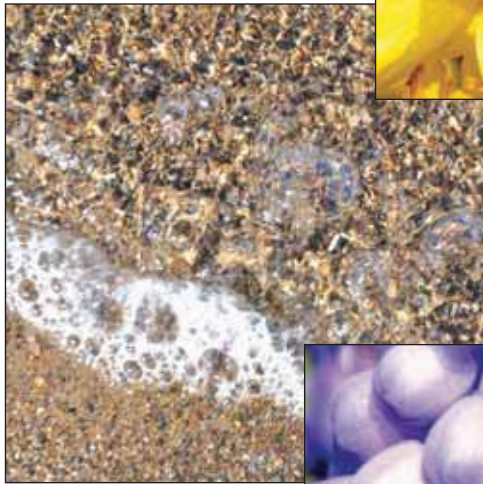


# Colors & textures

Can you tell what the following textures and colors are? Answers appear on page 2.



TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2012

CLASSIFIED ON PAGES 12-16

# Mighty Men



Larry Sumner, left, David Kemler, center, and Pastor Walter Pryor, right, envision a ministry that would do more than give to people . . . it would teach them.

## This Jackson ministry is looking for a few good men to give, to teach, and to grow a dream

By Matt Schepeler

Imagine if there were a place where people on the south side of Jackson could go to get fresh food close to home.

Imagine a place where locally-grown produce was sold at a reasonable price, which helped people make healthier choices in their diet.

Imagine if the store brought in young people and taught them the principles of managing a business as well as teaching them life skills such as money management and instilling a strong work ethic.

Now imagine if local churches took ownership of the project, and rather than "throwing money" at a situation or, worse yet, expecting the government to meet the needs of people, churchmen opted to get involved themselves.

Imagine that. That is exactly what four area Christian leaders in Jackson are imagining, and they are doing more than dreaming; they are taking steps to turn their dream into a reality. They envision the store/ministry dubbed First Fruits to have several ministry aspects: a men-mentoring-men ministry, business training, and a market resource center.

At the heart of the operation would be the grocery store, featuring locally grown produce and other food products.

Wendy Wight, the leader of Together We Can Make a Difference (a ministry specializing in, well, "making a difference,") believes the vision is becoming a reality.

Wight said she sees that many Christians have a hunger to serve, and most have much to share. She believes this "busi-

ness/ministry-model" would create an opportunity for that to happen.

For example, one thing she would like to see such a store/ministry do is make it possible for lower-income people to bank. Wight notes that many poorer people pay anywhere from \$12 to \$25 just to cash their checks because they do not have a bank.

"Right now many of them are going to a party store," said Wight, where they get taken advantage of with the high fee.

Incidentally, Wight sees the entire operation designed to help men become leaders in the community as well as their families. "I see men coming together in unity with a mind to work," she said.

Larry Sumner echoes Wight's enthusiasm. Sumner, a father of eight, has a strong desire to create something that can help people in the community grow in mind and character . . . as well as a desire to provide a fresh-food market for the community to help them grow physically healthier.

"We want to set a high stan-

"We are dreaming a dream," said Wight, "but we believe that investors will come along side and be a part of it." They are hoping for 400 men to come forward with a donation of \$100 to help kick-start the program, but they are looking for more than their money. They want to tap into their desire to serve their fellow man by utilizing their experience, abilities and inner desire to become a part of the vision.

David Kemler, General Manager of St. Vincent de Paul, is firmly behind the idea.

"I see a lot of needs that the church hasn't addressed," he said.

St. Vincent de Paul in Jackson operates three stores in the county that help people find everything from affordable clothing to furniture to collectables and antiques. Revenues generated from the stores go back into the community to help people with such items as rent and utility payments, medical bills and prescriptions, car repairs, job training and even funeral expenses. While St. Vincent de Paul is not officially a part of the First Fruits vision, Kemler hopes to lend his experience to the effort.

"I have been in retail most of my life," said Kemler. "There is a real need here, especially with grocery retail. One of our goals is to make people more self-sufficient," he said. For instance, he noted that when people utilize a food pantry, the experience can actually make them more dependent on the generosity of others. The idea of First Fruits is to help them help themselves.

"Our goal is not to compete

### "I believe it is time to rebuild our city."

Wendy Wight, Director, Together We Can Make a Difference

dard," said Sumner. "A lot of these people don't have transportation, and they only have access to high-priced, highly-processed food," he said.

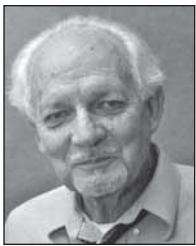
But putting all this together will take time, money, and cooperation.



Mark Salemka, Ron Keith, Mike Vischer and Frank Johnson show their younger selves in masks that were part of the play *Whatever Happened to the Butterscotch Gang?*

# Reaching out

Members of the Irish Hills Community Church in Onsted put on a three-act play featuring four high school buddies who attended high school in the late 1950's. The play kept the audience laughing throughout, and ended with a salvation theme.



Hoz Vischer

The play was written by Hoz Vischer and utilized music, humor and a touch of drama to bring a gospel message to the audience.

A great deal of thought and creativity went into the production. The cast included 17 people as well as the

four leads.

The church recently put on a Christmas play, and is becoming known for productions that are entertaining as well as evangelistic.

The Irish Hills Community Church is located at 9734 Slee Road in Onsted. They have a 10:30 a.m. worship service in which the public is welcomed.

## KID CUTE

### Ballerina born to dance

Tillie Greer Earley, age six months, is ready for her first dance recital. She is the daughter of Travis and Mindy Earley of Grand Rapids. Grandparents are DeWaine and Darlene Earley of Lake Columbia.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Have a "kid cute" photo? Photo must be of kids who reside in or have a connection to (i.e. relatives) our coverage area and be appropriate for reproduction. E-mail photo to: [exponews@theexponent.com](mailto:exponews@theexponent.com) or mail or deliver to: The Brooklyn Exponent, 160 S. Main, Brooklyn, MI 49230.

### Mighty . . . from page 1

with existing grocery stores," he said, "it is to help people to become more independent."

But why are they hoping to mentor men specifically?

Wight noted that she often works with children who do not know their dads.

"There is a real fatherlessness out there," she noted. She said that the vision has its inspiration and guidance from the book of Nehemiah, in which men worked together to rebuild the city walls.

"We believe from

this seed God will grow a Mighty Man Mission and business training center," she said.

"At the heart of this is to create a place where 'semi-needful' people can go and be treated with respect," said Wight.

## Gospel Starlites at LCF

Liberty Christian Fellowship is hosting "Gospel Starlites" on Sunday, April 15, at 10:30 a.m.

The church is located at the corner of S. Jackson Road and Liberty Road. For more information, call 529-4449.

## Legacy Five and Greater Vision at Spring Arbor Free Methodist

Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church is hosting Legacy Five and Greater Vision gospel music groups on Friday, April 13, at 7 p.m. The church is located at 120 East Main Street, Spring Arbor. For more information, call 750-2400. To purchase tickets visit online at [www.springarborfm.org](http://www.springarborfm.org).

## Spring colors and textures Answers

From top to bottom, are Forsythia, Wampers Lake, Grape Hyacinths, daisies, toadstools, redbuds, algae, maple tree seeds and a tree root that has been up-close and personal with a lawn mower through the years.

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