

*Since The United Methodist Church launched Imagine No Malaria in 2010, more than 1.2 million nets have been distributed.*

**By Jan Rahn**

*Tribune Staff*

As the proud contest winner of supporting a sad cause, the Grant United Methodist Church will be able to send four members to a leadership institute.

The Grant UMC led their district in an "Imagine No Malaria" contest, raising \$2,056 for mosquito nets in an effort to prevent malaria in Africa.

Malaria kills 700,000 people each year. Every 60 seconds a child in Africa dies of this disease which can be eradicated by prevention, treatment, education and communication.

"Imagine No Malaria" is a United Methodist initiative toward ending deaths—the goal is to raise \$75 million.

The amount raised by the local church in Grant for the contest equates to \$16.44 per parishioner.

The Grant UMC raised the funds through Bible School and Sunday School collections along with a free-will donation meal for this particular mission emphasis.



"This project was well supported in a big way," said Pastor Nora Mendyk. Besides winning this year's district challenge, there was an additional \$1,000 raised during last year's Vacation Bible School.

"It's wonderful to be able to help children around the world as we're made aware of their needs," said Mendyk. "This malaria campaign is getting widespread as people understand the need."

Mendyk said the United Methodist Church not only provides nets, but also educates people how to take community action.

"Many people don't even know malaria is caused by mosquitoes," said Pastor Mendyk. The initiative educates them on the importance of cleaning up stagnant water or trash and providing basic sanitation.

For winning the "Imagine No Malaria" contest, the four representatives from the Grant UMC will have their registration, mileage, hotel and meals covered while attending the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection Leadership Institute in Kansas City during September. Eighty different ministry workshops are offered. Keynote speakers are Adam Hamilton and John Ortberg—pastors, leaders, innovators and visionaries.

**About Malaria**

Malaria is recognizable by early symptoms of fever, vomiting, and headache. It is transmitted

by the Anopheles mosquito and can result in anemia, coma, and death if left untreated.

Although malaria, a disease of poverty, is preventable, every year it kills 700,000 people, mostly children and pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa.

United Methodists are part of a worldwide effort to eradicate this disease by the year 2015.

### **Support from UMCOR**

Financial and logistical support for this program is being provided by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the humanitarian and relief agency of the United Methodist Church.

The distribution of nets was coordinated by Africare, a humanitarian organization that provides logistical and distribution support.

The entire project has been done with the full support of the Angola Ministry's National Malaria Control program in collaboration with the West Angola United Methodist Church.

### **What Funding Provides**

Money collected to help eradicate malaria will do the following:

- Provide medication to treat someone with malaria
- Purchase and deliver one insecticide-treated mosquito net
- Cover the expenses for an anti-malaria campaign in a local school
- Train traditional birth attendants in malaria prevention and treatment
- \$500 provides all the expenses for a one-day community leader training for 35-40 attendees on malaria prevention
- Provide the cost of a motorbike for a community health team in Liberia or Sierra Leone
- \$4,000 purchases a year's worth of malaria laboratory test kits for all UMC clinics in Bo District, Sierra Leone
- \$5,000 supports a bed net distribution program targeting pregnant women and children in 20 communities in Liberia
- \$10,000 purchases anti-malarial medications for patients cared for in a rural hospital in Nigeria for one year
- \$20,000 can underwrite a health board training for both annual conferences in Angola, to assist the church in developing a strategic community-based health and malaria prevention plan

### **Malaria Control Timeline**

- In 2005 the Malaria Control Program was launched in Sierra Leone and is now operating in various countries around the globe.

This program works with communities to form comprehensive plans to combat malaria. At the community level, UMCOR works to eliminate stagnant water and trash around people's homes.

With help, training, free or low cost medications, consultations, indoor residual spraying, and insecticide-treated nets are provided to individuals and families.

UMCOR's efforts target pregnant women and children in particular, who are most vulnerable.

- In 2006, when the United Nations Foundation, "Nothing But Nets," program launched more than five years ago within the UMC, the concept spread like wildfire throughout the denomination.

Led by youth in particular, the UMC has raised more than \$ 9 million to send life-saving insecticide treated mosquito nets to Africa and join the global fight to prevent unnecessary deaths from malaria.

When United Methodist Churches and annual conferences contributed to "Nothing But Nets" programs in sub-Sahara Africa, UMCOR worked with UMC health teams in Africa to distribute the nets and implement the training follow up programs.

- In 2008, United Methodists pledged to support a “Global Health Initiative” at general conference.

It was determined that the issue of malaria in Africa would serve as the initial focal or entry point for the larger denominational conversation about health worldwide.

- 2010: Since the launch of “Nothing But Nets” and the Global Health Initiative, United Methodists as a denomination have learned more about the complexities of malaria, other related health challenges, and all the issues tied to poverty and development.

In an effort to honor both the enthusiasm of “Nothing But Nets,” but wanting to do even more for malaria, the “Imagine No Malaria” campaign was launched in April 2010.

Partners in this effort include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.N. Foundation. Visit [ImagineNoMalaria.org](http://ImagineNoMalaria.org).