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Ministry families aided by NWBF fund

By Sheila Allen

VANCOUVER - Financial hardships are plentiful in communities across the Northwest, as residents deal with the realities of difficult economic times. Pastors and their families are not spared from these hardships, and have historically lived on limited incomes while meeting the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of those under their care.

A donor sensitive to these realities has come to the aide of several pastors across the Northwest Baptist Convention. A fund was created to accommodate the \$25,000 gift that was designated to meet short term needs demonstrated by men in ministry. Dubbed the Pastoral Assistance Fund, the fund was created in December, 2007, and the money has been disbursed in intervening months.

“We asked our directors of mission around the Northwest to suggest pastors they knew of with specific needs, whether they were financial or medical needs,” said Tom Hixson, president of the Northwest Baptist Foundation. “Someone in every association across our convention received some assistance.”

The unexpected check was a true surprise for Knox Butte Baptist Church pastor Bob Rieke and his wife, Donnel.

“We got the check in the mail, which informed us that our names had been turned in by a director of mission. That \$1,000 came at a time when we were down to our last bit of money for gas,” Rieke said. “It was a blessing beyond anything we could imagine. We were able to pay off some bills and covered some things we needed.”

Rieke has been pastor at Knox Butte for three years, and was a member of the church before being called as pastor. It is a small church that was comprised of mainly senior adults, but now is reaching children and their families. They make good use of a church van to pick up children for services.

“The money we received lifted us up more spiritually than anything else,” Rieke said. “It has been such an honor to have something like that come to us.”

“It was an easy task to find people with real needs that received the funds,” Hixson said. “The money was donated by a strong Southern Baptist who understands that Northwest pastors have unmet needs.”

The gifts ranged from \$750 to \$1,250, and were given to 29 recipients. Those receiving the one-time gifts were drawn from names submitted from each association in the Northwest Baptist Convention.

“The fund was created in response to this donation, but now is open to others who wish to help with unmet needs in the lives of pastors,” Hixson said.

Those wishing to contribute to the Pastoral Assistance Fund may contact the Northwest Baptist Foundation at 1.800.594.2981 or visit www.nwbaptistfdn.org.