

West Grove United Methodist Church

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Website: <u>www.westgroveumc.org</u>



Easter People Raise Your Voices & Open Your Hearts!

On the first day of the week, the doors were locked, and the disciples were hiding for fear of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood among them and gave a blessing of peace. Then he showed them his hands and his side, and the disciples rejoiced. Jesus blessed them with the power of the Holy Spirit and forgiveness, but Thomas was not with them, and said later, as John 20:25b-28 reads: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

For me it is one of the most profound passages of scripture. We often grew up calling Thomas, "Doubting Thomas." Yet his doubts could have understandably come from several sources, a few might have been his own experience with the trauma of the crucifixion, the horribly wrong expectations of the priorities many would have had about leadership and a Messiah, and his own, personal betrayal of Jesus. In the midst of his reactions, Jesus does not seem to be bothered by his emotions and doubts. Instead we have another example of the extravagant generosity of God's grace, and an incredible invitation from Jesus to touch his wounds. Jesus blesses with forgiveness and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, and sets and example for all.

From the cross Jesus chose to forgive, and he helps us understand the freedom we have to choose how to live, responding to God's loving guidance. Once we claim the freedom and live faithfully, we have great possibilities before us. God is personally offering us the power of forgiveness and the creative presence of the Holy Spirit. As Jeremy Camp wrote and we sing, "The same power that rose Jesus from the grave, lives in us!" And it is not a random event, nor by chance, nor did our need and the dynamics of life surprise God or Jesus.

Our Approach to Faith

Many of us as Christians, follow an approach to faith, where once we receive God's grace, God keeps sharing with us in ways that help us continue to learn, mature, and grow throughout life. Learning is a lifelong process, and God's grace is regenerative, renewing, as it is recreative throughout every event and stage in life. The transformation the disciples experienced, means that we too can live in the transformative power God provides. This dynamic can create a great challenge of not just resting on our accomplishments but being willing to continue to listen and understand God more and grow. Our purpose in life is to seek to understand God more every day, as strive to grow in His love.

Growth and maturity can happen in large and small ways. Perhaps there are times when we are intimidated to talk with a neighbor or loved one about a difficult experience or subject. We hold back from taking part in difficult ministries or efforts. We hesitate speaking up for justice, or to bring insights to dialogues, discussions, and decisions happening all around us. Instead of locking ourselves away in a room, isolating from the perceived threats like the disciples did at first, we are called to receive and share God's blessings. God provides us with empowerment by grace, so that we might be led in new ways to share, and not be intimidated, in our families, our fellowship, and community. We pray our fellowship together continues to strengthen expressions of our faith and encourage you to take part. In receiving Christ, we are moved beyond being tempted to just muddle along, never stepping out in the full life God promises in Christ.

As disciples, we have much to learn from the early disciples and Thomas. As the disciples welcomed and encouraged Thomas to return to join their fellowship, so we too can encourage others. There is a great blessing in being willing to be vulnerable as Christ was, even in the midst of doubts. Others can learn from our journey and we can learn from one another how to live more fully in God's grace, mercy, and love. So the encouraging words from the old hymn can resonate in our lives too: "Easter people raise your voices, for sounds of heaven in earth should ring! Christ has brought us heaven's choices, heavenly music, let it ring! Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter people let us sing!"

God's blessings to all, - Tim

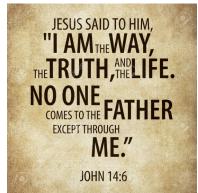


Worship in May at West Grove UMC

Join us as we worship together by opening our hearts to Jesus, growing in God's way, and serving God's world.



8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m Worship. Live Streaming on You Tube.



May 7, 2023 Fourth Sunday of Easter Communion Sunday and All Worship Sunday

Our scripture is from John 14:1-14 when Jesus assured his disciples, all of us, that there is a place for everyone of us, a home in God's house. It's a personal image for us to find strength and hope, as a man like Jesus makes faithful promises. He lifts up that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and it is a blessing meant to provide assurance, but not to inspire arrogance. Our other scripture is from I Peter 2:2-10, where we are reminded how limited our attention span often is. Good people are often overlooked and underestimated, but not with God.

May 14, 2023 Fifth Sunday of Easter Mother's Day

Our scripture is from John 14:15-21, where we are led to live in God's Spirit of Truth to keep the commands Jesus has taught us out of love. I Peter 3:13-22, teaches us to be prepared for adversity, especially when we are striving to do God's will. God wants blessings for us, and for us to live the abundant life is to fill our lives with sharing goodness.





May 21, 2023 Seventh Sunday of Easter Ascension Sunday

The recommended scripture is from John 17:1-11, a time when Jesus prayed in personal ways for his disciples. As pastor Jim likes to say, the *real* Lord's prayer. Pastor Jim will preach for us, as Julie and I will be attending the wedding of our nephew and his bride that weekend. An additional text recommended is I Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11, words of encouragement for when we face great challenges to our faith. When we are focused on God, we never fail; God can always make something form our efforts.

May 28, 2023 Pentecost Sunday Memorial Day Weekend

How do we experience the Holy Spirit, God's creative power? His presence cuts through the division we've erected to build community and real friendships, as we learn in Acts 2:1-21. I'll leave you with something to consider: What might we share every day that leads us to live more in the power of the Holy Spirit?





Jenner's Pond Residents: Join us for worship on May 14th at 11 a.m. On your closed circuit TV and in-person in Alison Theater, Led by Pastor Jim

Pastor's Desk



Future Ideas

This summer, I hope to pull together a series for worship on sharing our faith in practical ways in the ways we relate with people. How we show friendship faithfully matters to the people in our lives and staying close with Christ makes all the difference. I hope you will make it a point to share worship with us. Some topics I hope to look at are:

The Art of Listening ~ Sharing Feelings Faithfully

Distinctively Christian Caregiving ~ Focus on the Process & Journey

Assertive Relationships ~ Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

Religious Shifts In America

The Springtide Research Institute recently conducted a survey. I often observe survey results with a dose of skepticism and reality; they can vary greatly depending on the people taking it, and their technique and approach. The results of Springtide's work showed that as a result of the medical challenges from the past three years, young adults, 18-25, are more likely to believe in God than just a few years ago. People have a variety of opinions about why the shift happened. One that makes sense is that they have quickly been exposed to deep vulnerability and it leads to an end to the tendency towards a sense of invincibility that many young adults feel at that stage of life.



Other thoughts are that people at various stages of life search for hope and strong reasons to live, and live life fully focused on what matters most. For many, the pandemic was the first real crisis they faced, where life was so much at risk and vulnerable. One young woman said she is now more likely to explore her faith by following certain people on social media who have something to teach. The woman does not go to church, because her lifestyle of school and work is so full, that she has little time to commit to a fellowship or worship. I'm seeking to be prayerful about how we can bring down the barriers that keep people from participating fully in our fellowship and friends with Christ.

Many people say they believe in God, or a higher power, but don't agree with what they were taught as children. One wonders what many were taught, and just what is remembered from childhood about relating with God. In fact, many of us would say that our faith has grown and matured through the various stages and events of life. While God wants us to maintain and live in the child-like wonder of life, we don't believe exactly what we did when we were children. This dynamic is one of the great aspects of our faith, to grow in new ways, and not to grow stale.

There's a lot for us to consider and be prayerful about. We especially want to be prepared as we welcome our guests, and take time to get to know people and share experiences and the question of our hearts. We are blessed by the assurances from God, from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, but not led to be arrogant. We are led to assertively take the initiative in sharing faith and fellowship, without being aggressive. As God has reached out to us, God encourages us to reach out to others. It is easier when we remember that God is reaching out to everyone; a blessing that is often called prevenient grace. We simply need to help people hear Him personally; God will empower the transformation. We know our world desperately needs friendship and fellowship with Christ. May our hearts be prepared to offer it.



West Grove UMC Food Pantry Weekly Hours:

Wednesdays: 5:00—6:30 p.m. Thursdays: 1:00—2:00 p.m.

We have over 250 registered families, which is more than 1200 individuals. Our church is serving approximately 140-160 families each week. **Donations are greatly appreciated** and some of the most requested items include peanut butter, crackers, canned vegetables, tuna, granola bars, cereal, dog food, cat food and cooking oil. We are in need of additional volunteers. There are a variety of ways you can help: stock the shelves, help check in the

clients, be an assistant shopper, clean up after the shopping by breaking down boxes for recycle, and much more. Anyone who has an interest should contact Joan Leaman.

We ask for your prayers for the families that are in need of the food support that we provide.

If you are interested, please contact Joan Leaman (jmleaman@comcast.net)

Trustee Notes

On Thursday, April 27th, in the middle of all of our rummage sale preparations. The Preschool had to be cancelled that day at the last minute as well. We lost the transformer, at least part of it. PECO was out, determined the transformer had to be replaced and as of 5pm, was in the process of hooking the wires back on. By that evening, PECO had restored all the power to the building and we were back to normal.

Many thanks to Donna and Dave for everything from working with PECO, coordinating/contacting people who use the building and so much more.

We are truly blessed to have such a great group of trustees and others.





West Grove UMC Calendar of Events

Be sure to check out the church calendar on our website. There are many activities, groups, events, studies and more going on every week.

Sunday School has classes for adults and children of all ages. Your church calendar is reviewed daily and updated with the latest events and meetings. Please refer to our website to get information, updates, calendar events, etc. **www.westgroveumc.org**

Retired Active People



R.A.P.'s

25th Anniversary Celebration Friday, May 12th Noon

RAP met on April 14 at noon. Following lunch we welcomed WGUMC and RAP member, Jeanette Stryjewski, who entertained us with her knowledge of Pharoahs, which included an interactive time of

conversation and crafts. Thank you Jeanette for a wonderful afternoon program.

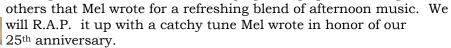
Please plan to join us in May as we close out this program year with a 25 year anniversary celebration. We are so grateful for all who came before us who started this monthly gathering of friends and we are so appreciative of everyone's participation to keep this tradition going.

We will gather on Friday, May 12, 2023 at noon in the sanctuary for a covered dish luncheon. Bring your favorite dish to enjoy with others.

Following lunch, we are so pleased to welcome the "Leaman Trio": R.A.P. with M, J, & J

Well, you won't actually be rappin', but you will be doing some toe-tappin' and singin'! Every song that Mel, Joan, and Jim (Mel's brother) perform will be on

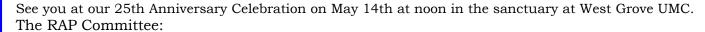
the screen, so we can all sing along as we please. Some of the songs will be familiar love tunes from the sixties scattered with a bit of blues and bluegrass. Mix these with a few gospel sing-spiration songs and



Come to our 25th Anniversary Celebration and enjoy a time of good food and fellowship not to mention the wonderful program planned for our entertainment. Everyone is welcome! If you have never joined us, now is the perfect time to meet new friends and greet those you know. Invite your friends and neighbors.

Don't forget to bring your favorite covered dish. Desserts and beverages will be provided.

Please RSVP to Sara Ann Ramberger at sar57ver@verizon.net or call her at 610-869-3863 to let us know how many to plan for.



Paulette Bryan, Cindy Haley, Joyce Lewis, Sara Ann Ramberger and Caryl Stuhrke



J.U.L.I.E.T.

JULIET...Just us Ladies Interested in Eating Together

The JULIETs will be meeting **Saturday**, **May 13th** in the church parking lot at 9am. Anyone is welcome to bring a chair and join the conversation. (In the event of inclement weather, the group will move to the church lobby)

PASTOR JIM'S CHRISTIAN LIVING COLUMN

helping us to live the Christian life May 2023

It often happens over a holiday meal, at a birthday party, or even at a memorial service for a loved one. Family members begin reminiscing, and before you know it, children are hearing stories about their parents and grandparents that they've never heard before.



Or adult children begin sharing some of the exploits from their childhood, and their parents learn what the kids "got away with" while they weren't looking.

It appears no matter how well we know someone, even our own family members, there's always more to learn about them. Too often we learn about the life of someone at their funeral or memorial service.

The same is true for our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Some of us have been learning about God since before we can remember. But there's always more for us to learn about Him. Like David, we should desire to know more about our Heavenly Father, to draw closer to Him. David wrote: "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." (Psalm 27:4)

David wrote this Psalm when being pursued by his enemies and was shut out from going to the house of the Lord. However, David in verses 1-3 sounds forth his confidence in God.

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be

afraid? 2 When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident." (Psalm 27:1-3, underlines are my emphasis).

Building confidence in God in our daily life is important as we live day by day. Whatever our enemies, we need to have the stronghold of God within us to guide us and sustain us. So how can I gain such confidence? May I suggest you spend time slowly reading through the Gospels, starting with the Gospel of John—seeking to know Jesus better each day. As you read a passage, jot down in a journal in your own words what that passage said to you about God. You may also note questions. Your notes will help build your confidence in God as you seek Him. If you have any questions send me an email and I will be glad to help. Pastor Jim

UNITED METHODIST MEN BREAKFAST AND GATHERING

The monthly breakfast meeting of the men and youth of our church will be **Saturday**, **May 27th**, **2023**, **at 8:00 AM at the church**. There will be a light breakfast with dishes provided by our men. If you would like to provide a breakfast dish please speak with Pastor Jim or Mike DuVall. The objective of our gathering is to grow our spiritual life for the glory of God. We invite the men of the church to join us. If you plan on attending, please let us know so we can provide sufficiently for those coming. Pastor Jim and Mike DuVall.





West Grove UMC

Children's Morning Out and Preschool

Spring has Sprung here at Preschool! The children have been so busy creating beautiful spring artwork and spending lots of time out on the playground in the beautiful weather. All of our classes had the opportunity to listen to a story and plant seeds with Pastor Tim and they are enjoying watching their seedlings grow in the church lobby.

Our talented teachers put their creativity to work cultivating gorgeous artwork for their classes to display during our Preschool Art Show. The classroom art was auctioned off during a silent auction as a fundraiser for our school. I was blown away at how gorgeous everything turned out. We definitely have some budding artists among us. We had a special evening as many of our preschool families returned to school for an evening out at the "Art Gala." Many thanks to all who donated baked goods for this event as well. It was such a

wonderful evening and we are grateful for all of the support



As we enter our final few weeks of preschool we will be looking forward to a field trip to the Brandywine Zoo, a special "Trike-a-Thon" fundraiser, as well as field days, and very special end of year festivities for each of our classes. Our last Pizza Kit Fundraiser of the year will be on Thursday, April 27th. If you would like to order please let me know by Tuesday, April 25th.

All the best-

Abbie Gruscavage, Preschool Director

the church community provides us.

Eggstravaganza Thank You!



Thank you to everyone who was part of a beautiful day! 40-50 children participated in egg hunts, crafts, and games with their families, which was a joy to see. Thank you for your time and candy donations, I am truly grateful!

SAVE THE DATE! Vacation Bible School July 10-14



Families are be-

ginning their summer plans and we want to see vou!

Details on our theme, schedule and registration will be coming in May, so be on the lookout! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Melanie Jones at childyouthdirector@westgroveumc.org

YOUTH MINISTRIES



Middle school & High School Youth Group Every Sunday

Youth group is for middle school (grades 6-8) and high school students (grades 9-12). Each week we play some games, share some snacks and talk about what's going on in our lives and how faith is a part of our day-to-day living.

May 7: Middle School & High School Youth Group

Middle School: 3:00-4:00 p.m. High School: 4:15-5:30 p.m.

May 19: End of Year Game Night

Middle & High School 6:00-8:00 p.m.

We are wrapping up another great year together. It's amazing how fast time goes by, not just the school year but all the years. This July will mark five years that I have been here at West Grove UMC. The youth group students who I met as middle school students are now entering their senior year of high school, and some are graduating. Children who were toddlers when I began are now bigger- little people, with beautiful thoughts and personalities learning how to



be kind, loving, and closer to God. It has been a privilege to be a part of their lives and to get to know each one of them. As we wind down the program year, we look forward to summer activities and some time to unwind. I am looking forward to the future and to see the ways all of us are growing! ~ Melanie Jones, Director

Graduate Sunday



If your child or grandchild (<u>member of the church or regular attendee</u>) are graduating high school or college in the coming weeks, we would love to honor them!

Please send the information to Melanie Jones. Please include:

Students name

School graduating from

*High school post-graduation plans

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



All Worship Sunday

Sunday, May 7, 11:00 a.m. service

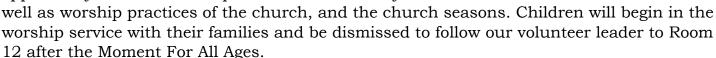
All worship Sundays mean children remain in worship for the service as we celebrate the sacrament of Communion together.

Look for the blue cart with worship bags for children, filled with fun

things to keep them engaged during worship!

Children's Worship May 14, 21, 28 during the 11:00 a.m. worship service

Children's worship is offered during the worship service for children in grades K-4. Children will have the opportunity to learn the scripture lesson of the day as





Children's Sunday School Sunday mornings 9:45-10:45 a.m., Room 12

Children's

There will be no Sunday school on Mother's Day, May 14

> Life of Jesus April 16- May 21

Our last Sunday school unit for the program year is under way!

We will be learning about stories from Jesus' life and lessons he taught: Jesus calms the storm, the walk to Emmaus, the widow's mite, and more.

Each week's activity will explore a bible story about Jesus and show us how Jesus taught us to live.

We hope you all join us! Sunday school is open to children grades K-6. Nursery time is also available for our younger friends, and our parent group meets right down the hall!

Sunday school class is open for children in grades K-6. Contact Melanie Jones with questions about Sunday school and the fun we have together!

Why Camp?



Transformed Lives

At camp, young people have the mental room to consider some of the most important issues of life. This break from the craziness of their regular routine allows campers to discover the truth that God loves them and has an amazing plan for their lives.

Nature & Adventure

Campers explore nature, participate in new adventures and test their limits in a healthy environment surrounded by the grandeur of God's creation.

Temporary Community

In a setting separate from their daily routine, with an opportunity to shed the expectations and pressures of others, campers are freed up to be themselves, to live above artificial limitations and blossom into who they were created to be.

Lifelong Friendships

Good friends who exert positive peer pressure can make all the difference in a kid's life. Friendships with caring adults and other campers, forged through shared experience and the compressed time at camp, can last a lifetime.

Adult Mentors

According to researchers, kids spend on average 3.5 minutes in meaningful conversation with their parents each week. At camp, caring adults, counselors and mentors come alongside campers, helping them think through decisions and experiences in a way that will prepare them for their future. Many campers point back to a positive role model they met at camp as one who helped shape the direction of their lives.

Gretna Glen is accredited by the American Camp Association

Upcoming Events

Children's Spring Blast

March 31st-April 1st Friday 7pm-Saturday 7pm



Confirmation Retreat

Friday, April 21st – Sunday, April 23rd Registration is by confirmation class



Spring Work Day

Saturday, April 22nd 9:00-5:00



10th Annual Gretna Gritty

Saturday, May 13^{th} 8:00-12:00



Open House

Saturday, May 20th 10:00-4:00



S'mores & Tours

Sunday, June 4th 1:00-4:00



Summer Camp In Session

8 weeks-Day & Overnight starting June 19th

www.gretnaglen.org

A Lawn Mower Needed



Hello! One of our Bridge of Hope mom's just signed a lease on a rental that has a lawn that she is responsible for. We are looking for a small push mower for her, battery or plugin is ideal. I'd love to connect with you if you might have

an extra to spare!

If you can help, please contact Joan Leaman at jmleaman@comcast.net

Open Grow Serve



OUR MONTHLY SHOUT OUTS!

Here are a few people you might not have seen around the church, but work quietly behind the scenes. If you would like a "shout out" about someone/something you saw that should be recognized, email the office at office@westgroveumc.org.

A Big Thank You to:

Melanie and the Confirmation Class, Anna Castaldi, Abby Herman, Jenna Miller, Jacob Rinehimer, Clarissa Robinson, Aiden Seltzer, and Lexi Weingarten who did a wonderful job leading the service on April 30.

Dave Talley for all of his help from electrical to locksmith!

Mel Leaman who was at the church early one morning weeding the garden.

Abbie Gruscavage who sprayed the playground to keep down the emerging weeds until more mulch can be put down.

The Rummage Sale Volunteers: The sale was a wonderful event and raised almost \$3000 for the UMW. It was the hard work of many who brought the event to fruition.

The Food Pantry Volunteers: A lot of hard work goes into feeding about 140 each week and the pantry volunteers make it happen! Thank you Joan Leaman for all you do!

BIRTHDAYS IN MAY

05/01	Jay Miller		05/17	Barb O'Brien
05/04	Kim Weingarten		05/17	Nolan Timm
05/05	Jeremy Hampton	HAPPY BIRTHDAY!	05/18	Scott Weingarten
05/05	Margee Michaels		05/20	Tyler Curtis
05/06	Sandy Deckard	,	05/22	Cynthia Hoover
05/07	Julie Hughes	Your church family wishes all of you a very happy birthday and a year filled with happiness and blessings!!	05/22	Steve Michaels
05/09	Dalton Wolfe		05/23	Jeff Laird
05/11	Dr. Bob Hates		05/24	Mark Simonds
05/12	Dan Elliott		05/24	Barry Wolff
05/12	Norah Timm		05/25	Esther Culbertson
05/13	Jack Frost		05/26	Cindy Haley
05/14	Emmett Owens		05/26	Joshua Hampton
05/15	Olivia Eason		05/26	Luke Schneider
05/15	Margaret Rubincan		05/28	Greg McCummings
05/16	Brenna Lynne Dunn		05/29	Vivian Paisley
05/16	Coby van Snik			



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~ Open, Grow, Serve ~

At West Grove UMC, we love God by opening our hearts to Jesus, growing our faith and serving our community and world in His name.

The Reverend Timothy Carl Anderman, Lead Pastor

pastor@westgroveumc.org

Office Hours: Monday—Friday 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Staff

The Reverend Jim Mundell - Associate Pastor, Chaplain at Jenner's Pond Jim.mundell@westgroveumc.org

Melanie Jones-Youth & Children's Ministry Director Childyouthdirector@westgoveumc.org

> Donna Fackler - Church Administrator Office@westgroveumc.org

> Betsy Smith - Traditional Music Director Contemporary Music Interim Director Keyboardist

Betsy.smith@westgroveumc.org

OPEN—Handbell Choir Director

Abbie Gruscavage—Children's Morning Out Director cmo@westgroveumc.org

> Maira Tena - Nursery Attendant Maira Tena—Sexton sexton@westgroveumc.org

Christ Servant Ministers

Karen Hruz, khruz@hotmail.com Peter Mullen, psmullen@petermullen.com

Board and Committee Leadership

Val Kapp-Benner - Interim Administrative Council Chair Kim O'Neil - Trustee Chair OPEN - Finance Chair Valerie Kapp-Benner - Treasurer Janice Bowers - Interim Financial Secretary Dick Stuhrke - SPRC Chair Michael Duvall—Tech Team Leader Melanie Hartley - Christian Education Melanie Jones - Children's Ministry Team Contact Valerie Kapp-Benner - Missions Chair Dick and Caryl Stuhrke - Hospitality Committee Chair Susan Paisley -Delegate to Annual Conference Pastor Tim - Committee on Lay Leadership Karen Hruz and Cindy Haley-Co-Lay Leader Cindy Haley & Fran Miller - U.M.W. Co-Presidents Susan Paisley - Prayer Ministry Coordinator Joan Leaman—Emergency Food Pantry Coordinator Amy Castaldi - Nursery Coordinator Betty Mundell—Ad Council Member at Large Cindy Hoover—CMO Advisory Board Chair Cindy Haley and Sara Ann Ramberger—R.A.P Coordinators