

## **Around The Woods**

### **Presbyterian Women of Hunter, Lexington Blessings in a Backpack Response to Moderator's Challenge by, Phyllis Hanna**

We looked at our local schools and found out that as many as 30-60% of the children could be on free or reduced-price lunches, depending on income. Often the children do not receive adequate food at home on weekends and will return to school on Monday simply ravenous. We were able to have Stan Curtis, founder of Blessings in a Backpack, to speak to us about his program and we could not wait to get started.

The Family Resource Center Coordinator of Glendover Elementary school chose 20 children. We decided to start small. Stan said our would be a pilot project, and would be evaluated at the end of the school year. We received 20 backpacks and a list of foods available at Meijer Grocery store for which we would pay about half their retail value. The cost of providing weekend food for 20 children for 19 weeks is \$40. We solicited volunteers and donations and set up a schedule. We pick up the food on Wednesday, pack the backpacks that evening, deliver them to school Thursday, and they are given to the children on Friday as they leave for home. The empty backpacks are brought back to school and we pick them up before we need them again for packing.

We included the whole congregation in the project and have raised enough money to pay for almost half the three year project. approximately 40 people are involved in working and donating. We feel this is truly a Christian mission.

### **Presbyterian Women of Hunter - Project CURE 2008 Contributed by Phyllis Hanna**

We started collecting medical supplies and equipment several years ago when it was brought to our attention by Kim Edwards that there is an organization that distributes medical supplies to hospitals and clinics in third world countries. We were also made aware of the tremendous waste that is practiced in our own health facilities. So much is packaged in antiseptic wrappings which once opened cannot be used for any other patient. Many items are simply discarded. CURE (Commission on Urgent Relief & Equipment) had a good reputation for finding hospitals with great need and the ability to use what could be provided; so we decided to send our collections to them. They were very helpful and arranged for a trucking company to transport goods to Nashville where volunteers sort and pack for shipment where needed. The project has been very successful. We have shipped great quantities of materials at very little expense and with the help of willing volunteers, who are not hard to find. We have invited other Presbyterian churches and the whole presbytery to participate with us. Any church with storage space can become a receiving center. You can encourage medical facilities to save useable supplies and equipment and bring them to you for transfer to CURE in Nashville.