

News from the District Strategic Vitality Team

Submitted on behalf of the team by Kim Shockley, CVS

The Catawba Valley District has been blessed this year with significant funds available for granting through Missional Engagement funds and Vitality funds. Missional Engagement funds are able to be used by local churches as they reach out in mercy or justice ministries into their local communities. This summer we helped Mt Pleasant UMC (Stanley) participate with NC MedAssist to provide medicines for 450 people in their community. We have a local video if you want to learn more about this program for your neighbors.

Another Missional Engagement grant was offered to Tucker's Grove UMC for their Building Futures Summer Enrichment Program and Basketball Camp. This program provided an opportunity for children to build on the skills of enunciation, pronunciation, reading comprehension, math and self-esteem while in a church based atmosphere. They worked cooperatively with the Lincoln County Summer Nutrition program to provide meals throughout the week. The Basketball camp was led by Coach Andrea Stinson formerly of the WNBA Charlotte Sting. All of the children and their teen helpers were impacted by these programs.

- Christ UMC Drexel received funds to help supply meals for their Circles of Burke Co poverty initiative.
- Missional Network 13 (Vale area) received funds to help support their Christmas Drama.
- Missional Network 9 (Belmont area) received funds to help support Camp Grace.
- Galilee and St Paul UMC's received funds to help develop their spiritual and academic summer program working with challenged students and a Monday night Bible study at the Green Tree Apartment Community.

The Vitality funds are helping to support projects at our local churches that help to prepare the church to be more outward focused. We have several grants pending to support congregations who want to offer:

- more modern technology for their community
- develop a welcome center to help build relationships with visitors
- offer salary support to provide musicians
- provide a picnic pavilion to offer outside space for the neighborhood
- provide a security system so that the church building and people can be safe in the neighborhood

Right now the Strategic Vitality Team reviews each grant and has serious discussion about how the project fits the values that we have determined help congregational vitality and health. The Team's grant form offers this direction:

1. Missional Engagement – what is your congregation willing to do to invest in building relationships within its community by meeting justice and mercy needs?
2. Risk Taking Ministry – what is your congregation willing to do above and beyond inward focused ministry? Define the God-sized risk the congregation is willing to take.
3. Innovative Planning – what level of creative thinking has been employed to develop plans for this new ministry? How will you treat this as an experiment, with regular evaluation?

4. New Church Development – what new thing is God calling you to explore? Is a Fresh Expression being considered?
5. Intentional Disciple Making – what are your measurements to determine disciple making outcomes? Attitudes, beliefs, behaviors?
6. Partnerships – who will you work with to help develop this ministry?

Please contact Rev. Shirley Canty, chair (scanty@wncumc.net), Kim Shockley (kshockley@wncumc.org), or Jana Alexander (Jalexander@wncumc.org) for grant forms. Right now the Conference is developing online grant forms, but until they are ready, our Word Document forms work well!