

Mission In The North (MITN)

Mission in the North (MITN) was a project of the Presbytery of Santa Fe, administered through the Jicarita Cluster of Churches and managed by an ecumenical Steering Group that includes members of six Cluster congregations of the Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholics and Methodists, and a liaison appointed by the Presbytery Council.

The project was funded by the mortgage payments on the former Embudo Hospital. Grants were made to projects sponsored by community and religious groups “in the service area of the former Embudo Hospital”, which corresponds to the area served by the churches of the Jicarita Cluster. Grants are made for projects or programs within three focus areas adopted by MITN:

- Medical and health related issues;
- Community organization; and
- Efforts to support and strengthen children, youth and families.

The Draft Charter for the MITN was signed by the Council's Committee Moderator Barbara Robinson and Adjunct Staff Andrew McComb on 4/25/1998. A Covenant for the Use of Funds Received from the old Embudo Hospital Property was signed by the Presbyter James Collie on 7-6-98, and the Associate Director for Property PC(USA) was signed on 6-25-98. At a Presbytery of Santa Fe Stated Meeting on February 2-3, 2001, it was discussed how the MITN project would be administered. On September 16, 2001, Andrew McComb gave a MITN report to La Jicarita Cluster, where he mentions a organizational meeting of MITN on September 23, 2001 at the Santa Cruz Roman Catholic Church. John Hazelton made notes from the September 23, 2001 Organizing Meeting where the MITN gave \$1,000 for the renovation of the Espanola Hospital Chapel. We continued to approve grants to many worthwhile organizations in Northern New Mexico until our last meeting on November 15, 2016. In the 15 or so years that MITN existed, we gave away \$386,314.68 in small grants.

MITN has given grants to many organizations, all of whom are worthwhile. Here are just a few that we thought would be examples of the type of organizations which MITN has given grants:

Penasco Youth Violin School: The Penasco Youth Violin School was a year-round music program for the children of Penasco and surrounding communities. The goal of the program was to provide a quality musical experience for all who participate. This goal is accomplished through a variety of methods, including group and individual lessons, recitals, performances, and music theory. More than thirty-five children in grades K-12 will be served by this program. The students have been giving concerts and have even performed at the half time of a state basketball tournament. Keeping children busy with such as violins does help keep them from drugs and such.

Embudo Valley Tutoring Association: The Embudo Valley Tutoring Association requested a grant for Dyslexia Therapy Training. This will continue a 2-year dyslexic therapy training course to EVTA's Dyslexic Specialist tutor offered by the Multisensory Language Institute of New Mexico, which began June 2016 and will continue through 2018. By doing so, EVTA will be able to provide appropriate dyslexic reading therapy to more students with reading disabilities.

Provide appropriate instruction to students with reading disabilities, like dyslexia.

Reduce the dropout rate of local students (40% of freshman students in our district drop out of high school).

Many Mothers: Many Mothers goal is to contribute to a healthy and vital Santa Fe community by providing free, in-home support to any family following the birth or adoption of a newborn. Through their home visitation program they help reduce the stress families and particularly mothers face after the introduction of a newborn into the family.

Home-visitation is the core program of Many Mothers and is staffed with trained, nurturing volunteers

who provide support for three hours a week for three months to a family with a newborn. That period increases to six months for families with twins or triplets. The nurturing of families that staff and volunteers provide during weekly visitation includes any combination of these supports:

- Physical support, helping with childcare and simple household tasks to give the mother respite and time to tend to her own needs;
- Emotional support through active listening, understanding and sharing of common experiences that validate the normalcy of a mother's mixed emotions;
- Modeling good parenting skills and addressing family-specific issues;
- Introducing a family to community resources for health care, food, clothing, education and other essential needs;
- Facilitating the mother/child bond and healthy familial relationships by relieving stressors;
- Pre-survey and informal questions during support to assess for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) formerly known as Post-Partum Depression (PPD); and
- Intervention when problems arise by alerting the mother to possible detrimental effects of an action or a situation.

Espanola Y Teen Center: The Espanola Y Teen Center requested a grant for their Robotics program to purchase programmable robots and equipment necessary for the youth to engineer and design robots. The programmed robots are put through obstacle courses and mazes. In addition some robotic challenges include creating a robot that can carry and deliver payloads, and there are sprint challenges as well. Funding will also allow the Espanola YMCA Teen Center's Intergalactic Team to attend local robotics competitions, including the International RoveRAVE robotics event held each spring in Albuquerque. Their goal is to increase opportunities for youth through STEM initiatives that foster the growth of personal skills through themselves at contest venues that will help them build positive self-worth. The robotics program will help youth apply higher thinking and problem solving skills as they work to solve technical challenges. This program can serve as a means to keep youth engaged in learning and in school and in having positive connections with others.

Ojo Sarco Community Center: Ojo Sarco Community Center (OSCC) requested a grant to complete the project which MITN partially funded in 2014. OSCC priorities are to provide safer access to the playground and building. The plan is to add a sidewalk isolating the pedestrians from cars in the driveway and to improve safety for children by creating safer access between the building and the play area. Progress towards the stabilization and fencing at the center has been made, but the project is still in its earliest stages. There is good news in that after more than 18 months trying to find a *pro bono* or low cost (affordable) civil engineer to help with a design for the walkways and play areas, OSCC recently signed a contract for a plan and help with a construction permit. Last year, thousands of units of service were provided. Many of the services are provided at the weekly food bank, and USDA Summer Lunch Program. In the summer of 2015, 600 meals were served and an art teacher was on site every day, five days a week.

Truchas Science and Arts Summer Program: The program is for youth in grades K-6. Older students will be paid to help with recreational activities. The program will be offered in the month of June, 5 days a week, from 10AM to 2PM including a lunch provided through the Rio Arriba County Food Program. There will be field trips to educational and cultural sites. Leaders will conduct "hands-on" experiments with the children in the morning, and local artists will teach art classes in the afternoon. Wise Fool will provide acrobatic training. The goal is to provide stimulating activities for the children that will develop their interests in the sciences and the arts. Last summer they had around 40 children

sign up for the program with an average attendance of 30 children per day. MITN was set up to be an ecumenical group in order to give out grants throughout Northern New Mexico. We had Catholics, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Here is a list of the people who have been part of the team from the beginning.

Catholics:

Greg Medina, Santa Cruz Catholic Church

Tom Sena, Velarde

Jerry Valdez, Espanola

Joanne Sandoval, Truchas

Methodists:

Dennis Hefner, Methodist Church

Steve Wiard, El Pueblito United Methodist Church of Taos

Ran Loy, Espanola

Brad Lounsbury, Espanola

Presbyterians:

Andy McComb, Jicarita Cluster Convenor

John Scott, Truchas-Chimayo

Al Medendorp, White Rock

Dean & Marianne Lewis, Medanales

John and Ruth Hazelton, Las Vegas

Elias Valdez, Mora

Betty Mascarenas, Dixon

Marty Bruner, Albuquerque

Jim Collie, Executive Presbyter

Rob Craig, Ghost Ranch Executive Director

Georgia and Charles Ortiz, Chimayo

Carolyn Wilkerson, Chimayo

Elsie Miranda, Fairview

Wayne Mell, Taos

Tina Cordova, Truchas

Mary Frances Singleton, Truchas

John and Nancy Guthrie, Los Alamos