

The Presbyterian Investor

Published for investors and friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

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How Presbyterian Investors Help Project Vida Answer a Great Need on the Texas Border



Project Vida Health Center, El Paso, Texas

by The Reverend Bill Schlesinger, Co-Director, Project Vida

Traditionally, when Presbyterian investors lend a helping hand through the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, it's to help a specific church renovate its facilities, add a building, or even relocate. Reshaping and adding space allows congregations to better respond to the mission needs in their communities.

In the case of Project Vida in El Paso, Texas, the "congregation" takes on a much broader definition. We don't have a congregation in the traditional sense. Our congregation consists of many supporting churches, the Presbytery of Tres Rios and lots of community partners. However, our mission is no less important, and the need for help from Presbyterian investors is no less critical.

My wife, Carol, and I are ordained Presbyterian ministers and co-directors of Project Vida, but we don't shepherd the traditional flock. Project Vida is a full service complex with medical clinics, low- and moderate-income housing, a licensed child development center and a transition living center for homeless families with children. The word "vida" means "life" in Spanish, and it is that broad definition that provides the parameters of what we do. Over the years, Project Vida has added programs in health education, adult education, GED, financial literacy, gang prevention, and recently, micro-enterprise development.

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How Presbyterian Investors Help Project Vida Answer a Great Need on the Texas Border



U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes and The Reverend Bill Schlesinger on the health center's opening day.

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El Paso, with a population of approximately 750,000, sits just across the border from Juarez, Mexico, with its two and a half million residents. The poverty here is grinding, to say the least. This area has the second highest level of medically uninsured in the state of Texas, nearly 34%. Family income is among the lowest in the nation, with nearly 70,000 below the federal poverty level. For thousands, along with some of the most basic daily needs, hope itself is in short supply. That's why Project Vida is of such critical importance. We provide a helping hand and a leg up for those who yearn to make life better for their children and to take care of their old and infirm. And we're making progress.

“Through the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, we’ve been able to purchase the building in which the Project Vida Health Center is housed. By purchasing the site, which we now lease, we will be able to both reduce the monthly cost of the space and make a strategic commitment to serving the people of northeast El Paso for years to come..”

– The Reverend Bill Schlesinger

Through the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, we've been able to purchase the building in which the Project Vida Health Center is housed. This vital entity provides care for 6,700 registered patients and is the only medical alternative for a sizable portion of the



The community gathers for the Grand Opening reception.

population in northeast El Paso. By purchasing the site, which we now lease, we will be able to both reduce the monthly cost of the space and make a strategic commitment to serving the people of northeast El Paso for years to come.

The loan to Project Vida marks one of the few times that the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program has provided funding to an entity with the end result being something other than a new or expanded church facility. Overwhelming need calls for new approaches and we, along with all those who are involved with Project Vida, want to thank the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program and all of its participating investors for their flexibility and willingness to look at non-traditional ways to provide help. It's the essence of what our mission as Presbyterians is all about, isn't it?

If you would like to make an investment in support of Project Vida to help further reduce the cost of our loan, please contact the Investment & Loan Program at 800-903-7457, Ext. 5865.

A “Thank You” from Westminster Presbyterian Church for Lending a Helping Hand in Gainesville, Florida

by *The Reverend Glenn Dickson, Pastor*

When the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program folks called to ask about our church and how we're serving our community in Gainesville, I wanted to be sure the readers of their newsletter would understand what the Program is helping us to accomplish and thank them.

First, perhaps a bit of history is in order. Westminster Presbyterian Church was started in 1967, and I came on board as pastor in 1972. From the beginning, this has been a church that has embraced the mission of being servants to each other and to the community at large. It's been an invigorating challenge, I can tell you, and our congregation keeps me on my toes with their enthusiasm and commitment to putting the teachings of Christ into everyday practice. Because we are less than a mile from the University of Florida campus, we have a significant number of members who are faculty members of the university. Our highly intelligent, well-educated congregation is the driving force behind all of our community outreach programs.

“...we refinanced some years ago through the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program and that more advantageous rate structure is saving us over \$4,000 per year in interest payments. The money we've saved, thanks to Presbyterian investors, goes to support the community programs we sponsor.”

– The Reverend Glenn Dickson

We will soon mark the 10th Anniversary of the dedication of our sanctuary, completed in 1997. This building has been the springboard that has allowed us to reach out to the community in our worship services. It was constructed using conventional financing, but we refinanced some years ago through the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program and that more advantageous rate structure is saving us over \$4,000 per year in interest payments. The money we've saved, thanks to Presbyterian investors, goes to support the community programs we sponsor.

One of those is the ALCORN Clinic. The acronym stands for Alachua County Organization for Rural Needs. The clinic provides medical and dental care to the needy and uninsured in one of the poorest areas of the county. These are people who have few alternatives for health care in their rural community. Anyone and everyone who comes in is treated and charges are assessed on a sliding scale based on their ability to pay. I wish those Presbyterians who support the Investment & Loan Program could see



Westminster Presbyterian Church, Gainesville, Florida

the look of gratitude that comes over the faces of those we treat. They'd realize, just as we do, that their commitment does real good in the world. Those looks of gratitude were repeated 17,000 times last year...that's the number of patient visits we had at the clinic.

In 1976, we started a day school for preschool children to help give them a head start in learning and prepare them for kindergarten and elementary school. It meets in a house we moved on site to our church campus and now serves about seventy children. Ninety-eight percent of the children come from outside our congregation, and it's now one of the top three preschools in Gainesville.

We also are involved in something called the Action Network. It's a coalition of Protestant and Catholic churches working to improve neighborhoods all over Gainesville. One of the things that we've been proud to participate in is the building of a skateboard facility just three hundred yards from our church. Now, skateboarding isn't something an old brittle-boned fellow like me would try but it's one of those things that is a healthy activity for our neighborhood youth. This facility provides a dedicated place designed for the sport and provides an alternative to using private property where there would be insurance liability issues.

There are numerous other activities and programs in which Westminster Presbyterian Church is involved, but the point I wish to make is that our mission here, as we see it, is to be servants to each other, to do justice by working for peace, to be reconcilers. And, we want to express our appreciation to the Presbyterian investors who have lent us their money to help us accomplish some good in our community.

If you would like to make an investment in support of Westminster Presbyterian Church to help further reduce the cost of our loan, please contact the Investment & Loan Program at 800-903-7457, Ext. 5865.

We Welcome and Introduce to You Two New Board Members...

Douglas Blaine Kenney

Douglas Blaine Kenney is – since 1977 – an independent Management Consultant specializing in foreign and domestic banks and Wall Street investment firms. Prior to this he was an executive with RCA, Citicorp and Coopers & Lybrand. During this same period he also served Gideons International as camp president, treasurer, memorial Bible secretary, prison ministry coordinator, chaplain and church speaker - including several years as pulpit supply to the Chapel of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y. He is a former U.S. Marine, serving during the Vietnam War. Doug studied Computer Science at Northeastern University, Business Administration at the University of Maryland, and Electronics Engineering at SUNY Binghamton. He writes for several technical media publications and is the author of numerous books on banking, computers and telecommunications, as well as many articles in the financial press. Today, as the Financial Secretary and a member of the Finance Committee of Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church, he manages church investments and teaches weekly Bible studies. Doug and his wife Linda currently reside in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.



Douglas Blaine Kenney

in Kansas. While studying to receive a B.A. in Sociology and Psychology, like a number college students, she strayed from church attendance. A blind date brought her husband, John, into her life in 1970. After their marriage, Carolyn moved to Ogden, Utah, and she became active in the First Presbyterian Church, Ogden. Carolyn's first assignment was to serve with her husband as the advisors for Senior High Fellowship. She has served a total of nine years on the session and taught both youth and adult church school for several years at First Presbyterian. She and her husband served as officers in their local Mariners and as the National Children and Youth Directors for the Mariners Organization. In the past, Carolyn has also been active and an officer in the Presbyterian Women Association of First Presbyterian. Currently Carolyn serves as the treasurer for the church. In 1973, she was recruited to serve on a Hunger Task Force at the presbytery level. When the presbytery entered into a partnership with three other denominations to form Shared Ministries in Utah, she became active in that organization and eventually became the moderator. Carolyn has served as the moderator of the Presbytery of Utah and the moderator of the Coordinating Council. In 2000 she stood for election for Stated Clerk and Treasurer for the presbytery. Carolyn continues to serve in both capacities. While serving as the commissioner from the presbytery to the Synod of the Rocky Mountains, she was appointed to represent the synod on the General Assembly Council (GAC). She is also a member of the Mission Support committee. As a member of the GAC she was invited to serve on the Board of the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program.

Carolyn Knight

Carolyn Knight grew up in Smith Center, Kansas - the center of the United States until Alaska and Hawaii were added to the 48. Her parents and extended family were very active members of the First Presbyterian Church in Smith Center, and she had all the gold stars for perfect attendance and Bible verse memory from Sunday school and church. In 1961, she was one of 37 youth from Kansas selected to participate in a two-week mission trip, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, to the Appalachians. This was a memorable trip for a teenager like Carolyn from a small farm town



Carolyn Knight

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This newsletter highlights just a few examples of how Presbyterian congregations are meeting real gospel challenges. And Presbyterian investors are helping make it happen. To join the growing number of investors, call the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program or visit our web site to request an Offering Circular.

If you want your investment to help a particular congregation earn Get the Point! rebates, please contact Suzi Gwinn at the Program office. Through your support, congregations can reduce their effective interest rate by as much as one full percentage point.

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