

Ablaze Grants Awarded

“Wow, what an overwhelming task! But it’s exciting to think of all the outreach activity that will be taking place across the District because of these grants!” That was the reaction of Ellie Menz, a member of the Iowa District West Missions Committee, after the Committee awarded the initial Ablaze grants for the 2010 fiscal year. The goal of the grant program is to assist congregations in sharing the Good News of Jesus with the unreached or uncommitted of their communities as part of Ablaze, a movement of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and its world-wide partner churches to share the Gospel with at least 100 million unbelievers by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

The grant program has been in place for a few years, but this year a change was made. Desiring to be better stewards of the financial resources and wanting to be able to evaluate the grants in relationship to each other, an application deadline of March 31 was enacted. Previously, applications would trickle in throughout the year, with six to eight applications in an average year.

“We really wanted to encourage congregations to consider the opportunities to reach the unchurched in their own community, perhaps trying something they’d never done before,” explained Missions Executive Mark Gerken. “We sent out several reminders and encouragements, praying that it would generate some interest.” The strategy appeared to work. Twenty-four applications were received, with requests totaling over \$104,000! With

approximately \$35,000 available and wanting to leave some funds available for later in the year, the Committee had its work cut out for them.

After all was said and done, twelve grants were awarded totaling \$28,250. A wide variety of outreach efforts were funded including congregations utilizing “Financial Peace University,” starting a food and clothing outreach, and even exploring the possibility of starting a new congregation. “Although we weren’t planning it, we wound up giving grants to a good cross-section of congregations—rural, small town and urban, ethnic, small and large,” commented Chairman Max Phillips.

Plans are being made for an end-of-the-year banquet to share the accounts of what the grants allowed the congregations to do and hear of the lives that were touched. Hopefully, as the stories continue to be told, even more congregations will be encouraged to pray, dream, and plan for intentionally reaching out to their local community with the love of Christ! To complete an application for a portion of the remaining funds for this year, go to the District’s website, www.idwlcms.org, and click on “Missions” under the “Ministry Areas.”

The Missions Committee hopes to have even more funds available next year, so start observing, praying, and considering the opportunities in the mission field of your own community! For more information, contact Rev. Mark Gerken, Executive Assistant for Missions and Human Care.



Mark Gerken
*Executive Assistant
for Missions and
Human Care*
515.576.7666
[mark.gerken@
idwlcms.org](mailto:mark.gerken@idwlcms.org)

Outreach Conference in Omaha



The people of Iowa District West have been invited by the Nebraska District to “Prairie Fire” on July 24 in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries and in conjunction

with the International Lutheran Laymen’s League Convention being held at the Qwest Center in Omaha. Through this partnership, participants will be offered many outstanding breakout sessions by nationally-known presenters focused on congregational and individual outreach. The day will begin with an inspira-

tional opening celebration featuring LCMS First Vice President Dr. William Diekelman. Following lunch provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, participants will choose from 36 breakout sessions designed to spark ideas for ministry and offer outreach resources to congregations and individuals. The day will conclude with an uplifting and inspirational Lutheran Hour Ministries celebration event featuring Lutheran Hour Speaker Rev. Ken Klaus. More information on speakers and breakout sessions is available on the Nebraska District website at www.ndlcms.org, along with the agenda and registration information. The registration fee is \$25 per person and registrations are due to the Nebraska District office by July 2.