

The Seed

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LUM launches Dignity U Wear program Partners with Stein Mart of Lafayette

The Lafayette Urban Ministry and Stein Mart of Lafayette are partnering with Dignity U Wear of Jacksonville, Florida to provide new clothing to needy children and adults in Greater Lafayette.

On Saturday March 20, eighty-eight LUM clients received almost 900 articles of brand new clothing during distribution at First Christian Church in downtown Lafayette.

Dignity U Wear creates partnerships with key manufacturers and retailers across the United States who provide the new clothing. These items are collected and warehoused, then made available to helping agencies like LUM, who distribute them to needy children free of charge. Dignity U Wear is like a food bank for new clothing. It assures new clothing that might otherwise be destroyed finds its way to children who have need.

"Children don't get to choose the world into which they are born," says LUM's Acting Executive Director, Mary

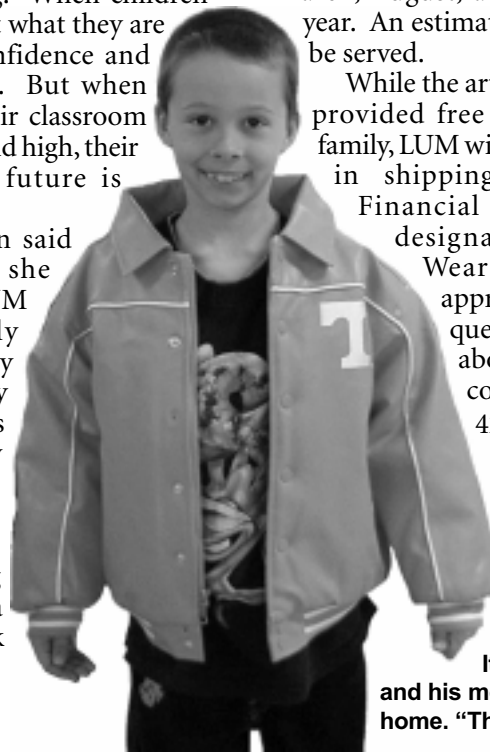
Anderson. "Too often it's a world filled with realities beyond their control—realities like worn, wrong-sized, hand-me-down clothing. When children are ashamed about what they are wearing, their confidence and self-esteem suffer. But when they walk into their classroom with their heads held high, their outlook for the future is brighter."

Neda Cochran said the clothing she received from LUM was especially needed. "My husband recently had surgery and is off work, so money is tighter than ever. It has been awhile since any of us has gotten anything new, so this is a special treat. Thank you very much!"

The Lafayette Urban Ministry will offer Dignity U wear clothing to our client families during the months of March, August, and November each year. An estimated 300 families will be served.

While the articles of clothing are provided free of charge to each family, LUM will incur about \$1,000 in shipping costs annually.

Financial contributions designated to Dignity U Wear would be appreciated. If you have questions or comments about Dignity U Wear, contact Joe Micon at 423-2691 ext. 20.



9-year-old Dustin Balsler loves his new spring jacket. It was a perfect fit and his mom let him wear it home. "Thanks LUM!"

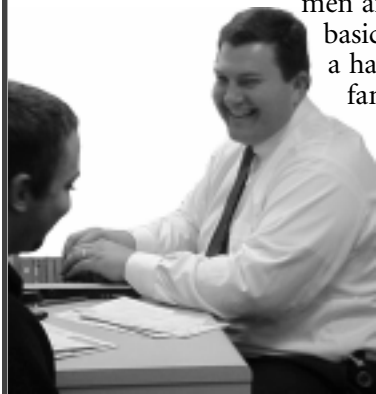
LUM and Bison Financial help families claim \$90,000

Many working families continue to struggle to feed, clothe, and house their families. The Earned Income Tax Credit is a federal tax program that provides targeted relief to low and moderate income Hoosiers and allows working men and women keep income for basic needs. It is a "hand up" (not a hand-out) that helps working families escape poverty.

Many families don't claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) because they don't realize they're eligible for it, file the easy form, or just need help filing their taxes. In tax year 2000, \$1.9 million in federal EITC went unclaimed in Tippecanoe County. Lafayette Urban Ministry is working to bring that money back here for people who need it, and benefit our entire community by reducing reliance on social services and by pumping more dollars into the economy.

Through April 15, Bison Financial Group has volunteers at LUM helping EITC-eligible workers file their taxes free of charge. The volunteers are here Mondays and Wednesdays from 5-8PM and on Thursday afternoons.

Eligible workers can receive as much as \$4,204 based on their earnings and family situation! As of March 31, volunteers have been able to file for over \$90,000 in tax credits.



Many thanks to Bison Financial Group volunteers including Steve Dunnick (at left), Managing Director Dave Vorbeck, Brian Melchi, Karen Stahly and Tosha Young, and to VITA volunteers Rex and Julie Daisy.



Bringing light



by Mary Anderson, Acting Executive Director

The LUM staff teases me about the sorry

condition of my office plants—which I insist would thrive if they would only get some sunlight (although water, fertilizer and new soil would help). I think a lot about light this time of year—or more specifically the lack of it – and not just because my plants are longing for some sun.

I get tired of gray, dreary days in February and March. I envy those lucky enough to spend some time in the southern sun. My biorhythms don't want me getting up in the dark. A gloomy Sunday afternoon is good only for the New York Times crossword puzzle and a nap. The church is wending its way through Lent – not exactly a "light" time of the church year.

So if nature and the calendar aren't going to cooperate, I guess I have to look elsewhere for light. There was a little burst of "light" this winter when my son and future daughter-in-law announced their engagement. And the celebration of our 30th wedding anniversary. And the first daffodils sticking their green leaves up (although they must be having second thoughts!). The promise of the flaming light of Easter after the darkness of Good Friday. I'll take "light" in any form I can find it.

In our daily work at LUM, we don't have to look too far to find the light. We see it reflected daily in the faces of those who come for emergency assistance and leave knowing that their utility disconnect is avoided or their prescription is filled. We see it in the faces of our after-school children, eagerly getting off the vans to see what great event is awaiting them upstairs. It comes to us in the kind donations in response to our annual fund campaign.

The greatest source of light coming from LUM throughout the year is the light provided by our volunteers! Each and every LUM

volunteer—over 2,000 of you—has brought a special light to those you serve.

LUM volunteers have fed and sheltered the homeless. They have read to children and helped with homework after school. They have shepherded campers and hiked for an end to hunger. They have answered phones and mailed newsletters. They mentor teenaged girls in RESPECT and buy Christmas gifts for Jubilee. They write their elected officials and represent clients' needs as advocates. They bag groceries at St. John's and grow extra produce in their gardens. They donate time, talent and treasure. And thousands of lives are brightened because of their gifts.

Your special brightness is never taken for granted. Please know we

value each and every one of you who gives of time and treasure to LUM. We could not do our ministry without you—we would not have the time, the money OR the energy. You are a blessing to every life you touch. You are our bright lights, reflecting God's love in your words and deeds. And we cannot say THANK YOU enough for sharing your light through our programs for the area's low-income families.

If you haven't been a LUM volunteer and are thinking about ways that you could help, please check this newsletter for up-coming volunteer opportunities. Or check our website for a current listing of LUM events that could use your help. There is a place for YOUR special light in the work of Lafayette Urban Ministry.



Volunteers are LUM's bright lights, reflecting God's love in words and deeds.

Top Ten Reasons to be a LUM Volunteer

10. When you call in sick to work the boss is always empathetic!
9. You can play euchre all night with other shelter volunteers and your spouse won't be upset when you don't come home until 7:30am!
8. Mary Anderson's candy dish!
7. You don't have to worry about your raise from LUM kicking you into a higher tax bracket!
6. Research shows that volunteers have less stress and live significantly longer than those who don't volunteer.
5. If you're a LUM Camp counselor we provide you with a never-ending supply of comfort food!
4. You get to spend quality time with LUM staff!
3. Students who volunteer regularly have higher grade point averages.
2. If you are a guy who volunteers on the bulk mail crew, there's a 12:1 female to male ratio, and every one of them is gorgeous!
1. Volunteering at LUM is good for your soul!

Please remember LUM's Annual Fund Drive



During a St. Patrick's Day Potluck for staff and board members, LUM Board President Carolyn McGlone explained how vital their financial support is to LUM's mission.

It will take almost \$600,000 to fund LUM's planned programs and services for 2004. The money will be spent to provide shelter for the homeless, food for the hungry, services for at risk children, and emergency financial assistance for families. Over 3,700 families will be served. About 1/3 of the funding will come from churches, government, grants, and businesses. But over two-thirds of LUM's annual budget comes from individuals, like you, who recognize the importance of our work and are committed to making sure our doors stay open.

March and April is Annual Fund Campaign time at LUM. It's a time for us to thank our individual donors for their past friendship and support. It's also a time for us to remind our donors that LUM's financial needs are slightly greater this year. Our goal for 2004 is \$60,000. As of March 31st we've reached 50% of our goal.

If you've already sent in your annual Fund Campaign pledge card, thank you! If you haven't yet sent it in, we'd appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible. Questions? Contact Joe Micon, 423-2691, ext. 20. Thank you.

Catholic Diocese & labor groups come to the rescue

When City of Lafayette Fire Inspector Ron Ritchie completed his annual safety inspection at LUM, the news wasn't good. The 10 additional shelter beds added in 2003 to the LUM basement resulted in the need for special fire rated walls and doors to be built in order to assure safer exit in an emergency. On top of that, our-nine year-old commercial refrigerator in the homeless shelter kitchen was about to breathe its last breath.

But thanks to a special \$5,600 grant from the Lafayette Diocese Campaign For Human Development, the funds are now available to make the needed purchases of drywall, studs, 3 fire rated doors, and of course the new commercial refrigerator. In addition, three local labor unions have offered their services to complete the wiring, build the walls, hang the doors, and remove heavy file cabinets from the basement. They are: IBEW Local 668, Carpenters Local 215, and Laborers Local 274. LUM thanks each of these groups who have worked and sacrificed to make sure our shelter is both hospitable and safe for our guests.

LUM Board and staff enjoy evening retreat

LUM's 7-member Executive Council and 12-member staff enjoyed an evening of fun and discussion together on February 6th at the home of LUM Board president Carolyn McGlone.

This year's topic was LUM's case management program. We discussed program goals and direction for this important LUM ministry. Up to now, the program has been staffed primarily by graduate social work interns, but recently LUM has started using volunteers to help guests move from our shelter to more appropriate housing placements. The hospitality was warm, the food was great and the evening retreat was a great way for LUM to start off the new year.

NEW VOLUNTEER POSSIBILITIES

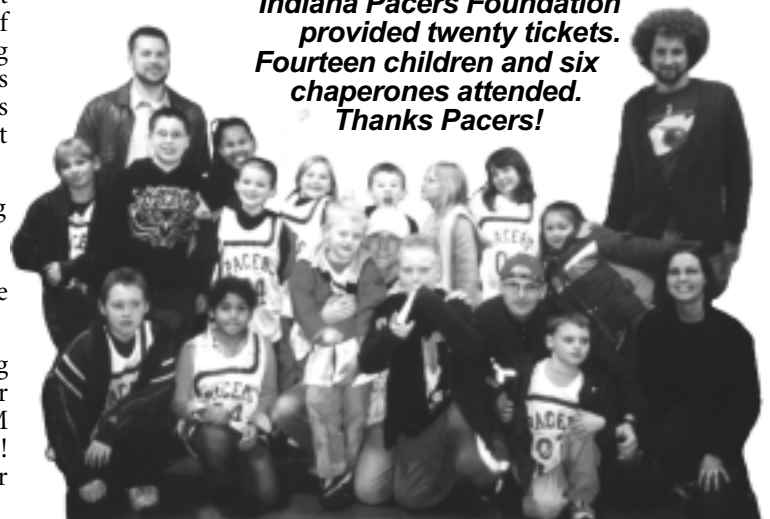
Case Manager. LUM is looking for individuals with an interest in helping homeless shelter guests return to the mainstream of community life. Knowledge of government/community housing programs, public assistance and employment programs is desirable but not required. This position requires 15 to 20 hours per week and is perfect for retirees. Contact Ron Langdon at 423-2691.

LUM Camp Counselor. Must be 18 years old, enjoy working with children, and be available to spend June 14-18 onsite at Pine Creek United Methodist Camp near Pine village in Warren County. For more information or an application contact Joe Micon at 423-2691 ext. 20, or lum@lafayetteurbanministry.org

Food Pantry Shopper/Driver. Are you looking for something fun (and important!) to do with that pick up truck? Shop for and transport food from the Food Bank to the St. John's/LUM Food Pantry. Once per week or once per month— you decide! Contact Patti O'Callaghan at 423-2691 ext. 17, or pocallaghan@lafayetteurbanministry.org.



On February 28 LUM's Afterschool Program kids enjoyed a fun evening out in Indianapolis watching the Pacers triumph over the Philadelphia 76ers. The Indiana Pacers Foundation provided twenty tickets. Fourteen children and six chaperones attended. Thanks Pacers!



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Change Service Requested

From the LUM Board of Directors...

At its December 2003 meeting, the Lafayette Urban Ministry Board of Directors approved the following personnel changes, which took effect on February 1, 2004:

- Executive Director, Joe Micon, is temporarily reassigned to the position of Operations Manager.
- Program Director, Mary Anderson, is temporarily reassigned to the position of Acting Executive Director.

On January 31st, Joe Micon announced his candidacy for the District 26 State Representative seat. The changes mean that while a candidate for office, Joe will continue employment at LUM, remain accountable to the board and maintain responsibility for day-to-day administration of LUM, including supervision of staff and direction of program and development. Mary Anderson will also be directly supervised by the board, and in addition to her usual duties, assume responsibility for communication with donors, churches, community groups, and the general public.

The Lafayette Urban Ministry is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, which neither endorses nor opposes candidates for public office. Do you have questions or comments? Contact LUM Board President Carolyn McGlone at 474-2945.

Briefly Noted...

- Omega Chi Epsilon, Purdue's chemical engineering honor society will hold its annual disc golf tournament on April 17th and 18th at Ross Hills Park. The tournament not only provides a fun activity for Lafayette area residents and great prizes for the winners, but the tournament raises money for LUM programs. Last year \$1,500 was donated! For information about how you can participate visit www.lafayetteurbanministry.org.
- Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is partnering with LUM as part of its Sharing Advantage Program. Sharing Advantage allows its customers to direct Wells Fargo to make a \$300 contribution on their behalf to a non-profit organization of their choice, like LUM, following a loan closing. If you are in the market to purchase or refinance your home, you have an opportunity to support the important work of LUM. Contact Lisa Marie Marlett at 464-8670 or e-mail her at lisa.marlett@wellsfargo.com.

12-year-old Shelby Ratcliff and 6-year-old Faith Killian-Fasnacht received thanks from the entire LUM Board of Directors on February 18th after donating a combined 300 boxes of Girl Scout cookies to LUM's homeless shelter! That's a lot of cookies—thanks girls!

