

World Mission

Here's some facts, figures:

What: World Mission Project.
Where: Tonjibe, Costa Rica.
Who: Members from the following churches: Birmingham United Methodist; Nardin Park United Methodist in

Farmington Hills; Byron United Methodist; Garden City United Methodist; Swartz Creek United Methodist; Springville United Methodist.
When: Two-week sessions, Jan. 17-31 and Jan. 31

through Feb. 14.
Why: To construct a multipurpose, one-room building next to an elementary school, to be used as a lunchroom, study room, library and teachers' office.

Local churches are represented

Following are members of "World Mission Project's Team List 2000," who later this month will embark on a trip to build a classroom in Tonjibe, Costa Rica:

From Birmingham United Methodist Church: Jim Miller, Farmington Hills; LaVere and Zoja Webster, Rochester Hills; Jaye Emerick, West Bloomfield; Ann Gussert, Haelett; Frederick J. Miller, Clinton Township; Christo-

pher Hall, Beverly Hills; Richard and Martha Michel, Birmingham.
From Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills: Associate Pastor Kathleen Groff, Farmington Hills; Joan and Robert Suda, Davao Island, S.C.; Fay Hager, Boynton; Jack and Shirley Tingle, Livonia; Elton Robertson, West Bloomfield; Robert H. Karr Jr., Livonia.
From Garden City United

Methodist Church: Mary and Lindsay Dolin, Livonia.
From Springville United Methodist Church: Pastor James Thomas, Swartz Creek; Basil Bloss, Swartz Creek.

Also making the trip are **Onsted resident:** John Bryan, from Springville United Methodist Church and Jeffrey Klein of Detroit. Klein's church affiliation was not listed.

Some information about Costa Rica

Facts about Tonjibe, Costa Rica:
Amenities: Electricity, clean water.
Education: Mandatory through the sixth grade.
Weather: Daytime temperatures in the 70s and 80s, nighttime temps in the 50s.
Language: Spanish.

Religion: Mostly Catholic.
Food: Beans and rice.
Medical: Residents have access to free, socialized health care services.
Location: Central America.
Attitude: "Pro-American," said Jim Miller, a problem. Miller said.

Other: Many carry cell phones, but personal computers are much more rare than in the United States.
 Banks close at 3 p.m. Sales tax is approximately 13 percent. Traditionally an agriculturally driven economy, it now features exports and tourism.

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an electric shower head purchased by the American volunteers. Locals are hired to do the cooking. "We eat a lot of beans and rice."

Despite those less-than-ideal conditions, the "Volunteers in Mission" members are gearing up for two-week shifts, spanning nearly a month, to construct a multipurpose room adjacent to the Tonjibe elementary school. It will cost between \$16,000-\$18,000 to build the room. Meanwhile, the work site isn't too far from one of the world's most active volcanoes, Arenal.

Miller will participate in the second shift, from Jan. 31-Feb. 14, as will Beverly Hills resident Christopher Hall, another member of Birmingham First United Methodist.

Helping humanity

It's the fifth time Miller has gone with the teams down to the region. For Hall, it will be his initial experience.

According to Hall, he became interested in signing up for the trip — which costs each volunteer \$1,000, including half for air fare — after doing some work last summer for Habitat for Humanity, helping build a house in Ferndale.

"I did a little work for Habitat for Humanity and I heard the stories from people — they did some work" in Costa Rica with the Volunteers in Mission team, Hall said. He felt compelled to join them for this year's junket, actually the 14th such trip for team members Bob Suda (of Nardin Park United Methodist) and Howard Gilmore of Byron United Methodist.

Costa Rica was identified by the United Methodist Church global mission group during the mid-1980s as a region sorely needing attention and assistance.
 "Groups were put together (including local churches, for instance) and they started going over there," Miller recalled. "It's just continued."

During recent trips, the team built a sanctuary and Sunday school addition to the Tonjibe Methodist Church, as well as two elementary school classrooms. "The original school (scheduled to be demolished) is infested with termites, just in a shambles," Miller explained.

Because of the structural work done by team members, the Costa Rican government was able to spend money on "luxuries," namely a second teacher, and school computer.

Extra duty

Although the main agenda is to build the multipurpose room, Miller emphasized that the missions always wind up accomplishing much more. A partial list of items purchased by the team include: medical supplies; school uniforms and school supplies; eating utensils; stove and refrigerator; tuition to medical school for several students.

"There's always a lot of extras that need to be taken care of," he said.

This year, with the intent of establishing a library, Spanish Bibles and other books are being brought down to the friendly nation of Costa Rica, nominated twice for the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize. They also will bring

14 suitcases of donated used clothing, toothbrushes and blood pressure kits.

And by the time they leave, probably countless other endeavors will have begun, to be wrapped up in future trips.

Beside the money for the building project, the group brings additional funds, materials and household items to help Tonjibe, a needy, isolated Indian community inhabited only by a tribe.

"Any money that comes in over and above our project we will spend there," Miller said. "It's not like we bring it home and bank it. We start over fresh."

Miller, a retired Garden City teacher, said local school and governmental officials are asked about what residents need most, and underscored that it isn't the case of the "ugly American" coming in and dictating.

"We try very hard not to ... stomp in and say 'This is what you need,'" Miller said. "We try to say, 'What do you need, how can we help you?'"

The trek isn't just to work, however. Miller said there is enough time to go to village restaurants and shops, play baseball and watch Spanish-language versions of Walt Disney films such as "Toy Story" on a television set.

"We take a VCR and bring a television and we have these movie nights," he said, referring to another snapshot in his stack of 1998 trip photographs. "The whole town flocks to see the movies on TV."

Police nab two teens after CVS break-in

BY JONI HUBBARD
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Police are still chugging over the case of two Farmington Hills teens who apparently felt they needed to perfect their techniques before breaking into CVS Pharmacy on Jan. 4.

Hills Assistant Chief Charles Nebus said South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium officers watched the 18-year-old and 16-year-old youths from the

time they left the Bahama Motel at Grand River and Eight Mile. "Officers watched them cross Eight Mile into Livonia," he said. "They looked into some cars that were parked at Farmer Jack. Then for the next 30 minutes, these two individuals practiced breaking into the drug store."

SONIC officers watched the boys practice kicking the window, watch as they pointed to the spot they'd later smash with a concrete block and as they

"After 30 minutes of rehearsing, they finally tossed the cinder block through the window of the drug store."

—Chuck Nebus
 —Assistant police chief

practiced swinging the block. The boys also practiced breaking into the nearby grocery store.

"After 30 minutes of rehearsing, they finally tossed the cinder block through the window of the drug store," Nebus said.

When the younger teen put a couple of bottles of beer on the window sill, apparently to take when they left, one of the officers grabbed him and the rest ran inside the store, where they caught the 18-year-old hiding in a stock room on the second floor, according to police.

Annual fund-raiser planned

The Livonia Parents of the Visually Impaired will host an annual bowling for Western Wayne County 8-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at Woodland Lanes in Livonia.

The nonprofit organization is made up of volunteers with all of the money collected going to programs which benefit the children. Anyone interested in helping by either bowling or contribut-

ing to the event is invited. Call Bonnie Bowering at (734) 459-9439 or Leslie Fritz at (248) 471-3929.

Woodland Lanes is at 33775 Plymouth Road in Livonia.

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