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Red Bird Mission is an Institution of the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church within the Red Bird Missionary Conference.

### Inside the Mission

#### Kathleen Ahmad, Red Bird Christian School

After retiring, I felt God was calling me to return to my first love, teaching. As a United Methodist, I decided to look for opportunities with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries Individual Volunteer program. I found that Red Bird Christian School wanted a volunteer to teach high school mathematics. After going through the training program for volunteers, I visited Red Bird, was given a tour, and talked about the opportunity with Dr. Collins, the executive director. When Dr. Collins expressed his vision for Red Bird Christian School so passionately, I became convinced that I wanted to become a part of that vision.

I was especially fortunate to be asked to join the faculty at Red Bird this year when Red Bird re-opened its dormitories. The addition of the international students has enhanced the Red Bird experience for both the day students and the dorm students. It is interesting for each group to see the differences in their education systems. In mathematics, examples include the metric system for our international students



versus the British imperial system for our local students and also, the use of a comma for international students versus the period for the decimal mark. This enables students to see that the method they learn is not necessarily the only or even the best way of doing things.

I am particularly pleased to be at Red Bird because Christian roots are embraced. As opposed to public schools where education and religion are strictly separated, at Red Bird, we are encouraged to actively share our faith with our students. Red Bird has a full worship service every week and devotions every day. We are also encouraged to bring God into the classroom through our lesson planning. Incorporating God into mathematics instruction is very simple because all of creation is driven by God's precise mathemat-

ics laws. I have been very happy at Red Bird and very honored that I have had the opportunity to teach here.

*Editor's Note: Long term volunteers like Dr. Ahmad fill vital roles at Red Bird Mission. Visit the Individual Volunteers page on our website or call 606-598-3155 for more info.*

See "Headlines" on the new school website - [www.redbirdchristianschool.org](http://www.redbirdchristianschool.org) - for more news about the school.

#### Ways to Support

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# Red Bird Notes

MARCH 2015

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## Taylor Collins Passes Leaves Legacy of Faith, Determination and Vision for Future

Dr. Olen Taylor Collins, Executive Director of Red Bird Mission, Inc., and Red Bird Clinic, Inc., passed suddenly on January 28, 2015. Born at Red Bird Hospital in 1948 and educated at Red Bird Mission School for a life of service, Dr. Collins was working at the Mission until noon the day before his passing. He gave all of himself to God's ministry at Red Bird Mission until the very end.

Dr. Collins served his alma mater as principal from 1975-1988 before continuing service in public school administration in Kentucky and Texas. He returned to Red Bird Mission in June 2010 when classes had been suspended at the school due to financial shortfalls.

He stated with determination in his first address to the staff in June of 2010, "We must have school at Red Bird this year."

In a matter of weeks, he restructured the school budget and garnered additional support from alumni enabling the school to open in time for the 2010-11 academic year. The dormitory program was suspended with those budget cuts, but Dr. Collins enlisted the alumni again to reopen the dorms in August 2014. Alumni Leonard and Bonnie Lawson had stepped in with significant annual giving to the school upon Dr. Collins' return, and they raised over \$190,000 in 2013 to remodel the girls dormitory that now houses young women from local mountain communities to Africa.

"Red Bird Mission School exists for the formation of Christian leaders in these Cumberland Mountains," This declaration heard from Dr. Collins in 2010 is now the guiding vision for the school. He gave impetus to the spiritual platform of student formation by leading the board to rename the school, Red Bird Christian School. He also pressed to create a chapel inside the school building that is dedicated to two of his mentors, Rev. Ed-

ward and Mabel Ehresman. He established a curriculum for leadership seminars that became a regular weekend and snow day offering for dormitory and day students.

Dr. Collins revitalized another cornerstone of Red Bird Mission's historical outreach – the medical work.

The recession had also put Red Bird Clinic in a precarious position threatening its continuation, but in 2011 Dr. Collins signed an agreement to transfer operations of Red Bird Medical Clinic to operate as a satellite clinic of Manchester Memorial Hospital. The Red Bird Dental Clinic closed for several months in 2012 after the retirement of Dr. Lamar Keiser, but Dr. Collins re-opened the clinic part time when a new provider was contracted. The clinic gained adequate financial stability recently to begin operating 5 days a week.

Students admired and respected Dr. Collins who took time to speak with them on his visits to the school.

Sydney, a second grader, stated; "When he came to school at lunch he (Dr. Collins) would stop and talk to kids at different tables. He always smiled at us."

Makenzie summed up many people's thoughts with this, "He is the one who saved our school."

At the beginning of the 2013-14 academic year, Dr. Collins addressed the faculty with a vision of making "Red Bird Christian School the best school in Kentucky". Realizing that it takes financial resources to provide for personnel and capital needs, he was beginning to lay the groundwork to establish a permanent endowment that would move the school towards excellency and secure it's existence for generations to come.

Olen Taylor Collins leaves his legacy of faith and determination plus a vision that will be guiding Red Bird Mission and Red Bird Clinic far into the future.



## A Word From the Interim Executive Director's Office



Lois J. Smith

Greetings from Red Bird Mission

This is a sad time at Red Bird Mission due to the unexpected passing of Dr. O. Taylor Collins, our beloved Executive Director. Even though he was ill, Dr Collins had an awesome impact on this community and Red Bird Mission during his time as Executive Director. My prayers are with his wife, Kari, his mother Della, and the rest of the family.

The Board of Directors has asked that I fill in as Interim Executive Director until the right one is found. I accepted the challenge because, like Dr. Collins, I love Red Bird Mission and its programs. Also like him, I was born and reared in this area and know the problems faced every day by my neighbors, friends and family. I have been on the Board of Directors at various times for many years, serving two terms as president. I was fortunate, as Board President, to work closely with Dr. Collins during most of his time as Executive Director. I shared his vision on the many improvements that have been made in the mission by him. I feel his greatest achievement was reopening the Red Bird Christian School, and now we have a vibrant dorm program with many local, regional and international students.

Even though Dr. Collins is no longer with us, he has left a definite path for us to follow to continue improving the ministries of Red Bird Mission, Red Bird Clinic and Red Bird Housing. We need the prayers and financial support of our loyal supporters more than ever. During this Easter season, as we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior, I pray that you will consider donating or increasing your donation to this vital mission.

I thank you in advance for your gifts to Red Bird Mission. If possible, please utilize our on-line donation tool on our website – [www.rbmission.org](http://www.rbmission.org) – to make your Easter donation this year.

### About Lois

Lois Smith has lived her entire life in the Red Bird Valley, except for 12 years immediately after high school graduation. She completed her degree from Eastern Kentucky University while working full time. Listed among her work experiences is 3 years with the U.S. Forest Service and 28 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

After retirement in September 2011, she began volunteering with Red Bird Mission. She has served as a member of the Red Bird Mission Board of Directors for many years serving two terms as president, her last term ending in November 2014. Working as Board President with Dr. Taylor Collins during most of his time as Executive Director provided her insight into his great vision for the school and the mission.

### Contribution Receipt Options

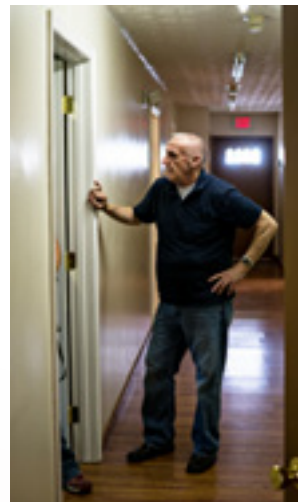
Our Development Department is transitioning to a new software application for processing gifts. During 2015, Red Bird Mission and Red Bird Clinic donors may choose the method of receiving receipt of your gift. Please notify us ([gifts@rbmission.org](mailto:gifts@rbmission.org)) if you would like to receive one of the following methods of receipt delivery - 1) Email and letter, or 2) Email only.

Wishing you a blessed and happy Easter season.

## Funds Sought for Needed Boys Dorm Addition

Interest by male students in becoming a part of the Residential Program at Red Bird Christian School has been overwhelming since the dorms reopened last year. There were no beds available in the Boys Dorm at the beginning of the second semester, but more applications have been received.

One of Dr. Taylor Collins' last actions as executive director was to begin the process of building an additional wing to allow more young men the opportunity to board and study at Red Bird Christian School. The board of directors voted in its annual November meeting to move forward with developing plans and seeking funding for an honors wing to be added to the Johnnie L. Turner Boys Dormitory.



Dr. Collins stops to talk with male resident

## Partnerships Yield Clean Water for Residents

The natural beauty and peacefulness of the Red Bird River is apparent to those visiting in eastern Kentucky. Many residents have depended on the river for drinking water and recreational activities going back for as far as anyone can remember. This is still true today.

Water testing coordinated by the USDA Forest Service found the Red Bird River and source streams of the river to be highly contaminated. With no city water available to many hollers, families are left with two choices – bottled water or polluted water. Bottled water isn't much of an option for most with towns about 45 minutes away and the high expense of buying bottled water.

A solution for those without access to public water service is to install a water kiosk where residents can fill containers with potable water. That solution will soon be a reality for Red Bird Valley residents. The kiosk will consist of a 1500-gallon tank directly connected to the Hyden-Leslie County Water District water lines running to the Red Bird Mission Campus. Water will be available to area residents at minimal cost. The tank will also serve as a resource in the event of a disaster.

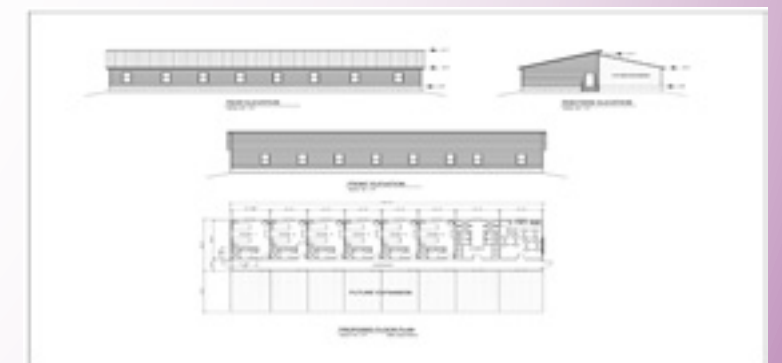
A host of parties have come together to make this idea of a kiosk a reality.

- Red Bird Mission will serve as the physical location of the kiosk; provide security and oversight of the program; and recruit residents to take advantage of the low cost water.
- The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has awarded a grant to implement the project.
- The University of Tennessee Colleges of Nursing, Architecture and Engineering, along with the UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center are committed to providing professional and technical expertise in the design and construction of the facility.
- Hyden-Leslie County Water along with Clay County EMS and multiple individuals have and will contribute materials, labor, expertise, and money to the project.

Hundreds of hours invested by Red Bird Mission Community Outreach and Maintenance staff in this project were funded by general donations to the Mission. Thank you to so many for making clean water a priority for the area.



Construction begins on kiosk



Preliminary Plans for Dorm Addition

### Read Red Bird Notes Online

If you would like to read Red Bird Notes online, send us your email address so we can put you on the electronic mailing list for news. And, if you don't have a use for the paper copy, let us know so we can take you off the print mailing list to save a little more money for ministry here.

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Advance Project Numbers • Red Bird Clinic #773724 • Red Bird Mission #773726 • Red Bird Mission School #773728