continued to talk with Abernathy about his charitable giving goals, he discovered he had a lot more to give. That's when the pastor suggested Abernathy contact Heartspring Methodist Foundation, formerly the United Methodist Foundation of the Texas Annual Conference, about setting up a permanent endowment fund to benefit the church, rather than giving the money directly to the church to manage.

"I feared money pressures might tempt the church to borrow from this gift for things outside the scope of his original intent and I wanted to do what I could to help protect his wishes," Cambre says. "If he made his donation to the Foundation for the benefit of the church, his principal would be protected forever and the church would still reap the benefits. That part really excited him."

Former Foundation President Roy Felder helped Abernathy set up multiple permanent endowments to support First UMC Hughes Springs and other ministries important to him. In addition to the initial \$8,000 gift Abernathy designated for landscaping, he also set up a permanent endowment fund to support the church with an initial gift of \$500,000, or more than \$1.5 million in today's dollars.

After he passed away, Heartspring received a significant gift from his estate to create an unrestricted permanent endowment to directly support the good works of the Foundation. It was this gift

continued on page 4

Grant recipient Bel Inizio changes lives one step at a time

THE HEARTSPRING Grants Program strives to help further the Kingdom of God by awarding impactful grants to worthy causes across the Texas Conference. Last year, Heartspring awarded more than \$200,000, helping the ministries of 16 churches and agencies to continue their work to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

One of last year's grant recipients, Bel Inizio, is a nonprofit ministry on a mission to help disadvantaged women in the race for a better life. Bel Inizio serves women in the Houston area in dire circumstances, with most recovering from substance abuse, domestic violence or the consequences of criminal activity.

Bel Inizio offers an eight-week program of fitness training and nutritional education as a way to teach essential life skills, coping mechanisms and other healthy

habits essential to a successful future.

The program is voluntary, but does require a commitment from each participant. Participants must join two workouts per week, receive wellness counseling and nutrition education, and make a commitment to enter and complete a 5K (3.1-mile) road race with their team at the end of the program. The program provides water bottles, gloves, socks and new shoes to enhance training.

Upon completion of the program and the 5K, each graduate receives a finisher's medal, a framed team photo, a certificate of completion and booklet filled with workout and nutrition tips.

"Bel Inizio strives to be God's hands and feet on the ground to empower those oppressed by life's difficulties," says founder and Executive Director Theresa Strong. She noted that for many,

faith in God often takes a back seat to the pursuit for basic survival. Bel Inizio demonstrates the love of God by helping women to take ownership of their life choices and equipping them to make healthy decisions that help to build a strong foundation for a successful future.

Dawn is one such success story. A victim of child abuse, Dawn ran away from home and turned to drugs and alcohol to self-medicate and cope. She attempted to turn her life around by joining the military. There she experienced the devastating effects of sexual abuse in the workplace, which led to further abuse of drugs and alcohol.

After several failed attempts at recovery on her own, she turned to a treatment facility in Houston for help and was invited to join a Bel Inizio training group.

Dawn was skeptical at first, but with every workout, the physical pain she felt decreased and she began to laugh again. She reunited with her faith. She completed her first 5K with her team and never looked back. Since then, she has completed two more Bel Inizio training sessions and started volunteering for the organization.

With an effective support group in place, Dawn moved into her own apartment, enrolled in college courses at the University of Houston, has a steady job as a chef, and is happily married and sober.

"Bel Inizio turned out to be like a family." Dawn says. "These wonderful ladies walk with you. They teach you, they listen to stories of your past and they genuinely care. Because of them, I got a really good solid start this time."

continued on page 3



Grant applications due August 31

Could your ministry use a helping hand? The Heartspring Grants Program was created to help worthy United Methodist organizations and causes to further the Kingdom of God.

Applications are due by August 31 each year, and grants are typically awarded after our quarterly board meeting in October. The application and a handout explaining the grant program policies, guidelines and procedures may be found online at www.heartspringmethodist.org/grants. If you have any questions or if you need more information, please contact us at 713-533-3780 (800-521-9617) or office@heartspringmethodist.org.

Financial Corner: 2016 brings mixed results

WHILE EQUITY and bond markets saw increased volatility in the second quarter, July brought with it a nice recovery. Global markets reacted strongly to the political and economic uncertainty surrounding the Brexit Referendum, in which voters approved the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. As summer advanced and companies report solid earnings, that volatility has since calmed down, and the marketplace continues to find its balance moving forward. ■



One-stop shopping for financial information

For those of you who want more detailed market data, reports on Heartspring fund performance, and other investment and financial news, we have created a new Financial Corner on our website,

www.heartspringmethodist.org/financial-corner. There you'll find our most current performance and many other tools and resources, such as market news and commentary from our fund managers, all updated monthly now, instead of quarterly.

While we will continue to provide a broad brush overview in this newsletter, we encourage you to visit the website for more in-depth results and perspectives.

SPRINGBOARD continued from page 1

permanent endowment funds to support the evangelistic programs and ministries of our Methodist churches, colleges and universities then and in perpetuity.

Jean Elizabeth Homeshier had a very modest estate, but she left everything she had to the Methodist Children's Home to provide perpetual support to help children in need.

Rev. Thomas Davis included in his estate plan an endowment to provide perpetual support to his alma mater, Texas Wesleyan University, so that other young men and women could receive the same valuable support and training as he did for their lives in ministry.

What will your story be? As a young man, my pastor reminded us that life can be compared to writing a book. He then challenged us by asking, "What kind of story are you going to write?" So, what kind of story will you write? What will the chapters say about your values, faithfulness, generosity and hopes?

Heartspring has been helping generous Methodists like these "prepare a never-ending story" for years. We are here and ready to help you accomplish your charitable dreams as you continue to answer the question, "What's your story?"

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.J. Taylor".

Rev. C.J. Taylor

BEL INIZIO continued from page 2

Strong adds, "We really do try and put into practice the words of St. Francis of Assisi who said, 'Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary, use words.' At Bel Inizio, we try to follow in the steps of Jesus as much as we can by illustrating God's love through our actions more than our words."

Since 2010, Bel Inizio has empowered more than 400 women to develop life skills and improve coping strategies as they strive to overcome life's challenges. After only eight weeks, graduates of the Bel Inizio program not only experience improved health and physical fitness, they also demonstrate higher accountability and improved self-confidence.

The project is intended to help increase participants' overall self-esteem and the likelihood of long-term success, whether they are preparing to leave transitional housing, recovering from abuse, or rejoining the community after a prison or jail sentence.

The 2015 Heartspring grant allowed Bel Inizio to offer the program to 117 disadvantaged women, a new agency record for one year.

"Because of the generous support from Heartspring, Bel Inizio has helped over 100 underprivileged individuals conquer their fears and past failures and improve their overall health, giving them the skills and behaviors necessary to succeed in life," Strong says. ■

Heartspring welcomes Bishop Jones

PLEASE JOIN US in welcoming Bishop Scott Jameson Jones as the new leader of the Texas Conference, effective Sept. 1.

After teaching United Methodist doctrine for 20 years and United Methodist history for 18 years, Jones is a self-professed “Wesleyan Nerd.”

In his public message to the Texas Conference, Jones acknowledged that these are difficult times for Christians, and United Methodists, in particular. And he makes us this promise: “I pledge to you that I will do the very best I can to be the kind of bishop that the United Methodist movement needs to be the best it can be to serve Christ in this particular place, and around the world.”

Jones was elected to the episcopacy in 2004 and assigned as bishop of the Kansas area. In 2012, he transferred to the Great Plains area, which included the Nebraska, Kansas West and Kansas East conferences that he helped merge into the new Great Plains Annual Conference. He served there until his recent appointment to the Texas Conference.

We want to extend a heartfelt thanks to outgoing conference leader Bishop Janice Riggle Huie for her outstanding leadership over the past 12 years. We wish Bishop Huie all the best as she begins a different kind of ministry in retirement. ■



World Methodist Conference

The 21st World Methodist Conference, held every five years in a different part of the world, will take place in Houston Aug. 31 to Sept. 3 at the Hilton Americas downtown. This year’s theme, “One,” is organized around four sub themes: One God, One Faith, One People, One Mission.

This is an exciting opportunity for our leadership to network with a global community of Methodists as they discuss the future of Methodism around the world. For more information about this gathering, or to register, visit www.worldmethodistconference.com.

ABERNATHY *continued from page 1*

that allowed Heartspring to become fully independent of the conference, a self-sustaining nonprofit ministry that no longer needed support from apportionments.

Thanks to the resources created by one generous Methodist, the Foundation’s ability to support the churches and members of the Texas Conference has grown dramatically over the years, with more educational and financial services, tools and resources available today than ever before.

The rippling effects of Abernathy’s gifts have already created a greater

impact on the work of the United Methodist Church than he may have ever imagined possible and his gift just keeps on giving.

“Marshall Abernathy had it in his heart to do something for the Lord that was bigger than maintaining the status quo,” Cambre recalls. “Obviously, he did just that.”

If your charitable goals include supporting the future of the United Methodist Church, contact Heartspring today for a free consultation: 713-533-3780 (800-521-9617) or office@heartspringmethodist.org. ■

Spirit

The Heartspring *Spirit* is published quarterly by Heartspring Methodist Foundation for clients, friends and members of the Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

5215 Main Street
Houston, TX 77002
713-533-3780
800-521-9617

1511 Judson Road, Suite A
Longview, TX 75601
903-753-8305

office@heartspringmethodist.org
www.heartspringmethodist.org

COPYRIGHT ©2016