

LBCH trustees updated on foster care ministry, construction projects

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

MONROE – Just four years ago, two children were in the care of foster care families associated with the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home.

While the Children's Home is grateful for the impact those families made on the lives of the children in their care, Children's Home staff wanted to do more – much more – to expand their reach of foster care homes for Christ.

The goal, according to President and CEO Perry Hancock, was to one day greatly increase that number to surpass that of the children in residence at its main campus in Monroe.

Today, after much prayer and increased efforts to bring awareness to that ministry, more than 100 children are receiving care from foster families associated with the Children's Home. Hancock calls that nothing short of a miracle.

"We are so excited about the response from our churches and families," Hancock told trustees during their recent meeting. "Many are now answering the call to foster and adoption ministry."

At the heart of its increase in foster care awareness is Connect 1:27, a network that assists churches with

the development of foster and adoption ministries and works with Christian families interested in serving as foster and adoptive parents. Connect 1:27 offers online resources, monthly e-newsletters, toolkits designed as ministry guides and conferences that both inform prospective foster care and adoptive parents and trains those currently serving in that capacity.

Connect 1:27 is based on God's command of James 1:27 – Religion that our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Hancock says, "Foster care children are modern-day orphans." Hancock sees a trend where churches and couples view foster care as a ministry opportunity. "Christian families nationwide are hearing and answering the call to foster and adoption ministry," Hancock said.

"When a church starts providing a foster care and adoption support group, unchurched couples will come to the church for that support. The support group then serves as the portal through which the unchurched couple become involved and integrated into the church."

Anyone interested in joining the Connect 1:27 Network can visit connect127.org or contact Beth Green at

318.343.2244 or beth@lbch.org.

In other action at the trustee meeting, Hancock updated the trustees on construction projects that soon will take place on its campus. Faith Cottage will receive new flooring, an updated kitchen and the elimination of paneling inside the home. Once complete, all eight of its cottages, which serve as a home for five to seven children and two houseparents, will have received renovations.

Grace and Fezell cottages were the first to receive renovations in 2013. Since then, Joy, Rucker, Love, Hope and Peace have also received updates. Renovations to Faith Cottage are expected to begin in early June, with a targeted completion of August.

In addition to renovations to Faith Cottage, two additional construction projects should begin in early June. One is the first of three cottages for children and their mothers transitioning from a homeless lifestyle to one of job readiness. The cottages in Martin Village will provide a place to stay for the homeless women and their children for up to one year at no cost to the residents. While there, the women receive a high school equivalency degree and life and employment skills training through the Christian Women Job Corps. The first

new cottage is expected to be complete by late 2015.

Two additional cottages are expected to be built in the near future, as funds come in from the proceeds of the Roy O Martin, Brenda Hall Abney Golf Tournament, which provides funding for the new HomePlace cottages.

A second project, to begin in June, is the construction

of four apartments designed to provide extended transitional living for those families who need additional time to prepare for independent living.

While construction on the two projects takes place, a temporary road will be built to minimize traffic disruptions at the Children's Home main entrance.

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District 8 Director of Missions
Lee Dickson announces his approaching retirement.

After 38 years as DOM/Ministries Coordinator, Brother Lee has decided to step down effective Oct. 1, 2015, which would be his 72nd birthday.

Anyone desiring to apply for the position of Ministries Coordinator/Director of Missions should send a resume' by June 30 to

DOM SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
C/O First Baptist Church
508 Second St. • Natchitoches, LA 71457
or email to Tommy Rush at trush@fbcnatchitoches.net

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