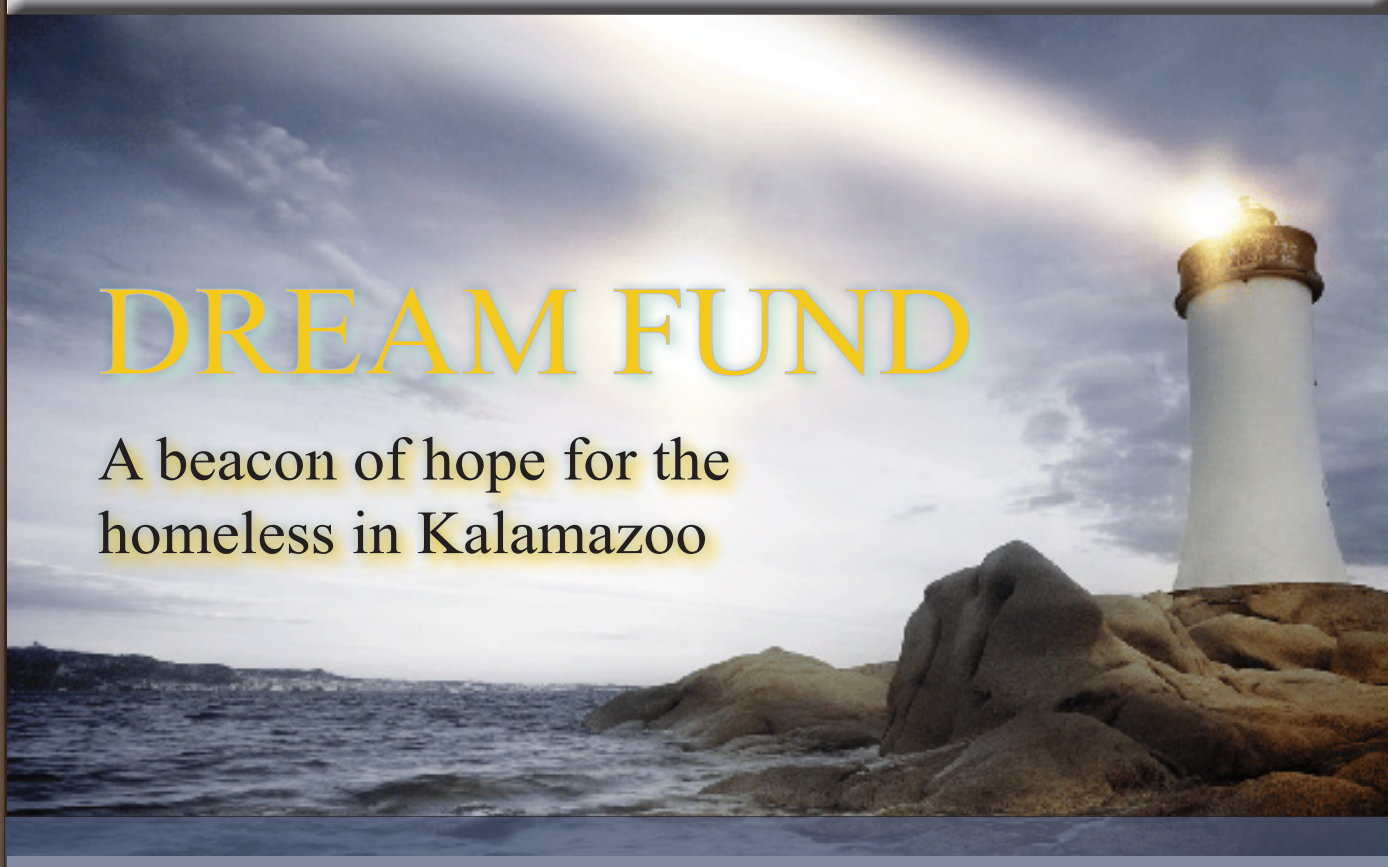




DREAM FUND

A beacon of hope for the
homeless in Kalamazoo



***For where your
treasure is there
your heart will
be also.***

Matthew 6:21

Thank you for joining us on Sunday, June 16 in celebration of your response to the Dream Fund Capital Campaign! The original concept for this fund drive came from the congregation approximately six years ago during the last Forward in Faith building capital campaign. At that time, a significant number of individuals indicated that after the church building project was completed, they would be interested in a different type of campaign—one to address needs within the city of Kalamazoo. In actuality, we were celebrating the implementation of your dream of six years ago on June 16! That morning we were also able to announce the first housing project due to your generosity in pledging your prayers, time, and resources.

Matthew 5: 14-16 talks about how *“You are the light of the world... Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”* We have not even started the first project, but we know that your light is already shining brightly while making an impact in the community and causing others to evaluate what they can do. We are hearing from various individuals and organizations, *“Could we do something like this?”* Or, *“can we join First UMC and become a part of The Dream?”* (continued on p. 4)

A beacon of hope for Kalamazoo: The Dream Fund *(cont. from p. 1)*

Your pledges and gifts to date enabled us to begin planning for the Dream’s first project at the Dream Team meeting on June 17. As you know, there is a significant homeless population in Kalamazoo. A large percentage of the homeless in Kalamazoo are women and children as a result of domestic violence and abuse. **To help address this issue, the first project will be to work with the YWCA to provide transitional housing for families coming out of the YW’s shelter.** These families can remain in transitional housing for up to two years. During those two years, supportive services are offered so that by the end of that time they are well on their way to beginning a new life. The cost of this project is approximately \$100,000. The hope is to complete the needed funding by the end of summer or early fall.

Finally, you have heard of the parable of the talents, where an individual entrusted his possessions to his servants while he was to be out of the country. Two of the three servants were able to double what he had left with them. You in turn have entrusted the Dream Team with your money, and the intent is to act like the two servants who increased the value of what was entrusted to them. The hope is to work with a variety of agencies and foundations to obtain matching funds for what you have entrusted to The Dream. Your gift may not be doubled, but it will grow! As of this date, **\$786,437 and other donations/commitments totaling \$33,993, for a grand total of \$820,430, have been raised and or pledged.** If this much was raised in the past six weeks, imagine what will be accomplished over the next three years.

Proverbs 16:9 reminds us that *“the human mind plans the way, but God provides the steps.”* If you have not pledged, prayerfully consider how you would like to get involved. You will find pledge cards in the pews or you can pledge online at the church’s website (www.umc-kzo.org; Generosity tab; Dream Fund drop down). Everyone is urged to pray that “God will provide the steps” in moving forward as a faith community to provide homes for ALL children and adults in our beloved city of Kalamazoo.

Thank you for being who you are—people who care, who want to make a difference, and who are a light to the world. - *The Dream Team*

July Mission of the Month Change

by Donna Oudersluys, Outreach Team

As many of you are aware, after its long history of providing transitional housing to families, the Eleanor House Family Shelter has closed. Throughout its years of service, First UMC having purchased the house, helped meet many needs of the women and children who temporarily called the house their home. Among those supportive efforts has been the yearly "Christmas in July" mission of the month. The congregation donated hundreds of items needed by the shelter and the families who were ready to move from Eleanor House to more permanent housing. The Outreach Team thanks you for your past generous response to "Christmas in July." Many of us will miss seeing the Christmas tree with house tags in the Perks gathering area in the middle of the summer!

This year for the July Mission of the Month, the Outreach Team asks that you take note of the needs of the **Kids Adventure Program (KAP)** and the snacks that are needed for the children attending the program from June 24 through August 1 (see page 9 of this issue for a complete list). In addition, our **food pantry** is in need of specific donations (see p. 2).

The Seita Scholars program at WMU

gratefully received 10 bottles of laundry detergent, 6 boxes of softener sheets, 28 packs of toilet tissue, 13 bottles of conditioner, 11 bottles of body wash, 8 bottles of shampoo, 4 dish detergents, 10 bars of soap, 1 set of twin sheets, and 8 miscellaneous personal care items thanks to your generosity. These items given during the May Mission of the Month have been distributed to the students who have aged out of foster care, are enrolled at Western, and who call WMU their home during the summer. You can learn more about this exceptional program at their website.

Thank you, The Outreach Team