



# Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Winter, 2008

## New Opportunities with the New Year

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

With the New Year underway, we find ourselves rushing along to keep pace with the many opportunities we see available to us. We are settled in our new facility and it is beginning to feel like home. We are so blessed to have the space to receive guests and offer more workspace to volunteers, both in the office and the Mobility Ministry Center (to learn more see article on Mobility Ministry).



Jack and Kim at a Sunday Evening Celebration

2007 was a year of dramatic change within Bridge Ministries. The Lord blessed us in many ways, bestowing the new facility upon us, providing relocation expenses supported by Washington Department of Transportation, volunteers who helped with the move, generous donors, gifted Board Members, and wonderful staff. I could go on, but what is most important is that I share my witness of God's hand in what has happened. In all that has been accomplished here, I see the gifts of God poured out to be shared with the people of God.

As I have looked back over this past year, I am convinced that God has done this to show us His trust in our mission. He has confirmed we have done good work over the past 20 years, and I believe He expects us to do more, much more. If He only expected us to repeat our past, we would not need new resources. But I believe He is calling us, you and I, to step forward and not only renew our commitment to our mission but to grow and expand it. To serve more, to care more, to listen more, to love more.

I know that I risk being repetitive since in our last newsletter I emphasized that people, their families and communities need hope now for a better way of living with disabilities. They, more than ever, need bridges to conquer isolation, often said to be the most hurtful aspect of living with a disability. They want to participate in and contribute to quality of life issues with dignity and joy. Yet, this message needs to be emphasized again with continued focus on programs that will help us build more relationships and create more opportunities for individuals and the community.

Come Join us. We cannot do this alone. We need your continued support and we need many more volunteers to join us to do the "more" God calls us to do. Pray and listen for His call to you, to serve His People.

Wishing you God's Blessings in the New Year.

## 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.

# A Church Inclusive of Persons with Disabilities

By Rev. Donna Whitmore, Chaplain of Church Enrichment

Many faith communities are beginning to ask themselves “what does God call us to in ministering to those with disabilities in our congregation?” Thanks be to God that this question is being asked and that pastors and congregations are seeking to discover how to incorporate persons with disabilities more fully in the total life of the congregation! Some of the values and approaches to ministry which are most representative of a church which is inclusive of persons with disabilities are that the congregation:

- Affirms that when one person is excluded from the Body of Christ, that Body is not complete. When the Body is incomplete, it does not function fully.
- Recognizes that persons with disabilities have often been overlooked in our faith communities and acknowledges that such persons deserve to be welcomed and valued as participating members in the household of God.
- Is intentional about getting to know the individual, seeing beyond their disability and engaging in relationships of respect and mutuality. Engages in ministry with rather than to persons with disabilities.
- Actively seeks ways to remove barriers (attitudinal, architectural or programmatic) that preclude or impede participation. Builds supports within the congregation so as to invite and enable full participation by all.
- Understands that while some persons with disabilities may do things differently, all persons have rich gifts to offer our congregations. Knows that a person with a disability can make a significant impact on the spiritual well-being of the church community, some through “gifts of the heart” and other gifts which reflect the image of God and kingdom values.
- Includes those with disabilities in making decisions that affect their involvement.
- Intentionally reaches out to those with disabilities who are seeking a church community.
- Understands that when you welcome, value, include, and support the participation of persons with disabilities, the whole family is welcomed and supported.



**A congregation which fully embraces persons with disabilities into the life of its congregation is a visible and profound witness to the community of the gospel's central message: God's love is for ALL.**

## PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS

If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive information about upcoming workshops on church and disability issues, please e-mail Rev. Donna Whitmore at [donnaw@bridgemin.org](mailto:donnaw@bridgemin.org).

# New Mobility Ministry Facility

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Bridge opened the door to a new facility designed to serve more and do more, to enrich lives and the community by helping connect persons with disabilities to the community through enhanced mobility.

The **west 12328 building lower level** is the site of our new Mobility Ministry (refurbished equipment) production and distribution center. This Durable Medical Goods recycling center carries on our long tradition of providing *free* mobility equipment to those who cannot afford to purchase these important items. People with long term disabilities without insurance, or other financial assistance, can find items such as canes and walkers, or complex power wheelchairs. For those who can afford to pay, and prefer the advantages to our environment of recycled items, we ask for a small, suggested donation to help support others in need.



On an appointment basis, the center is designed to receive, recycle, and distribute, 25 of the most common types of medical equipment. Items are donated by healthcare and retirement facilities, and individual donors. All items receive a thorough cleaning and inspection, and are repaired and adjusted for serviceable use by a cadre of volunteers. We offer no guarantees, but these items are repaired to perform as close to like new as practical and offer years of service life to those who receive them.

**W**e invite you to become a part of our volunteers at Bridge. You'll make new friends and make a difference. For more information, contact Colleen Dodson at [colleend@bridgemin.org](mailto:colleend@bridgemin.org) or by phone at 425-885-1006 x 113.

For more information on opportunities to volunteer and join the mobility team, donate your used equipment, or check availability & arrange an appointment to pick up equipment call: 425-885-1008 or e-mail us at: [equipment@bridgemin.org](mailto:equipment@bridgemin.org) or visit [www.bridgemobility.org](http://www.bridgemobility.org)

## Calling All Volunteers...

by Colleen Dodson, Volunteer & Event Coordinator

**F**ollowing is our current list of volunteer needs:

- Circle of Friends and Friend to Friend- spend some time with a person with disabilities in a group or one on one. We have many people who would like a friend to help alleviate their isolation. Time spent would be based on the need of the person and the time you have available.
- Mobility Ministry- help refurbish durable medical goods in our new equipment production facility.
- Event support- assist our Chaplains at the events they hold on a monthly basis. Help with room set up, food set up, registration or other tasks needed.
- Administrative support- on call help needed in the office. Tasks include answering phone calls, and returning calls, mailings, some basic data entry on the computer.





# Welcome to Guardianship

by Patty Croteau, Guardianship Associate

Hi, I'm Patty Croteau, the newest Guardianship Associate. I work with Gordon and Marion to serve our Guardianship clients, all of who have developmental, as well as other, disabilities. Although I have been a Certified Professional Guardian for many years, the real inspiration for my work with the DD population lies closer to home. My son, Quinn, is autistic. Although his use of language is rudimentary, and he has no social graces, Quinn shines brightly with his happy nature, energy, and intelligence.



As I meet my clients at Bridge, I see similar kinds of luminosity along with the disabilities. I tell my son, "Everyone has something that makes life difficult. For you, it is autism. For another person, it is diabetes. For another person, it may be relationship problems." I don't think this makes him feel better, but perhaps it makes him feel less alone. I love that about Bridge. We go farther than traditional guardianship services to bridge the isolation of those we serve. It is a real honor to be part of God's plan in blessing those who are disabled.

# Welcome to Enrichment Support

by Lisa Coleman, Ministry Program Assistant

Hello everyone! I feel so blessed and privileged to join the team at Bridge Disability Ministries as Ministry Program Assistant. With guidance from the team, I'm happy to help keep the Enrichment programs running smoothly using my people, office and computer skills learned over the years. I have worked and volunteered at two other nonprofits doing behind the scenes work: maintaining databases, designing spreadsheets, creating flyers, editing letters, and the like. Additionally, I have a background in the software development field as a technical writer.



I am delighted to work here. Everyone at Bridge walks the talk of our mission, demonstrates love through service, caring and understanding, and remembers we are so blessed to serve and learn from those whom we seek to serve. I look forward to being part of growing the Church and Personal Enrichment programs for 2008.

# Guardianship IOI Continued

By Marion Cloutier, Certified Professional Guardian

Bridge Disability Ministries is Guardian for forty two persons with cognitive developmental disabilities. We believe our guardianship program is unique, given the broad base of experience and heartfelt desire of the staff to include uplifting social and spiritual care in our role, loving support and relationship building. Gordon, Patty and I work hard to provide the greatest level of independence and freedoms allowed for each of our clients to live a joyful life in the community, while ensuring complete and accurate compliance with the legal requirements imposed upon Guardians.

The guardian of the person and the person's estate:

- Assesses the person's physical, mental, and emotional needs and any need for assistance in activities of daily living, and files with the Court within three months of appointment a care plan that identifies those needs and explains how they will be met.
- Implements that plan and files a periodic status report of actions, usually annually.
- Gives or withholds consent for medical treatment if the need arises, and in general makes personal and health care decisions for the person.
- Manages the property and financial affairs of the person, and files with the Court within three months of appointment an inventory of the person's assets.
- Files a periodic financial accounting of his/her actions, usually annually, and in general makes property and financial decisions for the person.

Additionally, Bridge has a Guardian Sponsorship program that invites individuals to participate in and provide general financial support for this ministry or specifically for any one of our clients, for whom they'd like to help make a difference. For more information, call our office or visit our website. We'd love to welcome you to our Guardianship family.

## COME VISIT OUR NEW OFFICE...



Come tour, meet and greet at an Open House for our new office:  
Thursday, March 13th or  
Thursday, March 20th  
3pm - 7pm.

**WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

# "The here and now..."

by Rev. Dr. David Emery, Interim Chaplain

We don't ask for what happens to us or around us to happen. Life's situations are often, if not in reality, always out of our venue of influence. People come and go in our lives. Our bodies work in some ways, not in others. Our minds comprehend some things and have no clue about other things. Our souls are searching in some ways, and are immensely grateful and hopeful in others.

It is such a pleasure and joy to be here at Bridge Ministries. I have been in prayer for some time seeking to find where God might want to give me the opportunity and place to share in spiritual formation with others. This may very well be an answer to those prayers.



I have only been here a week and I have had such an amazing time already. Meeting and getting acquainted with new environments, new people, new places and new opportunities for ministry is a familiar experience in my life. I have served in numerous ministry positions from very part time Hunger Action Enabler to full time installed pastorate and head of staff for nine years.

There are things common in each of these places of ministry and things unique to each one as well. The common experience was that God is the same God then now and forever. This is so cool.

In all of these places there were people in the midst of everyday mundane familiar patterns that cried out for God's presence. There were also those in heightened emotional, physical, spiritual distress crying out for God's presence and love. This experience of life seems to be similar regardless of gender, age, physical, or any other arbitrary distinguishing personal factors. There are certain things we hold in common, and one of those is undeniably our connection and formation in, by, and through God.

There are also places of unique God given distinctions and possibilities. I am eager to discover these at Bridge as I have in Napa, CA; Penrose, CO; North Haledon, NJ; Ringoes, NJ; Clifton, NJ; Lakehurst, NJ; and most recently Trenton, NJ. These are exciting days to live, and these are exciting times to be in ministry together.

May God's abundant blessings fill us all!

**Welcome Rev. Dr. David C. Emery,** *Presbyterian Minister PC (USA) Interim Chaplain*

Dave was born in Renton and grew up in Normandy Park as a member of John Knox Presbyterian Church. He graduated from the Christian Academy High School in Japan after living in Tokyo for two years. He later graduated from SPU, San Francisco Theological Seminary and most recently Drew School of Theology. His Certification includes Pastoral Crisis Intervention, Clergy Leadership: Going Deeper Program of Shalem Institute Bethesda, MD, and Interim Ministry through the Interim Ministry Network program and has served in churches rural, inner city, suburban, and retirement communities. Dave moved back to the Pacific Northwest after a thirty year absence and loves the coffee, not the traffic, loves the mountains and water and feels right at home again. We are so blessed to have him on staff to meet the needs of those we serve.

# Did You Know That....

## BRIDGE'S DISABILITY RESOURCE LIBRARY....IS A RESOURCE FOR ALL.

Over 300 books, videos and other resources make up our Bridge specialized Disability Resource Library. Considered a regional model in the field of disability ministry, the library is focused on high-quality ministry-specific resources. Within this focus, the topics range from autobiographies of persons with disabilities to congregational enrichment guides, to theology of disability to works of fiction and non-fiction. This resource is available to you, your congregation or community group. Come and check out our library ... and tell your friends.

Here is a sampling of resources related to congregational ministry with persons with disabilities:

***Including People with DISABILITIES in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families and Congregations***, by Erik W. Carter (Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, 2007)

With this innovative guide, congregations will get the realistic how-to strategies they need to become places of welcome and belonging for people with a wide range of disabilities. Carter brings his ideas to life with anecdotes, vignettes, thought-provoking quotes from experts and community members, and specific examples of successful strategies.

***A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability***, by Kathy Black (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1996)

Kathy Black offers a unique and effective approach for preaching about disabilities. By going to the heart of the gospel and drawing on the healing narratives or miracle stories, Black shows how preaching affects the inclusion or exclusion of 54 million Americans with disabilities from our churches. *A Healing Homiletic* provides a new method of preaching about healing, based on Scripture and for understanding the needs of the disability community. A must read, especially for pastors, Christian/religious educators and bible study leaders.

***Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders***, by Barbara J. Newman (Friendship Ministries, Grand Rapids, 2006)

This slim volume provides an excellent introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) to those in the church with caring hearts but who may be baffled in terms of interacting with, nurturing and teaching children on the autism spectrum. Barbara Newman provides a theological rationale for a ministry of inclusion, including seeing ASD as difference rather than deficit. She provides an outline of various autism spectrum disorders and their typical behavior differences as well as ten strategies for the church. A reproducible resources section includes interview and permission forms, a coordinator's job description, a sample Individual Spiritual Formation Plan, and much more.

## "Faith...the View From Here"

A One Woman Show on March 7th, 2008 at 7:30pm  
Mercer Island Presbyterian Church

You are invited to an inspirational, autobiographical show to raise awareness and sensitivities about families living with disability concerns, faith and hope. If you did not get a postcard in the mail, call (425) 885-1006, ext 115 for more information on tickets.



**T**wenty two year old, Sarah Nettleton wrote this poem when she was 18. She has been writing poetry since the age of 12. Her interests include canoeing, kayaking, downhill skiing, and watching movies. Sarah was the youth member of the Presbyterian Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy national task force on disabilities, and currently serves on the national leadership team of Presbyterians for Disability Concerns. She also has a disability and uses facilitated communication.

## God in Us

by Sarah Nettleton,

Please understand we hear God.  
We are touched by God's presence.  
We see God in others.  
We taste the goodness God gives us.  
We smell God near us everyday.

Please let us help you.  
You can see God in our bodies.  
You can feel God in our hugs.  
You can hear God in our words which may  
not be spoken out loud.  
You can taste God in our hugs.  
You can hear God on our skin.  
You can smell God when you are with us.

We may have bodies that don't work well.  
We may have ears that can't hear sounds.  
We may have eyes that can't see clearly.  
We may have voices that aren't verbal.

We know God in ways you haven't experienced.  
We can teach you.  
All you need is patience and an open heart.  
Be real.  
Be genuine.  
Be sincere.  
We may become true Christian friends.  
Open your heart and mind.  
Let us in.

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## Board Members

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# Bridge Disability Ministries

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*Celebrating 20 years  
of  
Honoring  
Persons with Disabilities*

## What We Do:

- Pastoral Care
- Personal Enrichment
- Circles of Friends
- Medical Equipment
- Guardianship
- Church &  
Community Enrichment
- Social Activities
- Volunteer Ministries

Phone/TDD (425) 885-1006, Mobility Ministry: (425) 885-1008 (hours M-Th, 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)

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Feb. 24th  | John Knox Presbyterian Church<br>109 SW Normandy Rd., Seattle         |
| March 30th | Mercer Island Presbyterian Church<br>3605 84th Ave. SE, Mercer Island |
| April 20th | Emmanuel Episcopal Church<br>4400 86th Ave. SE, Mercer Island         |
| May 18th   | St. Andrews Lutheran Church<br>2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue            |
| June, 2008 | Watch for details in the mail   |
| July, 2008 | Rock 'n' Roll Dance, date TBA   |

### Disability Ministries Network

Gatherings for pastors and church leaders who seek to be intentional about the welcome and inclusion of persons with disabilities. For more information, contact Donna at (425) 885-1006, ext. 108 or [donnaw@bridgemin.org](mailto:donnaw@bridgemin.org). Stay tuned for details.

### "Faith...The View From Here"

A One Woman Show by Linda Keeney.

Friday, March 7th, 2008 7:30p.m.

Mercer Island Presbyterian Church  
3605 84th Ave. SE, Mercer Island

### New Office Open House

Thursdays, March 13th, and March 20th



Stop by between 3pm - 7pm to see our new office space and meet our staff!

### 2008 Benefit Dinner & Auction

"Wind Beneath My Wings"



Saturday, October 11th, 2008  
at the Museum of Flight

Come celebrate the life changing gifts and experiences of persons living with disabilities.