



Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia
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Virtual Experience

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NEW [Merle's Blog](#)

Merle will be sending updates from the Living Hope Community Center via this weblog. Click above to access the site.

October 2007

Merle Prince...Living It!

Merle Prince has spent much of her adult life involved in Christian social ministries as a volunteer at the local and state levels.

A lifelong resident of Henry County, Merle has been married 44 yrs. Merle and Joe Prince have three adult children and three grandchildren. She has been a member of Starling Avenue Baptist Church for most of her life and currently serves on the church Personnel Committee.

Merle says, *"Within my congregation, I am being drawn to the needs and desires of younger mature adults. What can we, as a congregation, do to assist the "sandwich generation"? What are the changing needs of aging "boomers"? How do we "age with significance" as opposed to just growing old?"*

At the community level, Merle has attempted to "live the call" as a member of the Grace Network Board of Directors and as Food Coordinator for the program. Grace Network is an ecumenical faith-based non-profit organization which serves as a one stop center of resources for residents in crisis. They provide assistance with essential life needs (food, rent/mortgage payments, and utilities) as well as budget counseling and referrals. Merle says, *"I truly believe Grace is the best thing that God's people have undertaken in our community in a long time. I often tell others that*

walking into Grace is like walking into a small part of Heaven. Within that place, God's servants are mirroring His image to each other and to the clients who come to us broken and hurting, in panic and chaos. Caring volunteers discern real needs and bring assistance and hope to people in crisis. All those things which tend to divide us: race, economics, education, the belief rituals we practice are put aside as we seek to find unity in our diversity in order to bring justice, peace, and well being to our community."

Merle is a member of the Hope Builders Ministry of WMUV which she represents on the WMUV Advisory Board. She serves as a WMUV Trustee Board member. Merle is one of the WMUV representatives on the VA Baptist Venturer Advisory Group. This group oversees appointments of volunteers applying for service of 6 months to 2 years through VA Baptist mission partnerships.

Merle has received National Leadership Training as a Customizing Specialist, WMU Birmingham, Christian Women's Job Corp training, and is enrolled in Duke University's Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management.

When asked about her gift/passion, Merle responded, *"Many people have lost their ability to dream or to believe that they can attain their dream. I love helping them, through discovery of their own gifts and potential, reach for the dream. There is no shame in not attaining your goal. The shame is in having no goal."*

Merle's Challenge to others: *"You never know what you can do until you try. We, too often, give in to our fears. Each of us has gifts and talents. We use them everyday in our jobs and with our family and community. The opportunities to use them for God's glory are everywhere if we are open to God's call. We are never too young, old, inexperienced, disabled, or whatever we might use as an excuse to be involved. God can and will use us all if we are willing to Live It!"*

Merle and her family have participated in Transformers every year since 2000. She has served on six previous partnership mission trips through the Virginia Baptist Mission Board and is about to embark on her seventh.

During the month of October, Merle Prince will be on mission in Cape Town, South Africa. She will be working at the Living Hope Community Center where she will teach women with HIV/AIDS the valuable skill of sewing. Merle will keep us informed through a web log (blog) she has set up. You may view the blog by [clicking here](#). Please pray for Merle as she serves others in Cape Town, South Africa.