

Select Page



200K Reasons Makes Shift to Expanded Hunger Ministry

Sam Meadors Selected to Lead New Delta Project Initiative

May 11, 2020 | Headlines



By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor



In an effort to combat the devastating effects of childhood hunger and the ripple effects it causes in other areas of a child's wellbeing, **200,000 Reasons** has announced a new initiative aimed at fighting not just hunger, but illiteracy and family instability as well.

200,000 More Reasons is the new initiative that 200K Reasons Project Coordinator Mary Lewis Dassinger will be bringing to the **2020 Annual Conference** for approval. 200K More Reasons expands on the 2014 initiative to end childhood hunger in Arkansas.

In the past six years, the number of food-insecure children has dropped from 200,000 to 167,440, and 86% of churches in Arkansas are now providing food to hungry children and their families through food pantries and other ministries.

But the fight to end food insecurity continues and overlaps into other areas of a child's wellbeing as well. The three objectives of 200,000 More Reasons will be nutrition, literacy, and stability.

"The most important predictor of high school graduation is a child's ability to read by 3rd grade," said Dassinger. "Additionally, food insecurity and other at-risk factors can have a traumatic effect on children. That's why we've made the decision to expand the mission of 200,000 Reason to not just fighting hunger, but providing literacy programs and stability to families as well."

Dassinger wants to see the number of feeding ministries continue to rise in Arkansas until 100% of churches are participating, but she is also hoping to see churches adopt new ways to reach out to children and families through literacy and stability programs.

Examples of literacy ministries include building personal libraries at your church for children to check out for free, hosting book clubs for all age groups, summer literacy ministries, after school programs that provide reading and homework help, and partnering with local literacy organizations to provide quality programming.

"Studies show that children who go to school hungry cannot thrive academically. The poorer your health and quality of life, the more likely you are to miss school and fall behind your peers," Dassinger said.

Household stability is key to the initiative as well, and Dassinger is hoping to have 35% of churches offering ministries that promote a healthy and stable family life for food-insecure children.

"This would include nutrition education, mental health support, and support groups for families in need," she said.



Rev. Sam Meadors, Delta Project Community Coordinator

Because the initiative is now more far-reaching than it has ever been before, 200,000 More Reasons is also announcing the launch of a new special project aimed at a particularly impoverished and at-risk area of the state, the Delta region.

The Delta Project is aimed at strategically fighting childhood hunger in the Arkansas Delta and will be led by the Rev. Samantha Meadors, a deacon in the Arkansas Conference.

The project is funded by The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, and at \$477,000, it is the largest grant ever awarded by the Foundation.

"The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas is committed to assisting the Annual Conference in responding to food insecurity needs within our state. As Jesus said, 'Feed the hungry,'" said the Rev. Mackey Yokem, Director of Leadership Ministries at the Methodist Foundation.

The three-year grant will be divided up to support different needs in the area, including mobile food distributions, summer literacy programs, grants to help churches add literacy and reading support to feeding ministries, and support the hiring of the newly created Delta Project Community Coordinator, Rev. Sam Meadors.

"I am excited to work with 200,000 More Reasons expanding the tremendous work of the Arkansas Conference as we move into the next quadrennium. I am particularly looking forward to working with churches to provide literacy programs in the Delta," Meadors said.

"My grandmother was the librarian for Cross County Schools- her love of reading and the power that it has to improve our lives is something that I hope to embody in my own work. Connecting churches to the needs of their community is a part of my call to ministry."

Meadors recently served seven years as the Director of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation, as well as a deacon at Cornerstone UMC in Jonesboro.

Serving children and families in Arkansas is very close to her heart, and she praised the Conference's initiative to step in and provide for hungry children through 200,000 Reasons.

"Our Conference stepped in when we heard that 200K children were going hungry. It's time to step in again.

"Churches can provide volunteers in schools to read with students, begin summer programs to encourage continued academic success, and partner with programs already involved in improving literacy in our communities. Arkansas United Methodists have found wonderful ways to serve the children of our state, I'm looking forward to seeing us serve together in even more ways," Meadors said.

Pending approval of the name and mission change to 200,000 More Reasons on June 13 at Annual Conference, churches will begin receiving more information on what they can do to provide nutrition, literacy and stability to their communities, and work to eliminate childhood hunger in Arkansas for good.

For more information on 200,000 More Reasons and ways that your church can get involved, contact Mary Lewis Dassinger at mdassinger@arumc.org. Sam Meadors can be reached at samantha.meadors@arumc.org.

Share this:

Archives

[June 2020](#)

[May 2020](#)

[April 2020](#)