

Wernle Youth and Family Treatment Center held their annual spring representatives meeting on Saturday May 7 from 9 - 11:30 followed by a short tour of the campus including housing.

Julie Kossler, Judy Ulrich and Claire Wilt were in attendance along with representative from 5 other Indiana and Ohio Lutheran churches.

We were introduced to Curtis, a former Wernle resident, by Marci Asher, Director of Marketing & Special Events. Curtis lived in the Private Secure housing for 11 month because he had anger and substance abuse issues. He gave a very inspirational talk about his life and his love and appreciation for Wernle and its staff and the help he received there. He will graduate from High School soon and is working two jobs. He is living independently in Richmond, learning to manage his bills and life's challenges and giving back to others. He wants to go to Ivy Tech and is interested in a business degree and social work and sports.

His warm smile and confident manner made a connection with all of us. He lights up the room when he tells of his "little brothers", 3 boys in his neighborhood and how he walks with them to their school and enjoys taking them to Glenn Miller Park to play. He mentioned that "they help him as much as he helps them."

We watched a video that all of you can see @ wernle.org website. We hope that you will take time to learn about the history of Wernle and the changes that have taken place since it was founded 137 years ago. Starting as a Children's home and evolving into a **Community of Hope** for families in Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky, it has been a successful and life changing treatment center for 89% of the youth who pass through it's doors in the past few years. We should all be grateful that Trinity is part of this mission.

The mission of Wernle is **growth** and its path toward that was set by Darrell Gordon who arrived 14 years ago.

Wernle now has 150 staff members serving the residents where there was once only 40-50. They are building facilities that "make sense" and will better serve the residents and the staffs needs.

Another part of Wernle's growth is the ongoing \$10 million capital campaign, with \$5 million, Phase 1 is already underway. For Phase 2, which began January 2015, a \$1.9 million gift from a family foundation in Indiana was received as well as another gift four weeks later of \$1.5 million from a private family foundation in Ohio. A total of \$500,000 is still needed for the **outpatient and after care support program**. Noting; that Curtis said "this project would be very beneficial to me".

Matt Hughes spoke about strengthening the involvement **of** churches who support Wernle in three ways. They are representative involvement, financial support and non-monetary giving. With respect to the non-monetary giving, or "gift in kind" giving, a new program was introduced, as follows:

For everyday consumable items used at Wernle, such as toiletries, art supplies, batteries and sports items, each church would commit to providing 1-3 items on the list for the entire year.

Example: 120 lined notebooks, 24 boxes of crayons, 9 carpet cleaners,. We would choose what we want to collect thought this year. Then in 2017 we will be doing this in a smaller time frame, "40 days of Lent," in which we will collect the items by Easter for the year. That way, Wernle has exactly what they need for the year with the support of **more** of churches.

We will be deciding what our church can give this year in the near future so we can begin collecting items for 2016.

This does not include clothing , suitcases, etc., which we can always give at any time. **Urgent** needs for residents are girls plus sizes 16 to 24 clothing and boys black or white ankle length socks

Two alternate ways to get involved with the kids at Wernle were suggested such as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and summer parties and adopting a child by remembering their birthday and holidays with cards, etc.

Cliff Nunn was introduced to us as Wernle's Church Relations Officer. This is a new position at Wernle. He will be responsible for interacting with the churches, and church visits throughout the year. Cliff moved here from San Diego where he had 18+ years working in youth treatment.