



UMNS photo by Mike DuBose, United Methodist News Service

Muji Bakare clutches an insecticide-treated mosquito net that was provided by the Nothing But Nets campaign against malaria in Apapa, Nigeria.

Africa Malaria Day set for April 25

HOUSTON (UMNS) – United Methodists are urged to give up lunch and save lives by using that money to buy an insecticide-treated bed net. Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, president of the denomination's Council of Bishops, is asking United Methodists and others to skip lunch on Africa Malaria Day and use their lunch money to buy a lifesaving mosquito bed net. Wednesday, April 25, has been designated Africa Malaria Day and, for the first time in the United States, President Bush has proclaimed a Malaria Awareness Day that same day. United Methodist Communications and The Upper Room

Living Prayer Center also encourage a 24-hour period of prayer that day for the children of Africa, those suffering with malaria and for global health.

"Malaria kills a child every 30 seconds in Africa," Huie said. "Bed nets are the most cost-effective way to protect children from the mosquitoes (that) carry this killer disease."

Society offers VBS program about hunger

BIG ISLAND, Va. (UMNS) – Thousands of children attending Vacation Bible Schools each year learn what Jesus meant when he said, "You give them something to eat." Through Bible stories and activities found in the Society of St. Andrew's mission project package, children learn there are people who go hungry, even in their own town. The children also are given the opportunity to give their nickels and dimes to help feed their hungry neighbors. The Society of St. Andrew's (Advance #801600) annual 2007 VBS mission project package, "Truckin' to End Hunger," is available for free. For more information, visit www.endhunger.org/order_material.htm, call Susan Allen at (800) 333-4597, or e-mail church@endhunger.org.

Church council blesses Bush library with land

DALLAS (UMNS) – Dismissing warnings that the soul of Southern Methodist University is at stake, a United Methodist council has voted to make land on the campus available for the proposed George W. Bush presidential library. In a closed executive session March 14 in Dallas, the South Central Jurisdiction Mission Council voted 10-4, with one abstention, to allow the United Methodist-related university to lease up to 36 acres on the southeast side of campus to the Bush Foundation for the Bush library, museum and policy institute. The school's bylaws require the church jurisdiction to approve the sale or lease of campus land. Reactions to the vote ranged from expressions of gratitude to sadness.

Higher ed board increases scholarship support

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – The amount of money a United Methodist college student may borrow annually from a denominational loan fund will double to \$5,000, while the interest rate for repayment will decrease to 5 percent. Governing members of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry approved a four-pronged approach to help students finance their higher education and seminary education. Their March 8-10 board meeting focused on reaching and supporting young people

in their vocational endeavors. Changes to the United Methodist Student Loan Fund – including decreasing the interest rate from 6 percent to 5 percent – will take effect in August. For more information about the United Methodist Loan and Scholarship program, visit <http://www.gbhem.org/gbhem/loans2.html>.

Ministry trades toys for guns in Iraq

TURIN, Iowa (UMNS) – Two small churches in rural Iowa have found a way to outsmart insurgents in Iraq, using boxes filled with soccer balls and stuffed animals to spread goodwill and save the lives of children in Fallujah. The ministry began last year after Janet Wakehouse, a member of Turin United Methodist Church, heard about a war tactic through her Marine son-in-law serving in Iraq. She learned how insurgents gave children realistic-looking toy guns in hopes that a U.S. soldier might mistakenly shoot a child and incite anger against the United States.

Wakehouse also read about a soldier who had traded a soccer ball for a fake assault rifle that one Iraqi boy was carrying. Out of the two accounts, a hometown effort grew to collect safe toys to swap for the dangerous ones. Members of the Turin church and the United Methodist Church in neighboring Onawa began gathering soccer balls, backpacks, Beanie Babies and other toys for the cause. In the end, 28 boxes were shipped before Christmas so the toys could be distributed by Wakehouse's son-in-law, Staff Sgt. Tylor Belshe, and his fellow Marines. ■



UMNS photo by Staff Sgt. Tylor Belshe

A young Iraqi boy happily shows off a soccer ball sent by the Turin and Onawa United Methodist churches in Iowa.

But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father ...'