



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Fall, 2008

Transforming Lives

by Dan Coppin, Board Treasurer & Secretary

As the Finance chair for Bridge Disability Ministries, it's easy for me to become overly-concerned with balance sheets, P & L statements, and the minutia of Bridge's accounting systems. In focusing on numbers, though, there is a danger that I can lose sight of what is at the core of our ministries – the transformation of lives.



Dan & Sunny Coppin
at the 2008 Benefit Dinner

As a supporter of Bridge, I hope you've had the opportunity to witness the life-changing work that our ministries perform. Through newsletters, events, websites, volunteer opportunities and fund-raising ventures, we are trying to spread the message about how your gifts help transform the lives of people and families living with disabilities.

I've been blessed to witness that transformation, not only in those we serve, but in myself. One definition of transform from the Merriam-Webster dictionary is "to change the outward form or appearance of." I witness that type of transformation every Sunday morning when I pick up Tim to take him to church.

Tim is confined to a wheelchair and cannot speak.

For several years we invited him to church with us, but he was too shy to attend. Once he did agree, it wasn't long before Sundays became the highlight of his week. Now when I walk to Tim's house to pick him up, he's waiting for me on the sidewalk. When we first see each other, his face transforms with joy - as does mine. Attend a Sunday Evening Celebration and you'll see that type of transformation repeated over and over again as friends reunite and new relationships are formed.

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.

The work that Bridge performs is truly transformational in a God-sized way. Through our ministries we hope to change lives, to bridge isolation, to provide mobility to those confined, to celebrate the giftedness of persons with disabilities, to protect the vulnerable, to provide spiritual care and comfort, to educate society and much more. Your support of Bridge Disability Ministries – as a volunteer, donor, board member, staff, or person we serve - enables us to meet these needs today and into the future.

So thank you for doing your part in transforming lives
and may God bless you!

'Wind Beneath Our Wings' Annual Benefit Dinner a Huge Success!

by Colleen Dodson, Volunteer Coordinator



Damaged Goods provided the evening's entertainment.

On Saturday, October 11 over 200 guests arrived at the Museum of Flight to celebrate together and enjoy an evening of entertainment in support of Bridge. With an incredible viewing of historical aircraft in the background, the band, Damaged Goods performed for guests as they surveyed the silent auction items and prepared for dinner and the bidding!

Jack Staudt, Executive Director, welcomed guests and spoke of the many changes and transformations at Bridge over the past two years. Pastor Dave Emery led the blessing before an impressive dinner served by McCormick & Schmick's with a highlight of the evening without a doubt – the Dessert Dash, with exquisite tantalizing cakes. Auctioneer, Marcus Walker, returned again this year and kept the bidding going as we auctioned off a handful of items in the live auction and led a successful Fund-A-Need.

Our guest speaker, Nhi Duong, shared her story which typifies the impact we can all make on a person's life. In her initial despair as she was losing her eyesight, Sharon Black, a founding member of the Bridge family, gave her hope. Nhi took that to heart and committed herself to school. What she lost in visible sight was replaced by insight into her personal and spiritual inner strength, shored up by her faith in God. She took that and built on it and became a volunteer working for the benefit of others living in need. The Sunday Celebration she started in 1996 continues annually at John Knox Presbyterian Church. Over time, more than one thousand guests have enjoyed celebrations and the building of relationships at these events.



The ever-popular "Dessert Dash"

I want to thank Nhi and all who participated in this year's Benefit; especially the guests, volunteers, and donors. It is through this generous support that Bridge is able to continue to provide services to people with disabilities. If you did not receive an invitation but would like one next year, please contact me at colleend@bridgemin.org or by phone at 425-885-1006 x113 to confirm your name and address.



Marcus Walker returned as our Auctioneer.

If you were unable to attend the event, but would still like to contribute, it is not too late. You may send a check by mail to: Bridge Disability Ministries, 12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103, Bellevue, WA 98005, or make an online donation by visiting our website at: www.bridgemin.org then click on the "donate online" button. Please make note on your check or in the "this gift is in honor of" box online that your contribution is for the Auction.

A TIME FOR AGAPE* REFLECTION

(*Greek for "unconditional love")

by the Spiritual Care Team

Bridge would like to extend our deep appreciation to The Medtronic Foundation for a grant that enabled us to present our family transitions retreat this year (for families with children living with a disability, looking to prepare for transitions from high school to adulthood, "life after school"). Held at Westminster Chapel, in Bellevue, it was a time of parenting reflection and networking to share experience, ideas, future planning and a fun time.

An engaging event for all, some families came from as far north as Marysville and also from the south end, Kent and Renton. Barely a moment for introductions and opening prayer; the participants were bursting with energy, eager to exchange and make connections. While the time spent clearly affirmed the need for more opportunities like the retreat, there was sadly one universal statement shared by all – none of the families had supportive church homes to welcome them and walk beside them during their transition struggles! The most positive outcome, is a shared vision to continue meeting regularly, developing a peer group that will further the mission of transitional programs.



A Dream Comes True

by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

At this year's annual benefit dinner, one of the guests voraciously bid on a live auction item, "Ride Along with a Police Officer". I wish I had a video recording of the wild and fun intensity of the bidding and could share the entertainment value of it with all of our donors. Instead, let me share the story behind the guest, who is the mother of a young adult who lives with a disability. Derek, now 26, was found to have had a cancerous brain tumor at the age of one.



Derek's mom, Candy Jones (right) with guest Shannon Metcalfe

After many surgeries and intense treatments, he was able to graduate from high school in spite of losing his short term memory and being left with partial paralysis on his left side. Unable to participate in sports and other activities, he was able to work on cars with his brothers, and Derek completely restored a car that made the front page of a well known hot-rod magazine!

Unfortunately, Derek's disability makes it unsafe to drive, but one of his long held dreams has been to go on a "ride-a-long" with a police officer! We thank the many auction donors like the Renton Police Department for being part of Bridge and helping to make this dream come true!



Making Friends at Calvin Presbyterian Church

A Sunday Evening Celebration Update by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

If you've never attended, you are surely missing out! At our September dinner, I was asked to help a young lady with her meal. She had one of the most inviting smiles I've ever encountered, and initially, I sensed she was non-verbal. At the same table, across from us, was another young man with a plate set before him. He'd begun to speak to me but I had difficulty understanding what he needed. I expressed that I was sorry. I couldn't understand. He tried again, a few more times to explain



Crystal, Tim, Larry and Jan at SEC.

when suddenly, the young lady I was helping piped up and joyfully shouted "he needs his roll buttered!" She was certainly a bigger help than I was! I laughed at myself and then she laughed with me! I got the roll buttered and before I knew it, I was having



Guests learn to use assistive voting devices.



Rev. Dave & Lois Knudson at registration

so much fun visiting it was almost time to head home... we exchanged phone numbers to arrange a future visit. There is a genuine spirit of true caring and friendship experienced at Sunday Evening Celebrations – between the host church volunteers and members serving dinners, the staff and volunteers greeting and registering guests, the Access drivers and the guests... it's truly amazing. Calvin Presbyterian also arranged for guests to learn about assistive technology for voting in this year's election. How thoughtful and inclusive...

GOT WHEELCHAIRS?

This month, it's hard to believe that we celebrate our first anniversary of the move from Kirkland, to our current mobility center in Bellevue. Last year, our many dedicated volunteers washed and processed donations in a parking lot (below), rain or shine, wind or no wind. On a human level, over 1,000 people either gained or enhanced their mobility through this ministry.



We now have a more productive, indoor washing station with spacious work areas for many more volunteers. We are reaching capacity to recycle double the amount of equipment, giving to more in need and reducing waiting lists! We are excited about the transition from OLD to NEW



If you are storing manual or power wheelchairs, no longer used or needed, we accept donations!

and the stories of lives being changed with these gifts. The gift of mobility is a gift that keeps on giving and giving and giving! Want to share your gift of time and talent? Call us and volunteer.

Relationships

(In Memory of our friend Brian Anholt)

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

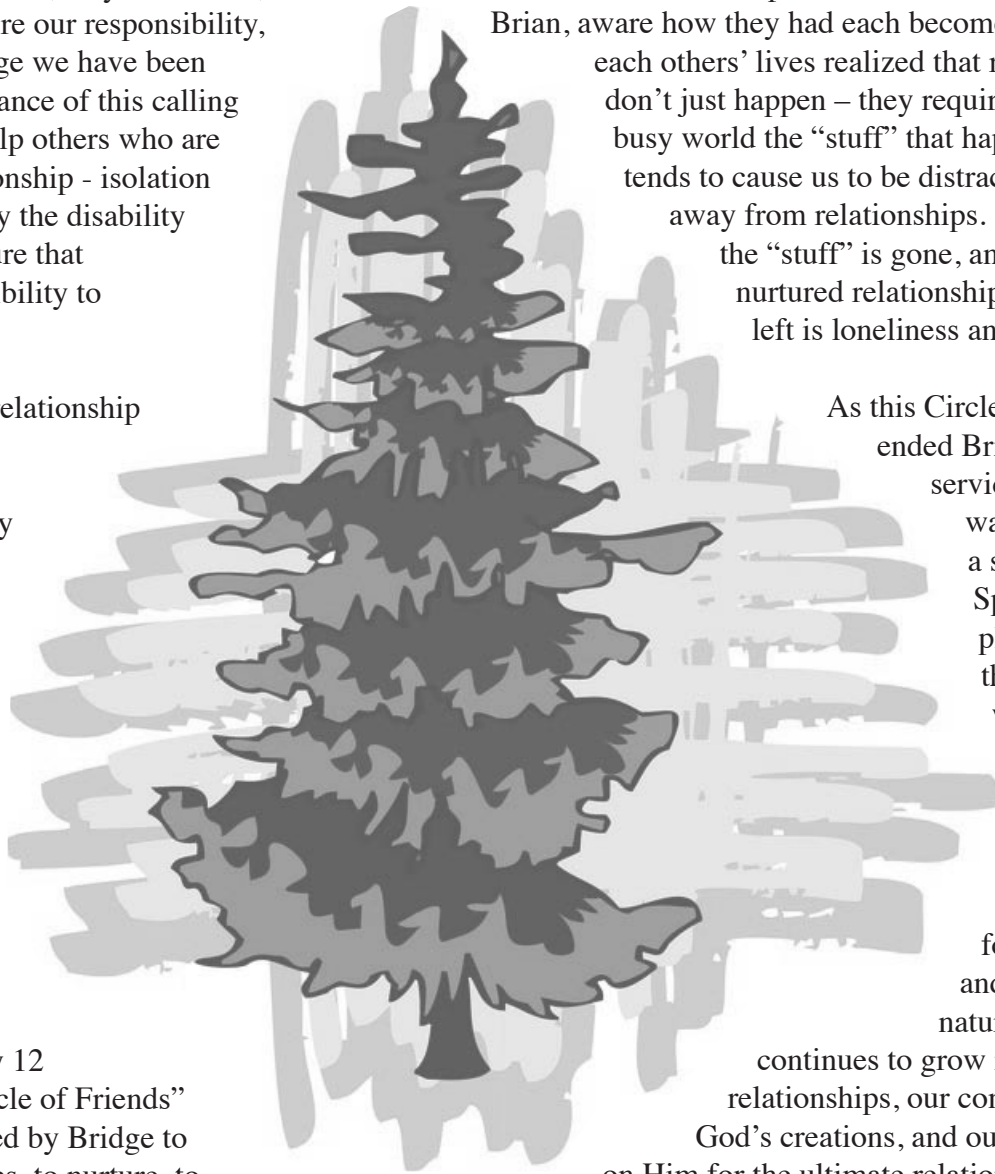
Our God calls us to be Relationship People. It begins in the beginning of time in Genesis 1-27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them,” and, in Genesis 2-15: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

We are in the image of God and in relationship with HIM. We are in relationship with others, “male and female”. And we are in relationship to the earth, our garden, which we are responsible for. Relationships define us, they shape us, they nurture us, and they are by our nature our responsibility, our calling. At Bridge we have been aware of the importance of this calling in our mission to help others who are isolated from relationship - isolation that is not created by the disability but rather by a culture that ignores it's responsibility to relationships.

The importance of relationship was brought home to me again at a gathering in memory of Brian Anholt. While Brian may have only had a few members of his family left with us, he had a large “Circle of Friends”, knitted together during his life and formalized with the support of a Bridge volunteer, Tronda Quin, nearly 12 years ago. The “Circle of Friends” program, was created by Bridge to develop relationships, to nurture, to cherish and to provide spiritual guidance

for them. While Circles are anything but typical in size or complexity, this Circle was large in members at a dozen people. Their connection with Brian spans many years, connecting at many points in his life both before he dealt with illness and after as he became disabled by health factors.

Of equal importance to this story is the relationships established among the Circle members that led them to commemorate his life together, their shared joys and life experiences with him and one another. The members, with a deep and expressed desire to continue the friendships formed as a “circle” around Brian, aware how they had each become a part of each others' lives realized that relationships don't just happen – they require effort. In our busy world the “stuff” that happens to us tends to cause us to be distracted and drawn away from relationships. Sadly, when the “stuff” is gone, and we have not nurtured relationships – what is left is loneliness and isolation.



As this Circle “family” ended Brian’s memorial service, each guest was presented a seedling Blue Spruce. The planting of these trees would be a symbol of many things; Brian’s work in the forest service and his love of nature, the life that

continues to grow in each of our relationships, our connection to God’s creations, and our dependence on Him for the ultimate relationship of love that continues beyond this life.

Bridge Connects with Other Agencies for Disability Awareness & Skill Building

Recently, Steve Bundy, the founder of SODA (Specialized Options for Disabled Adults) and his son Noah, who lives with a disability, visited with our staff about their mission to help create job opportunities for people with disabilities. Their approach is to first create public community platforms (such as malls) for people, with and without disabilities, to exchange dialogue and share information. This helps develop interactive skills; skills that employers look for, in hiring.

While Bridge doesn't help to create or find jobs, we look for other resources and creative ways for people to connect with the community and thus build relationships and relational skills whether through friendship building, working with others, or volunteer activities. The next time you see a SODA display, stop to visit and tell them Bridge sent you!

For more information visit: www.sodamoon.com

Did You Know That....

LOW COST DESKTOP COMPUTERS ARE AVAILABLE TO LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS



Computers are available in the Seattle area through Interconnection, (www.interconnection.org) Every computer is refurbished to high standards and comes bundled with everything needed to be up and running in no time, including a free computer set-up class.

THE 211 CRISIS CLINIC HAS A DISABILITY SPECIALIST ON STAFF

This King County, Washington resource (800-621-4636) is available to individuals provided they meet the specific criteria:

1. The person must be at least 18 years of age,
2. They must be in an independent living environment and may also have a care-giver to qualify or qualifying kinship care-giver and
3. The crisis must be associated with their disability.

The Disability Specialist does not act as a direct advocate, handling the crisis but rather, works directly with the individual to help empower them with resources and other means of solving the crisis independently. For more information visit: www.211.org

As Bridge Disability Ministries seeks to respond to people with physical and developmental disabilities, the spiritual care component of our engagement is simply this:

Those whose physical sight may be impaired,
see more than we believe.
Many who cannot walk
travel far better and farther than we imagine.
Those who are hearing impaired
provide us an opportunity to listen to something
much greater than words themselves.



-Dr. David C. Emery, Chaplain, Spiritual Care

Guardianship Picnic -2008

by Patty Croteau, Guardianship Specialist

I want to thank the volunteers from Washington Mutual, through United Way Day of Caring for making this years picnic such a success. Held on Friday, September 12, at Carkeek Park, it was well attended by clients and their caregivers. This beautiful spot on the bluff overlooking the water, and the breeze made it cool enough to sit in the sun. Everyone loved the grilled hamburgers and chicken, and potato salad and our clients especially enjoyed the trains as they went by. The number of volunteers and staff made it possible to really focus time and attention on our guests and to have fun with silly decorating visors, dancing (Patty), and being photographed wearing funny hats (Jack).

The event ended with toasting marshmallows, and filling up on s'mores for dessert. Our always thoughtful Volunteers even brought a car battery, converter, and blenders for our clients who needed their lunch chopped or pureed. Pureed s'mores did not go well, but it was fun to try! Many thanks to everyone for being part of this wonderful relational experience for all!



Remembering

We are grateful for the donations we have received in memory of Bridge circle friends and guardianship family members who have recently passed into God's ever loving presence.

We hold them and their family & friends in our thoughts and prayers.

Brian Anholt - Circle of Friends

Karl Bennett - Circle of Friends

Raymond Younie - Guardian Family

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Cleo Floyd, Spiritual Care Team
Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator
Colleen Dodson, Volunteer/Event Coord.
Patty Croteau, Guardianship Specialist
Gordon Ellison-Oslin, Guardianship Assoc.
Lynn Shomber, Guardianship Assistant
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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 M-Th, Noon - 4:30pm)

www.bridgemin.org **bridge@bridgemin.org**

Want to receive our next newsletter via e-mail? E-mail your request to bridge@bridgemin.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm*)

*Unless otherwise noted.

Dec. 6th St. Theresa's Catholic Church
(SAT 12-2:30) 3939 SW 331st St, Federal Way, 98023

January date to be determined.

Contact Bridge office for details.

Feb. 8th John Knox Presbyterian Church
109 SW Normandy Rd, Seattle

March 14th St. Patrick's Day Dance
(SAT 1-4pm) Newport Covenant Church
12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue



If you know of a church or community group interested in hosting a 2009 Sunday Evening Celebration, call us at (425) 885-1006, ext 112.

December 13th "Winter Dreams"

Holiday Benefit Dinner & Concert
with Gary Stroutsos & David Lanz.

Help us continue to reach out and build relationships. Send a gift today, or donate online at www.bridgemin.org.

at Kirkland Lodge & Lakeview Gardens Care Center
(see our website (events) for details)
Portion of tickets sold to benefit Bridge.
Call Wendy Sue Fellers at (425) 890-9348 for more info.