

## **The History of UMOM New Day Centers:**

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, The Arizona Methodist Church Extension Society (AMCES) began an urban ministries program to provide relief for transients and minister to inner city families. In 1973, the Metropolitan Phoenix Council (MEPCO) was created to expand the program to address the problems of hunger and as a result established a food bank. In 1985, MEPCO was dissolved and United Methodist Outreach Ministries (UMOM) was officially incorporated by the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church to coordinate local and national mission projects. To this day, UMOM remains as one of the Urban Ministries of the [Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church](#) in addition to being considered a local outreach supported by various faiths throughout the community.

On Christmas Eve of 1987, UMOM began staffing and managing an overflow shelter. Governor Mofford put a call out to Methodist congregations to provide volunteers to staff this program, with UMOM as the operator. The first year the program was operated at the Wesley Community Center gymnasium. The following year, the Governor requested the armories in Phoenix (2) and Mesa (1) open as overflow facilities. Facilities changed from year to year until the purchase of the Watkins site by the City of Phoenix.

This program eventually became year-round, specifically serving homeless single women and families. In addition to having a warm, safe place to sleep, program participants were provided a meal, hygiene items, clothing and medical attention, as well as case management and other supportive services provided by the City. UMOM continues to operate this program and has garnered expanded support, both financial and with volunteers.

In 1991, UMOM opened Lamplighter Place providing permanent supportive housing for mentally ill and homeless single adults.

That same year, UMOM began to offer shelter for 15 families and 34 children in an emergency shelter program at the site of the old Sands Resort Motel at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Van Buren. In October of 1992, this program expanded to become the UMOM New Day Center, providing emergency (120 days) and transitional (up to 24 months) shelter for homeless men, women and children. In 2004, UMOM was officially incorporated as UMOM New Day Centers, Inc..

In addition to ensuring families were provided with basic necessities, UMOM recognized the importance of helping families regain their independence and master the skills required to successfully navigate in a challenging world. UMOM provides education, recreation, health screenings and assessments, resources for financial assistance, job

training and placement, continuing education, counseling, medical services, legal assistance and much more

In 2006, UMOM began the \$23 million HELP (Housing, Employment, Learning and Purpose) campaign that enabled the purchase of two additional properties and a complete renovation, providing increased support to a total of 156 families.

In 2007, UMOM was awarded a contract to open a 56-bed shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. The shelter provides safety, advocacy, education and relocation/housing referral assistance to enable families to overcome the effects of domestic violence.

In October 2009, renovations to the new campus were completed and UMOM relocated the family shelter. The new campus houses approximately 425 men, women and children each night with over two-thirds of these persons being children ages 0-15. It provides safer and more secure living, enhanced and improved services, and a large indoor space for family and teen activities.

UMOM understands the needs of families as they work toward regaining their independence. The new campus offers services such as a Wellness Center, chapel, Kids Den for after-school activities, the Clothes Closet which provides clothing for clients, and a community dining facility providing 3 nutritious meals daily plus culinary skills education.

UMOM's Child Development Center is licensed and accredited for about 100 children, providing a safe learning environment and sense of normalcy for children who have experienced precarious living conditions. Attendance develops social skills and improves preparedness for school while it frees the parent(s) to focus on education and employment.

In late 2009, Helping Hands Housing Services, a leader in affordable housing and support services to the Valley's low income populations, officially became a part of UMOM's Next Step Housing. This program is designed for homeless families and individuals who not only participate in our shelter programs, but may be offered to individuals and families who are referred to us through an alternate shelter program or agency. The goal of Next Step Housing is to assist participants in locating and obtaining safe, affordable housing.

UMOM's dedication to assisting families in need through the years has resulted in a generous outpouring of support from the community, allowing us to provide not just temporary shelter, but a solid foundation of skills, confidence and life changing options for countless families.