



## **RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE REACHES OUT TO HEART OF APPALACHIA**

The Red Bird Missionary Conference (RBMC), formed in 1968, is the single most comprehensive mission effort of the United Methodist Church in the United States. Located within our own Southeastern Jurisdiction, it ministers to the educational, health, economic, social and spiritual needs of residents of a remote area of Southeastern Kentucky in the heart of the Appalachian region.

According to Ruth Wiertzema, Director of Communication Ministries and Director of Connectional Ministries for RBMC, a missionary conference is a unique entity in and of itself.

“We are one of only three missionary conferences in the United Methodist Church,” Wiertzema said. “Missionary conferences are created to serve areas where local resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of the community,” she explained.

The mission of the Red Bird Missionary Conference is to minister to the spiritual, physical, educational and economic needs of people within the region and equip them to reach their God-given potential.

RBMC churches and outreach ministries are supported by all United Methodists through Advance Special #173978, the Advance for Churches and Outreach Ministries and through covenant arrangements between local churches and Red Bird missionaries. The conference is made up of 23 local churches, four outreach centers and four mission institutions:

- Bennett Center
- Henderson Settlement
- Red Bird Clinic
- Red Bird Mission

Collectively, the ministries and institutions of the Red Bird Missionary Conference serve the needs of individuals and families in a socially and economically isolated 10-county region.

Representative ministries include:

- Medical and dental clinics
- Supplemental healthcare
- Early Childhood Education
- K-12 School with residential program for high school students
- Emergency support services
- Clothing Assistance
- Project SHARE and Food Pantry
- Transportation Assistance
- Elderly Housing
- Senior Citizens Center
- In-home care for seniors
- Meals on Wheels
- Adult Education, including literacy, GED and computer training
- Agricultural Program
- Craft Program
- Community Store
- Maternal Infant Health Program
- After-school care
- Summer youth programs
- Camp O'Cumberlands
- Appalachian Local Pastors School

Various components of the Red Bird Missionary Conference have been in mission to the Appalachian region for more than 80 years. Currently 16 pastors are serving in a missionary capacity there and as many as 5,000 work team volunteers from throughout the United Methodist Church also are in service there each year.

To learn more about the ministries of the Red Bird Missionary Conference and how you can help, please visit [www.redbirdconference.org](http://www.redbirdconference.org).