

Raising faith in

# The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship ■ September 2011

## EICKENROHT ELEMENTARY OUTREACH VISIT

**O**n August 27, a group from Hosanna (Pastor John, Ron and Heda Christ, Pat Gibbons, Judy Rhodes and Nancy Agafitei) visited Eickenroht School, a Spring ISD elementary school about 1.5 miles south of Hosanna on Ella Blvd (near the Funeral Museum). The purpose of the visit was to explore ways that Hosanna might serve our neighbors in the community by assisting with the needs of the predominantly low income students and families at this school. The group met with Principal Robbie Green and with Lisa Erickson, the 5th grade teacher who had first brought these needs to Hosanna's attention through a series of e-mails to Pastor John this summer.

### The School

Eickenroht serves pre-K, K, and grades 1-5. This is the third year it has been in operation. The staff is stable and dedicated to the population they are serving, although they have had layoffs recently because of budget issues. Some positions (librarian and K and pre-K aides have been dropped to half-time), and some positions have been eliminated (parent involvement coordinators). When the students leave Eickenroht, they graduate to Bammel Middle School, and then either Westfield or Dekaney High Schools.

The school is named for Ralph Eickenroht, one of the early bus drivers for SISD, who later became the first band director. Now in his 80s, he is one of the most active volunteers at the school. He has already been there for the first days of this school year, helping students get to their classrooms and meet their teachers.

The building is new, clean and lovely. It is technologically well-equipped, with a smartboard in every classroom, two computer labs, and several mobile laptop carts (holding 28 units each) that can be moved to various classrooms. They have had little vandalism from the students or the neighborhood. An SISD police officer is "on call" to come to their building if needed. The facility has alarms, gated entrances, and security cameras in the building and parking areas.

### The Student Population

Currently there is an enrollment of 688 students. The student population is quite transient. For example, they have a fourth grade student who has already been in seven different schools. The students live primarily in apartment complexes north of the school along Ella. Two main ones are Commerce Park and La Jolla.

Eickenroht is the #1 recipient of Title I money in the SISD, because 92.9% of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches because of the family income level. They are rated as "academically unacceptable" because 1 less than the required number of students did not pass the standardized test. This is currently under appeal, and they expect this rating to be upgraded.

The student population is roughly 50% Hispanic, with most of the rest African-American. The principal says that dealing with diversity is not a problem for the school. Poverty is the challenge. Because the parents are poor, many are working in the days and/or evenings, and therefore are unable to do much with/for the school.

Keeping the attendance at the state-required 95% is a challenge. Classroom sizes are at maximum and beyond in many cases. Bilingual classes are offered at every grade level of elementary school in SISD. The goal of these classes is to let the children become fluent in both English and Spanish, while they continue to learn their academic subjects.

### Ways they could use help

Some students need help to get the school "uniforms" (plain red or white T-shirt with sleeves; denim or khaki slacks, skirts or shorts). Some families need personal school supplies.

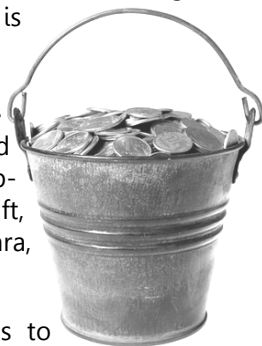
Some families need extra help in special situations. The school has a program called KIDS (Kids in Desperate Situations) to help with these needs, and a special employee to identify the needs and make the family connections to help. They raise funds for KIDS by selling T-shirts for \$40 each. Cash donations are

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# Noisy Offering September 18

Hi all!

Thank you for all of your support last month in helping to prepare the kids in our community for back to school! On the same day as our noisy offering last month we also had an amazing presentation by Heidi Christ Smith in regards to the African Initiative. As a project that is very close to many at Hosanna, we found it very appropriate that this month's noisy offering be for the **African Initiative**. The funds gathered this month will be used to help support the scholarship fund, WomenCraft, and community rehabilitation in Ngara, Kagera Region, Tanzania.



We are very fortunate as Americans to have the opportunity to attend school through high school and beyond if we so choose. In Ngara, Tanzania, poverty is rampant. Ngara has more than doubled in size as refugees fled there from neighboring Burundi and Rwanda, countries rocked by civil wars and genocide. As these refugees attempt to better their lives, many struggle to find work and take jobs as laborers in fields. As a result many children don't make it past the 7th grade, which exponentially increases their risk of living in poverty. So far Hosanna has sponsored 180 children. This may not seem like a lot, but they think of us and thank us every hour for our generosity.

And how often have we chosen to pursue careers that are our passion, something we consider fun, or like doing as a hobby? Many of the women in Ngara don't have this opportunity and have to work in fields with children on their backs and at their side, to provide a meager income and meals for their families. WomenCraft allows these women to weave baskets for an income by providing them with the materials and a place to work. Normally this is something they would do in their spare time and only as something that they needed for themselves.

Your gifts help to inspire the Living Word in many people's lives. Please continue to help share and spread the Good News!

Thank you all so much for everything you do!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me:

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## Have a blessed and noisy month!

## Glimpses of Grace 2011

### Year-to-Date Gifts

*Through June 30, 2011:*

<b>World Hunger</b>	<b>\$774.00</b>
<b>African Initiative:</b>	
<b>WomenCraft</b>	<b>\$18,200.00</b>
<b>Kagera Scholarship Fund</b>	<b>\$375.00</b>
<b>Buffalo Wings Fundraiser</b>	<b>\$1,155.90</b>
<b>Benevolence</b>	<b>\$16,020.83</b>
<b>Helping Hands</b>	<b>\$1,260.00</b>
<b>Mulkey Scholarship Fund</b>	<b>\$554.00</b>
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
<b>Garage Sale</b>	<b>\$3,908.53</b>
<b>Northwest Assistance Ministries</b>	<b>\$290.00</b>
<b>Rachel's Day</b>	<b>\$268.00</b>
<b>Hunger Rumbings</b>	<b>\$1,106.00</b>
<b>Mulkey Fundraiser</b>	<b>\$5,917.00</b>
<b>Disaster Relief</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

### Mission of the Month Gifts:

<b>January</b> — WomenCraft	\$755.57
<b>February</b> — The Life Center	\$729.00
<b>March</b> — Lutherhill Ministries	\$701.80
<b>April</b> — Habitat for Humanity	\$758.50
<b>May</b> — Lutheran Campus Ministries	\$595.52
<b>June</b> — NAM SOS Food Drive	\$668.76
<b>July</b> — Care Net Pregnancy Center	\$551.00
<b>August</b> — NAM Back-to-School Drive	\$575.00

### Helping Hands:

**January:** Two families received money for assistance; Four individuals received items from the food pantry.

**February:** Four individuals received food, one received rent assistance.

**March:** Four individuals received food.

**April:** Five families received food.

**May:** Four families received assistance.

**June:** Five families received food; two received gift cards.

**July:** Six families received food.

**August:** Four received food, assistance and gift cards.

**Helping Hands Fund Balance:** **\$1,722.57**

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also accepted, and we could do this as a Mission of the Month emphasis once per year.

They can use physical donations of supplies like Kleenex and hand sanitizer that the school budget does not cover.

Volunteer help is needed, especially shelving books and reading to the children in the library, and serving as classroom aides in pre-K and K classes. All volunteers have to pass a background check before starting to work. The school opens at 7:00am for the free breakfasts, and classes start at 7:30am.

A business person from the local community is needed to serve on their advisory board.

The school has an open house, a science night, a health night, and other events. The church could possibly staff a table at some events like this. A book drive to collect new and used children's books that could be given to students at such events would be welcome.

They have a need for ESL classes for parents. These could be done in the evenings at the school.

Snacks or baked goods for teacher/staff appreciation are welcome at any time.

We could possibly host an event on their property. The October Trunk or Treat Festival was mentioned as a possibility.

Need playground equipment (\$11,000 per playground set) and shade units for the existing playground (\$4,000 per tent).

There is a Youth Services group that does week-long summer camps from 9am to 12pm, plus a lunch following. It might be possible for Hosanna Youth to help with this activity, similar to the Servant Week activities that they did this year.

### **Ways that they do NOT need help**

The facility is "materials rich" with devices, technology, classroom equipment, and such purchased and stockpiled using the Title I funds that the school receives.

Students in grades 1 – 5 at this school are not permitted to carry backpacks. The principal feels that they are cumbersome and unnecessary.

If you feel called to coordinate the Eickenroht project, or to help in any of the ways listed, please contact any of the people listed above who have visited the school.

Claire Tyrrell here. I just wanted to thank everyone for all the support in renovating the nursery. It could not have turned out the way it did, in the timeframe it did, if not for everyone's help and the amazing monetary donations. The following are the wonderful businesses that contributed to the project. Please frequent them when the need arises.

- ◆ Carpet Man on Kuykendahl
- ◆ Sherwin Williams on Louetta
- ◆ S & H Flooring on 1960W
- ◆ Lowes at 249 and Cypresswood
- ◆ Sharon Ferguson, artist/muralist

The large rug in the yellow room was bought with funds from the Julia Marie Briggs Fund. Julia was a 13 year old Girl Scout when she died 3 years ago from an undetected tumor behind her heart that closed off her trachea. She went to our day camp and was active in the horse program. Her mother, Vera, gave me a check for \$200 when she found out that I was doing my Gold project, saying, "Julia would have wanted you to succeed in this project, and would have helped you. Use this money as you see fit." We bought this rug with that money in her honor. It's Julia's rug.

Thanks again for everything!  
Claire Tyrrell

Thanks to all of you who made our September 4th blood drive a success! We received credit for 22 units of blood which included 2 double red cell donations. If you were deferred, please don't give up! It happens to the best of us! Also, if you are not already a Commit For Life Member, please consider joining! Bernie Brown

# Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark

ONE - Don't miss the boat.

TWO - Remember that we are all in the same boat!

THREE - Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

FOUR - Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

FIVE - Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

SIX - Build your future on high ground.

SEVEN - For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

EIGHT - Speed isn't always on advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

NINE - When you're stressed, float awhile.

TEN - Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

ELEVEN - No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

Dear Hosanna Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your support of Care Net Pregnancy Center of N.W. Houston through your special offering. We are honored to be chosen as a recipient. Your gift will bless babies and their mothers as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ and advocate for life. In Christ, Mona Parish

## A pair of notes from our recent IHN guests:

Dear Hosanna Lutheran Church:

Thank you so much for being a blessing to us. We greatly appreciate the living quarters, food and fellowship. May God continue to bless you and your families.

Sincerely, The Carriere Family

FROM THE EVANS FAMILY,  
THANKS FOR THE LOVE  
AND SUPPORT, ETC. MUCH  
LOVE TO U.

We cannot produce abundantly without a deep prayer life, without living in God. A woman with a full time job and four children was once asked how she possibly had time to pray. She replied: "I am too busy not too pray! If I didn't take time to be with God, I would be swallowed up in chaos."

