



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Fall, 2011

An Element to Being Human

by Thomas Wagner, Board Member

What makes us human? Many people smarter than I can answer that better than myself. However I submit that one of the key elements to being human is authenticity: the ability to cry, to laugh, to worship our Creator. To be authentic and vulnerable with others are all traits that make us more fully alive and ultimately human.

Sunday Evening Celebration, Circle of Friends and the other gatherings of Bridge's Spiritual Care give people the opportunity to share their emotional truth with others. The tears of fear or loss, the laughter of life's foibles and profoundness of connecting our story to Christ's, they all remind us that God is not some distant being but one that is intimate and near.

In an age of rampant isolation, in which so many are "connected" to the machines and screens in their life, Bridge offers a reminder of what life is really all about, to share our authentic self in the communion of others. In doing so Bridge not only provides a valuable service but offers a prophetic voice to a world which longs to hear it.



*For this God is our God for ever and ever;
he will be our guide even to the end.*

Psalms 48:14 NIV



Safe Harbors - The Dinner Auction, by Jack Standt, Executive Director

This year's Dinner Auction had a Nautical theme and the title was Safe Harbors. It was easy to see how this came about when you step off the elevator on the 17th floor and enter the Seattle Harbor Club. Not only was I greeted by a wonderful view of the Seattle skyline and "Harbor", but our creative decorations provided by Karen Claus (including Sailor Hats for the volunteers), made me remember my own Sailor Days. This place was festive and welcoming and felt like a Safe Harbor. This was a secure place to be, among friends, with lively conversations, smiling faces, good food, fun activities, and the security of knowing I was welcome here.

It was the same feeling we have at every one of the Sunday Celebrations we organize throughout the year. In 2012 we will have 15 events like this and each one is another Safe Harbor. While on this special night we had 225 guests, sometimes Bridge creates a Safe Harbor for just two participants. Take Anne Aljets and her friend Deb seen in our recent video posted to our website. When they are together it is just as festive as our Harbor Club dinner. We know they are safe and Joyful because HE is with them. The promise comes from scripture, Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."



That is what Bridge programs are about - joyful relationships. We are grateful for the over \$80,000 raised at the event, but even more blessed that 60 new friends participated as first time supporters of our programs. New friends and new relationships are the result of "Safe Harbors." Events like this are about sharing the good news of service to others in our community, so please share this story with a friend.

"What do you do at Bridge Disability Ministries?"

by Linda Martin, Spiritual Care Programs and Volunteer Administrator

I am asked this question many times each week, so I get a lot of practice answering it. For me, the essence of what we do is in our mission statement, so I usually start by telling people – "Our mission is to combat isolation in the lives of people living with disabilities." Then I proceed by giving examples of how we endeavor to do that.

One of the most important ways we do this is our Sunday Evening Celebrations. At least once a month a local church opens their doors to the people we serve, welcomes them, serves them a meal, and provides a program for their enjoyment. People who live with disabilities of all kinds, physical, developmental, mental illness, join together for a time of fun, food, faith and fellowship. We enjoy craft activities, singing, praying and eating together.

When we break bread together, we fulfill that ancient ritual which symbolizes the bond of friendship. When we regularly share a meal together we develop a sense of community. As Christians, this communal meal also increases our sense of spiritual connectedness to each other and to God. All human beings value this opportunity, differently-abled though we may be. However, opportunities for such sharing are limited for many people who live with disabilities, and who are often excluded from such gatherings.

As the economy has gone through ups and downs, and budgets have been cut at every turn, the people we serve are finding their opportunities for fellowship dwindling. But at Bridge we remain committed to making as many opportunities available to those we serve as we can find the resources to support. And thanks to the support of area churches, volunteers and donors, the people we serve continue to be invited to the table.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. - Acts 2:42 NIV



Volunteers are always needed. Call to learn more! (425) 885-1006, x 118

Guardianship Offering Services to New Clients

by Patty Croteau, Lead Guardianship Specialist

The Bridge Ministries Guardians are offering new Case Management services for Private Pay clients. Case Management can take many forms. Essentially, it can be whatever the family guardian wishes to delegate to Bridge. For example, it could be managing and tracking spending money, advocating with landlords, medical advocacy, filling out eligibility reviews for benefits, or just going on outings to develop a relationship of trust. Parents who come to us want the peace of mind to know, "Who will watch out for my son or daughter after I am gone?" The answer can be Bridge.

2011 has seen changes and growth in the Guardianship Ministry. Having opened our agency to new private pay clients, we have been appointed Guardian outright, as before. Most of our new clients however, are adults with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) who have family still in their lives, acting as Guardian. The guardian family members are looking for Bridge to be appointed Standby Guardian, to step in after the family member is no longer able to serve. To prepare for that inevitable transition, Bridge offers assessments and case management services payable by the hour. When the time comes, the loved one living with intellectual disability will already know our Guardians and be part of the Bridge Guardianship family. Likewise, our team at Bridge will be ready to care for those who are now moving on, with the best options for independent living.

This new service needs preplanning and often preparation with a legal advisor. A Parent guardian cannot nominate Bridge as Standby without our agreement in advance, as there is no guarantee that Bridge can accept when the time comes. To assure the best transition for your family member, please contact Lead Guardian Patty Croteau at 425-885-1006 x 102 or PattyC@bridgemin.org to prepare for the future needs of your loved one.



Mobility Matters, *by Gerry Barney, Mobility Manager*

There are days when God's timing amazes me. Several months ago a donation arrived with an item I didn't recognize. It looked like an air pressure system (APS) mattress, but included two pumps and other items. I set it aside in a box and stored it out of the way on a top shelf. I didn't give it much additional thought. Months later, a woman came in to return a piece of equipment she received and asked if we had an APS mattress. I remembered the box on the top shelf and brought it down. The items in the box turned out to be different from what she needed, but she recognized one of them and said, "Oh, you have a lymphedema pump. I had one of those once. It was so helpful." I'd never seen or heard of such a pump, made a note on the box and returned it to the top shelf. Before she left, I recalled an earlier message from someone wanting to donate an APS mattress! I searched through more voice messages (we get about 40 calls a day), until I found the donor name and phone number. I called and it was still available so I handed the phone to the woman so she and the donor could meet.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- II Corinthians 1:3-4

Imagine the odds of connecting a person in need to a donor with a unique matching item. The story of that day gets even better. In checking my messages again, a social worker called from Harborview, "I know this is a long-shot, but I just want to see if you happen to have a lymphedema pump." (It's the only call I've ever received for a lymphedema pump and the only time this year we've received one!) Imagine two connections in one day back to back...for two unique items...if it isn't Divine intervention... I just don't know what is. I do know that I see the hand of God every day at the mobility center.

More volunteers are always needed at the center to help with phones, give out equipment and share more stories. Please call (425) 885-1006, x 118 to learn more about a rewarding opportunity to give your time.

"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Hebrews 11:1

Spiritual Care

by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

Parakletos: to help, advocate and come alongside

Recently, I learned that when a ship in the Rancient world became disabled, it was tradition for a second ship to be sent to come alongside the first one. The disabled ship with its sailors would then be led by the second ship to a safe harbor for repair. This second ship was called a "parakletos" (in Greek). For me, the connection between this year's "Safe Harbor" theme for our annual benefit dinner and our Spiritual Care ministry message couldn't have been more clear. Bridge's Spiritual Care ministry is deeply committed to and intentional about coming alongside to help, advocate for and alleviate isolation for people living with disabilities. We can never thank each and every one of our supporters enough for coming alongside Bridge every year to lead and connect others to be a part of our community.



In Remembrance

We are grateful to have received gifts

In Memory Of...

Don & Betty Chandler
Jane Cortina
Peggy Davis
Elmer Girardot
Carrie Hall
Anne Knofel
Dorothy Kranz
Dale Macomber
Auntie Maria
Bob Meyer

In Honor Of...

Bruce Knofel

Help us continue to build relationships,
improve mobility, promote inclusion,
and enrich our community.



Send a gift today or donate online. And if you are retired and over 70 ½, a qualified charitable distribution made by December 31, 2011, may satisfy all or part of your 201 required minimum distribution.



Bridge Disability Ministries

12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103
Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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Honoring Persons with Disabilities



What We Do:

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

Phone/TDD (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 stated)

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| Nov. 20th | St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
4228 Factoria Blvd., SE, Bellevue |
| Dec. 3rd | St. John Vianney Catholic Church
12600 84th Avenue NE, Kirkland
NOTE: Saturday, noon - 2:30pm |
| Jan. 8th | Crossroads Bible Church
15815 SE 37th St., Bellevue |
| Jan. 15th | Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
10021 NE 124th St., Kirkland
NOTE: 10:30am - 2pm |

NOW ACCEPTING NEW GUARDIANSHIP CLIENTS

Specializing in serving people with developmental
and age-related disabilities.

For more information call: (425) 885-1006 x102

SAFE HARBORS

Thank you to our sponsors:



WINE WORLD

Family Transitions Retreat

Save the Date - Feb 25th 10am-4pm

Spiritual Retreat for Families with Special Needs Children
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Kirkland - **For more information:**
(425)885-1006 Ext. 118 or lindam@bridgemin.org

Our Mission

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