

MARY ELLEN'S HEARTH  
NELLIE BURGE COMMUNITY CENTER  
**5 ON THE 5TH Campaign**

This morning, you could hear the sounds of laughter and life fill the great room as 10 mothers and their 16 children awoke surrounded by the love of Christ in a way many of them could not have imagined just a short while ago. No sleeping in cars. No abandoned buildings. No wondering if there would be anything to eat. No cleaning off children's faces with a dirty rag dampened in the puddle left by last night's rain. They were safe; they had clean sheets; hot water; a real breakfast; fresh milk; and hope. Some of the mothers went to work, some of the children went to day care, some of the families went to church, and some simply let the blessings of the day flow over them and dared to dream of the possibility of new and better tomorrow. Shut your eyes. Can you visualize the scene? I hope so; because you help make it a reality every morning at Mary Ellen's Hearth, the newest ministry at Nellie Burge Community Center.

The Alabama West Florida Conference has supported the ministry at Nellie Burge Community Center since the women at Court Street Methodist Church in Montgomery began helping women and children in 1904, and continued that support as the ministry evolved to meet the needs of women, children and families in the River Region for over a century. In 2012, ministry dramatically shifted and Mary Ellen's Hearth opened its doors as a home for homeless women with children offering hope, help and healing through Christian love and values. You can read more about the ministry in the brochures included with today's bulletin.

Bishop Leeland asked the Board of Directors how to best rekindle the flame that has long been a part of the grassroots Methodist support of the Center. While Nellie Burge still gets support from Sunday School Classes, the United Methodist Women, Women's Circles, and the general budget of a couple of churches, they decided to focus on the congregations in the 2 districts which encompass their outreach efforts—Montgomery-Prattville and Montgomery-Opelika. With full support and blessings of Bishop Leyland and the 2 District Superintendents, John Brooks and Robbins Sims we are unveiling our **5 on the 5th Campaign**.

The **5 on the 5th Campaign** design is simple and inclusive. Each calendar year there are 4 months that have 5 Sundays. Our campaign asks that each family in each church give an extra \$5 each of those Sundays to support the ministry of Mary Ellen's Hearth. We hope that this effort will become a part of the DNA of each church in the 2 districts and allow children, youth and adults to have ownership of the transformational work accomplished at Mary Ellen's Hearth. Your sponsorship will allow The Center to slowly reduce dependency on government funding and the restrictions that come with it. We want to keep this ministry Christ focused without constraint and you can help achieve that goal.

Sunday, June 29 is the first fifth Sunday of **5 on the 5th Campaign**. Please pray for the staff, women and children at Mary Ellen's Hearth and prayerfully consider becoming a part of this amazing ministry. What's the payoff you ask? Transformation. For you, and these families. You cannot visit Mary Ellen's

Hearth or read about the families without knowing that Christ is at work touching and shaping the lives of all who dare give or are blessed to receive. Indeed the giver is often one who receives the greatest blessing. But Sharmane, one of the residents who completed the program, might argue with you about who was really blessed. Listen to her words shortly before she left:

“My son and I have been here 16 months. We both enjoy living here. I have been able to pay off a lot of debt. I have gotten my own car. I have been able to focus on money management and learn from my financial mistakes I made when I was younger. I had a rough childhood. Both my parents were out of my life at age 14 and both dead by age 18. So I basically raised myself. I managed to keep my grades up but I had a terrible attitude which came from not having any parenting. So I put myself in a lot positions where I would be fired or lose my job because of my attitude but living here has made me get my priorities straight.

“I have never had stability until I came to Mary Ellen’s Hearth. I came here with my 5 year old son because I was evicted after I lost a job. I wasn’t in school at the time, I had no stability and was unable to pay my bills. But since coming here I am back in school and actually have a career as a pharmacy technician. Yes...the cycle HAS stopped with my son. He is experiencing stability and can pass that on to his children when he grows up. So the cycle has been broken!”

Praise God! And \$5 can help other women break the cycle of dependency for their families. They dream about freedom from government subsidies, independence, and a life with dignity and hope. Thank you for supporting Mary Ellen’s Hearth and making this transformation possible.