

Way to go! Way to give!

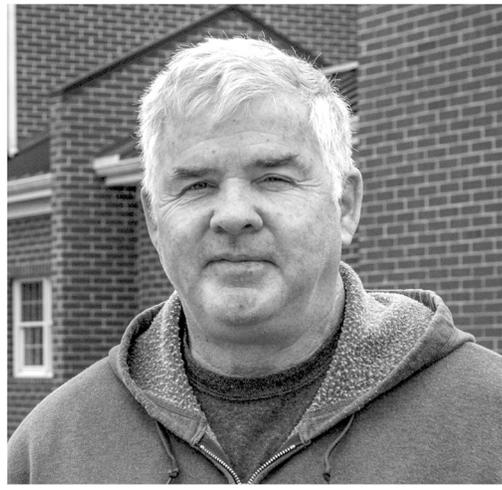
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Holston Conference

Hands-On Kits/Mission Offering

“This project made me feel more blessed.”

~ Dave Spannbauer



It always happens in June, a few days before the start of the Holston Annual Conference.

According to Dave Spannbauer, it always happens on “the hottest day of the year.”

Every spring, church members across 12 districts of the Holston Conference collect tons and tons of food, school, sewing and health supplies. They carefully pack the goods into buckets, bags, and backpacks. The ultimate destination is the children and families served by United Methodist missions in Liberia and Zimbabwe.

But first, the supplies will be collected by districts and driven by volunteers – on a hot day in June – to Fairview United Methodist Church in Maryville, Tenn. There, the tons of rice, ham, pencils, rulers, washcloths and toothbrushes will be packed into huge ocean-going cargo containers.



Volunteers help load supplies into a cargo container.

“It’s quite a project,” says Spannbauer, age 58, who has helped load the supplies at Fairview for the past 10 years. Workers from all over Holston gather to pack the donations so they will survive months of traveling by truck, ship, and train. In 2013, the collected supplies were valued at more than \$286,000.

“Everybody’s helping out, and it’s really a lot of fun,”

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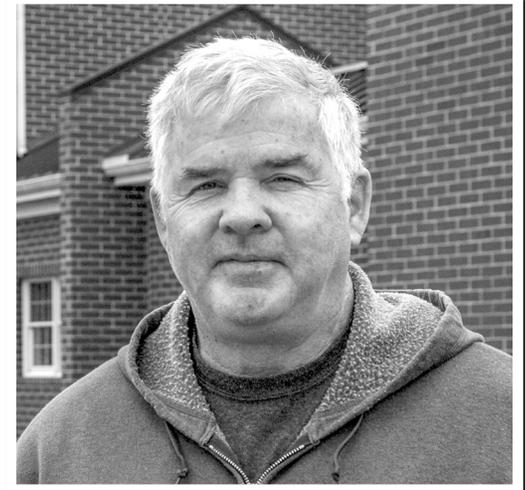
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Spannbauer says of the massive effort. “We don’t waste a bit of space in those containers. They’re packed top to top, side to side, and very full.”

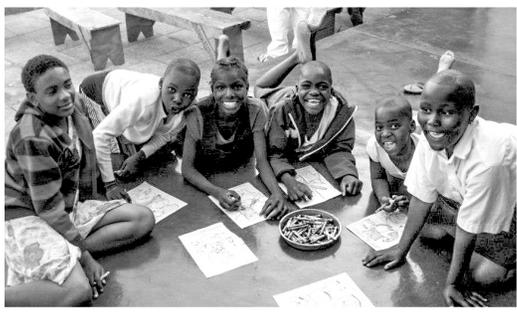
Known as the Hands-on Mission Project, the annual collection of life-sustaining supplies for Zimbabwe and Liberia is just one way Holston members give generously to help others at this time of year.

Every year during May and June, church members also give money to the Annual Conference Missions Offering. The cause changes every year; past offerings have benefitted missions in Brazil, Vietnam, and Imagine No Malaria. In 2014, Holston’s missions offering will support education in South Sudan. The goal is \$175,000.

Of course, the gifts you give every Sunday morning or through online tithing also provide support for these missions – by paying for staff and resources to organize such large, complex outreach efforts.

Spannbauer, a long-time member at Fairview, has seen firsthand how Holston generosity has changed the lives of children in Africa – and his own life, too. He’s not only packed the trucks in Maryville, he’s been to Zimbabwe eight times to see how the children appreciate and use the supplies that come from Holston Conference.

“Let’s just say they’re very happy when the Holston shipment arrives, because that’s their food for a year,” Spannbauer says. “This project has definitely made



Children in Zimbabwe are excited to receive school supplies.



The cargo container is stacked to the top.

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Thank you, Holston Conference. You’ll never know how many lives you’ve changed.

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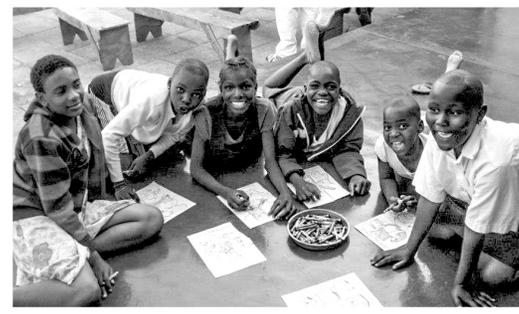
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