



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Winter, 2012

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Oh!

Glad Tidings



Of



Comfort

and

Joy



Photos taken at Christmas Celebration at St.
John Vianney Catholic Church December 8th.



"And you will have joy
and gladness, and many
will rejoice at his birth."

Luke 1:14

The Dove and The Angel Van

by Linda Martin, Spiritual Care Programs & Volunteer Administrator

Bridge Champion Valerie Backus recently shared the story of her God-daughter Paloma, whose name means 'dove' in Spanish. Valerie was close friends with Paloma's mom Isabel before Paloma was born. Both Montessori teachers, they met in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico 16 years ago, and through their common bond became like sisters.

When Paloma was born, it soon became apparent that she would have special needs. Valerie and her husband John became Paloma's God-parents, and determined to do anything they could to make things easier for the family. They moved to Arizona 6 years ago, and Valerie and John brought Paloma to Seattle for diagnosis where it was determined that she had cerebral palsy. Valerie describes Paloma as bright, but unable to walk or communicate verbally. Despite this, those who know and love Paloma say that she does have the ability to communicate in her own way, especially with her expressive eyes.

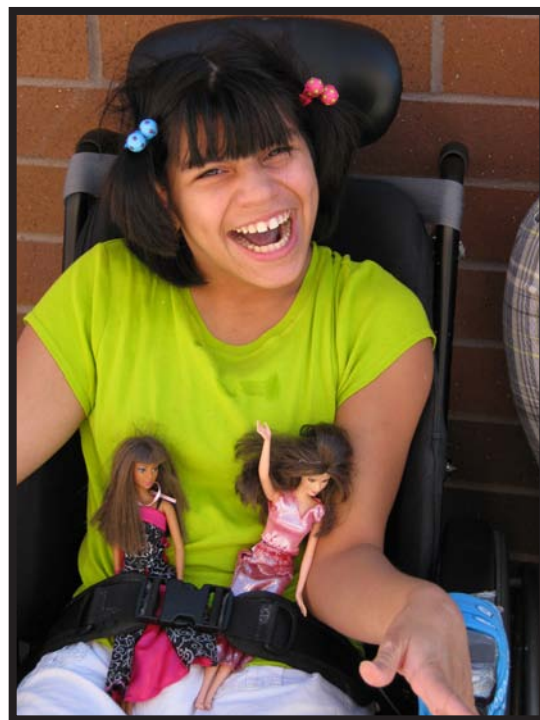
Through the years Isabel had many dreams about Paloma and her needs, and no matter how unlikely they sounded, they seemed to come true. About 2 years ago, she called Valerie and told her she dreamed that Valerie and John would get Paloma a white van that was just like new and specially equipped to transport Paloma in her wheelchair. Valerie was blown away. How on earth would they ever be able to get a van – much less one that was like new – and with the color specified to boot!

Valerie had her doubts, but she knew how hard it was on Paloma's parents to transport her without a properly equipped lift van. They were killing their backs lifting her as she got bigger and heavier. So she called Bridge Executive Director Jack Staudt and told him about the van Paloma's family needed. He said people do contact Bridge now and then looking for someone who needs an accessible van, so he'd keep them in mind. About a month later, he called to tell her the dream had come true! There was a van available that was in like new condition. It had only 11,000 miles on it, and it was even the right color! It was dubbed the Angel Van.

Back in Arizona 2 years later, Isabel lost her job and feverishly searched for a new one. She finally found a school that wanted to hire her, but the school was in Washington, DC! Valerie and John made plans to help Paloma's family move the 2300 miles, renting a moving van and helping with the driving. In late June, they packed the vans in 108 degree weather and the family piled in the Angel Van: Paloma, her parents Isabel and Victor, and her brother Joaquin and

sister Constanza. It was hard to believe they could all fit but they did, and trekked cross-country without complaint, living largely on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

The family found an apartment that would meet their needs, Isabel started her new job, and this is where the story is supposed to end happily ever after. Unfortunately, just when things were looking up, Isabel got cancer. She's had surgery, and started radiation right before Christmas. Her family's welfare hangs in the balance because Isabel is the only member of the family with a work visa due to her credentials. Victor hasn't been able to get one. So this story ends with a plea from Valerie: please take a moment to pray for Isabel's healing.



A Look Back at 2012 *by Marcia Barker, Development Officer*

Like most years, 2012 held financial peaks and valleys for Bridge Ministries. As Bridge's new development officer, it's my job to raise the funds necessary to carry our programs and services forward. Five years of economic downturn have challenged nonprofits like Bridge Ministries not only because donations dwindled but because the needs of the people we serve increased dramatically as a result of government spending cuts. Last April, our **"Time for a Reality Check"** letter explained that a sharp reduction in Foundation funding and the continuing decline in church giving had hit Bridge hard and we knew it was time for dramatic change. We faced a serious (\$100,000) budget deficit and outlined the various steps underway to address that gap.

Since January, we have all adapted to a smaller staff and Executive Director Jack Staudt and Chaplain Dave Emery accepted part-time schedules to reduce staffing costs. Everyone has worked hard to identify untapped funding resources. Our staff and volunteers have found many creative ways to meet their goals with fewer expenses.

Additional savings are now being realized thanks to our November relocation of the Bridge staff to a smaller office suite right here in the Northup Way building – same building, same address. Reducing Bridge's office footprint will save at least \$50,000 a year to be used for other vital programs. These changes haven't been easy but they were the right thing to do and, thanks to a dedicated staff and board of directors, office morale and commitment to the people we serve remains high.

Bridge has been blessed this year with several unexpected – and generous – grants from Foundations and individual donors. Our 25th Anniversary Dinner Auction in October raised close to \$100,000, making it our most fruitful fund raiser ever. We have prayed and prayed for the financial sustenance to see us through these difficult economic times and our prayers have been answered.

Do we still need help? Definitely! Helping hands and open hearts are always needed. In fact, YOU (individual supporters) are our best hope for raising revenues to offset this lingering deficit. With your generous spirit and financial help, Bridge will end the year with a much smaller deficit than in years past. Please remember that gifts of ANY AMOUNT are appreciated and make all the difference! God bless you.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

11 Corinthians 9:7



STEWARDSHIP BEYOND THIS WORLD

*~Blessing others as you have been blessed~
Would you like to honor Bridge Ministries in your Estate?*

FREE Professional Assistance Available!

to those who wish to leave a blessing of worldly assets
to Bridge Disability Ministries in their Will.

Questions? Contact:

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or

Marcia Barker

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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

bridge@bridgemin.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

Unless Otherwise Noted

- Jan. 6th Hosted by Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
10021 NE 124th St, Kirkland, 98034
NOTE: 10:30am - 1:30pm
- Feb. 10th Hosted by St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
3604 NE 10th Ct, Renton, 98056
NOTE: 10:30am - 12:30pm
- March 2nd Rock 'n' Roll Dance (see right)
Hosted by Newport Covenant Church
12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue, 98006
NOTE: Saturday, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

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

Save the Date...

2013 Rock 'n' Roll Dance

It's a Love-In, Baby!



Saturday, March 2nd, 1-4pm

Newport Covenant Church, Bellevue

12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue, 98006

Food, Friends, Fun and Fundraising... Groovy!

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.