

## **Children Growing Through Mission**

*by Rev. Dawne Phillips, CTC Director of Missions*

You're never too young to serve and even lead in mission! At least that's the message I heard from two churches with whom I visited this Spring! Whether it's in our home community or on the road our CTC churches are doing a great job of providing opportunities for children and families to serve their neighbors with the love of Jesus!

**Keller UMC's** 2015 trip to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas was an opportunity for parents, children and grandparents to join together in serving and learning about how our contributions make a difference for families around the world. In addition to learning about the international ministry, families had morning and evening devotions focused on serving our neighbors wherever they are, learned about stewardship of the earth, and made cheese, rain-sticks and sun-catchers. Best of all, children and families are equipped to lead their congregation in on-going ministry through Heifer International. Janna Elliott, Administrative Assistant in Serving Ministries says, *"We collect money at children's time each Sunday using buckets that are covered with Holstein print material that the children put their offering into. A few times a year we make it a point to emphasize where the offering goes. In November our UMW sponsors an alternative gift market called Sharing the Joy, where a table is set up for more contributions to Heifer International. People like to give to Heifer at this time in honor of friends and family for Christmas presents."* Total contributions to Heifer International through the leadership of Keller UMC's children has been over \$800 in the last eighteen months.

This year's family mission trip will include staying at Meadowbrook UMC in Fort Worth and volunteering at FUMC Fort Worth's First Street Mission, United Community Center and working on a project at an inner-city park with the City of Fort Worth Keep Fort Worth Beautiful department.

For more information about these ministries contact Rev. Molly Simpson at [mollys@kellerumc.org](mailto:mollys@kellerumc.org) or Janna Elliott at [jannae@kellerumc.org](mailto:jannae@kellerumc.org).

**At Colleyville UMC**, children's mission happens locally through a once/month mission opportunity for children in grades 1-5 on Sunday afternoons and a shorter, every-week opportunity for Pre-K and Kindergarteners on Sunday mornings. Using the ministry model **Mission Possible Kids** (<http://missionpossiblekids.org>), children participate in hands-on mission projects that serve neighbors locally and around the world. The message children (and the church) are learning is that children can have as much impact as adults and can lead the church in growing more deeply into missions. Projects this year have included homeless day packs, making cross and flame ornaments to sell for mission \$\$, cards for children at Cook's Children's Hospital, heart pillows for refugee children in the Middle East, Easter baskets for children in need, and appreciation bags for law enforcement officers. They also serve as ushers and receive a "noisy offering" of loose change in worship once each month that funds contributions to other projects like Methodist Children's Home, Glen Lake Camp, Bibles for children in their community, and Heifer International. Their leadership encouraged one adult Sunday school class to also raise \$\$ for Heifer, saying "If our kids can raise funds for Heifer, let's see what we can raise too!" Joslyn Harney, Children's Director at Colleyville UMC says "We would be glad to explore the possibility of partnering with other churches in our area who might want to come together to lead children in mission." You can reach Joslyn at [joslyn@fumccolleyville.org](mailto:joslyn@fumccolleyville.org).