



# Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2012

## Board Members

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Board Chair/Treasurer

### **Frank Wallace**

Board Vice-Chair

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### **Tom Wagner**

Member at Large

### **Patrick Hicks**

Member at Large

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Executive Director

### **Rev. Dr. David Emery**

Chaplain, Spiritual Care

### **Linda Martin**

Spiritual Care Programs &  
Volunteer Administrator

### **Marcia Barker**

Development Officer

### **Mallory MacDonald**

Development Associate

### **Patty Croteau, CPG**

Lead Guardianship Specialist

### **Gordon Ellison-Oslin, CPG**

Guardianship Specialist

### **Lynn Shomber**

Guardianship Administrator

### **Caroline Horrigan**

Guardianship Intern

### **Gerry Barney**

Mobility Manager

### **Doug Dennie**

Bookkeeper

## Caring People

by David Emery, Chaplain

We have an amazing capacity as human beings to care. We often times care whether it is rainy and cold, or sunny and hot. Not that we ever see much of the latter here in Seattle.

As you probably are aware there is a group out there today for nearly anyone. From Tiddlywinks to finding the right church to support, we have a high degree of ownership for anything we get involved in.

We as human beings have an easy time putting our time, energy, and efforts into what we believe to be important and significant.

There are two things, however; I believe are above all the rest of our activities, work, or even leisure. Jesus made this clear, We are to first and foremost give ourselves to our relationship and identity with God. We are to be connected to God 100 percent of every moment of every day, with every breath we take.

Second, and equal to the first we are to be connected and in right relationship with others. This relationship with others is one of equality, integrity, dignity and value. This goes for people who cannot speak, see, hear, walk, or cognate. All relationships of compassion and empathy are valuable for everyone everywhere.

There are two things that make this doable: effort and intentionality. Intentionality means we really believe what I just said and mean it. Effort means that we act on what we believe.

This is the spiritual path, and it is paved with people of all kinds and abilities. I pray and trust this is a path we are all traveling together.

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you."*

Matthew 6:33



## Family Spiritual Retreat

**June 23rd, 9:30am - 2pm**, at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Kirkland

A Day of  
Spiritual Care,  
Sharing and  
Learning  
for Families of Youth in Transition.

For more information, please see our flyer on our website:  
<http://bridgemin.org/spiritualcare/transitions.html>  
or call (425) 885-1006, ext. 107

# The Joy of Being a Friend

by Caroline Horrigan, Intern Case Manager and  
Sometime Christmas Fairy and Dancing Shamrock!

*"Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth."*  
Matthew 5:5



**J**oy. Sheer joy. That is what I feel working in my position at Bridge Disability Ministries. I am in the very fortunate position to be an Intern Case Manager here at Bridge.

I actually started out my life here at Bridge as a volunteer in their Friend to Friend program. I would visit a client in the Guardianship program once or twice a month. These are people who don't have many friends or family and don't get to go out very much – things that you and I can take for granted. The friend I visited is a blind gentleman who loves cuckoo clocks! It was a joy and a privilege to be in his presence, and all it took was time; a little time to let someone know that they aren't alone in the world, that someone does care.

Although I am Bridge staff now, I still consider the Guardianship clients I meet with to be friends. Once a month I meet them at home one-on-one and take them on an outing of their choice – usually for coffee, a snack, a walk or visit to the mall. As Patty our Lead Guardian says, I get to do the fun part of the job – take our clients out!

I still continue to visit the friend I visited as a volunteer in my current job as an intern case manager, and it is still a privilege to be in his presence. Nowadays he hears my voice and immediately says, "Cuckoo, cuckoo!" as he knows we are going on an outing to a clock shop to listen to the cuckoo clocks. The man in the clock shop knows my friend and lets me move the hands to make the clock 'cuckoo' for him – what pleasure this simple kindness gives my blind friend!

The joy I receive from spending time with people who live with disabilities is, I feel, even greater for them. To have someone be with them, do things with them, and show they care for them means the world to them. God truly reveals Himself to me in my friends, and I am sure He shines out of me when I am with them as well.



## Fun Times with People Living with Disabilities

By Alex Motteler

**A** sign for "Wacky Wheelays" caught my attention in our church newsletter. It was to be held at the high school across the school district from my house. Eagerly, I had my mother put the event on both of our calendars, and when the day arrived we headed out. Arriving at Bothell High, we were directed to the football field. Access vans, personal vans, and cars carrying bikes filled the parking lot. Getting out of the van I followed the signs to the track where we would be competing. Here, just as we would find at a field day for non-disabled people, there were silly games for us to take part in. Egg balancing, shaving cream cheerio toss, and a race were just a few of the events we had the opportunity to try. Although I would soon discover that the typical Bridge event would be a meal, the friendships that were formed attracted me.

My first impression of Bridge, although misleading (Wacky Wheelays was more about the games than sharing a meal), I was not about to be dismissive. I enjoyed seeing my friends at the Seattle-area churches, the honor of wearing a birthday hat, and singing. In fact, since a friend, who also goes to my church, had a birthday in the same month as me, we pointed at each other and laughed. We both wanted to see each other wear this hat before taking our turn. Furthermore, we were in good spirits and saw this pointing as a way to quietly acknowledge that this was our birth-month. Silly songs to sing, monthly gatherings where we take turns pointing at whoever has a birthday, and a great dinner to top it all off. It's fun!

For me Bridge is all about forming friendships and knowing that I am not alone in my struggles as a person who lives with a disability. Furthermore, what can be better than surrounding yourself with great friends, who share the same challenges you do. When we eat, sing, and laugh together, we learn about the life struggles we each face. Chatting with each other over dinner, we can find somebody with a different perspective on our life challenges in the community. Sharing is very important to "find a bridge over troubled water", because our abilities should define who we are. Each month I join this conversation, as I continue to face my own challenges.

*Alex graduated from Cascadia Community College in December with a two year basic transfer degree. In the fall he will attend University of Washington's Bothell campus for their Society, Ethics and Human Behavior program. Alex chose this program after experiencing many set-backs in his life due to the least-expenses model that our society has offered those living with a disability.*

# Building Bridge: 25 Years of Service, *by Marcia Barker, Development Officer*

Have you wondered how Bridge began? I've enjoyed delving into the history of this wonderful organization. I especially enjoyed a long conversation over coffee with our founder, Presbyterian Pastor Henk Wapstra, and his wife Rosa Lee.

When he felt God's call to start a ministry serving people with disabilities, Henk shared his vision with others. As a result, eight people in addition to Rosa Lee came alongside to help: Mark and Carol Downing, Bob and Julia Parker, Pete and Gretchen Peterson, Ross and Didi Prentice, Mark and Carol Downing. This group became the founding Board. Their first budget in 1987 was \$17,000, and they operated out of the Wapstras' basement. Henk's services as a part-time chaplain were contracted out to the Resource Center for the Handicapped until Bridge could support a full-time person.

Henk recalls, "In June 1987 **there was a dream but no money.** Two hundred letters were sent out across the United States to people Rosa Lee and I . . . (and) Board members had known. The letter outlined the vision and asked for possible partnership. My recollection says that there were about 50 positive responses with gifts ranging from \$5 per month to \$200 per month. In June 1987, Bob Parker filed the papers for Bridge's nonprofit status." Charlie Wiggins (now Washington State Supreme Court Justice) filed incorporation documents for "Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns."

Early on, Bridge was advised by a number of people to drop the word "ministries" from our name "so that we would be more easily accepted in the social service/business/medical communities." But, as Henk says, "We were and are a ministry. To a person, the Board with strong conviction decided that the name should stay the same."

In March 1988, the Board took a "leap of faith" and put Henk on a full-time schedule not knowing where the funds would come from, but trusting God and His people for provision. That became a common theme with Bridge – moving ahead with ministry expansion to fulfill the dream, and trusting God and His people for provision.

Later that year Sharon Black joined Henk at Bridge as Associate Director. Seattle Times writer, Warren King, wrote of Sharon, "She had a certain magic about her in helping others realize their potential. It came from her heart and she gave it with great enthusiasm." So Henk and Sharon could work out in the community, Volunteers Harry Woodrow and Bob Wharry started handling administration so that Henk and Sharon could work out in the community. **The dream continued to grow.**

In 1989 Bill Carlstrom of the Paul Glaser Foundation stopped by for a visit. As Bill listened to Henk and Sharon talk about the dream of serving people living with disabilities, Bill interrupted them saying, "THIS is what our Foundation has been looking for. Your \$5,000 grant request is as good as approved." Shortly after that First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue wrote Bridge into their mission budget for \$4,000 a year – the first church to do so.

In August 1990, Bridge moved to a 400 square foot office space in a small strip mall in downtown Redmond. Henk and Sharon travelled to churches on many a Sunday to make Disability Awareness presentations, and connections were made with and between other ministries and organizations involved with what was then termed "handicap concerns." Guardianship and wheelchair repair started about the same time.

Sunday Evening Celebrations began in 1992 with the first one held at Highland Covenant Church in Bellevue. That same year, Bridge was given a \$250,000 gift from an anonymous donor. This provided a down payment for Bridge's new office on 6th Street in Kirkland, and the Ministry continued to grow.

25 years later we remain a Ministry committed to building relationships of respect with and for the people we serve. I thank God for those early Champions and everyone who has helped Bridge serve people living with disabilities throughout this quarter century. I'm delighted to serve as Bridge's new Development Officer in our 25th Anniversary year. It's a joy to be associated with such an organization, and to know that my work contributes to keeping this vital Ministry alive. **And, yes, Bridge is still a "Ministry" to this very day!**

## Matching Gifts Employers

Many companies will match the donations made by their employees/retirees to Bridge Ministries dollar for dollar. By completing your employer's gift matching form (some companies have their form online), you can double your contribution! If you are not sure your employer has a gift matching program, simply check with your Human Resources Department. Here are some of the companies with matching gifts programs:

Adobe Systems  
Alaska Airlines  
Allstate  
Amgen  
Bank of America

The Boeing Company  
Costco Wholesale  
GE  
Google  
JP Morgan Chase

Macy's  
Microsoft  
Regence Blueshield  
Safeco  
Starbucks

Symetra  
UPS  
United Way  
University of Washington





## Bridge Disability Ministries

12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103

Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

Honoring People Living with Disabilities



### What We Do:

- Spiritual Care
- Guardianship
- Mobility Equipment
- Community Connections
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Friendship Circles

Phone (425) 885-1006, Mobility Ministry: (425) 885-1008 (hours Tues-Thurs, Noon - 4:30pm)

[www.bridgemin.org](http://www.bridgemin.org)

[bridge@bridgemin.org](mailto:bridge@bridgemin.org)

## Mark Your Calendars...

### Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

#### *Unless Otherwise Noted*

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| July 29th   | Summer Picnic Celebration<br>Hosted by Sunshine Ministries<br>Game Farm Park, 3030 R St, Auburn, 98002  |
| August 12th | Wacky Wheelays Field Day & Barbecue<br>Hosted by Northshore Baptist Church<br>Bothell High School Track & Field<br>9130 NE 180th St, Bothell, 98011<br><b>NOTE: 1 - 4pm</b> |
| Sept 23rd   | Calvin Presbyterian Church<br>18826 3rd Ave NW, Shoreline, 98177  |

#### **WE CAN HELP**

Parents & Guardians of people with Developmental Disabilities:  
**Our Guardianship Ministry now offers  
private pay case management.**  
For more information call: (425) 885-1006 x102

## 2012 Benefit Dinner & Auction



Save the Date.....

**October 13th, 2012  
at The Harbor Club,  
Bellevue**

For more information, or for table sponsorships and corporate underwriting opportunities, contact Marcia Barker, Development Officer: [marciab@bridgemin.org](mailto:marciab@bridgemin.org), (425) 885-1006, ext. 107

### **Our Mission**

Because Bridge Disability Ministries honors the God-given dignity of people living with disabilities, we build relationships to alleviate isolation and enrich our churches and communities.

Want to receive our next newsletter via e-mail or be removed from our mailing list? E-mail your request to [bridge@bridgemin.org](mailto:bridge@bridgemin.org)