



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Winter, 2009

Little Miracles Big Message

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

We are reminded in our reading of scripture that some of the most memorable events in the life of Jesus are the Miracles He worked. My Pastor recently challenged a study group I participate in to look beyond the Miracles to the Message instead. The New Testament writers recorded miracles to point us to important teachings. Water changed to wine is interesting ... but the message is ... trust in God to meet our needs.

For over twenty years, this Ministry we call Bridge, has been a testament to many blessings... all miracles that have brought people to the ministry like Henk Wapstra who first saw the needs of people with disabilities followed by our early Board members, volunteers and staff, people like Sharon Black, Mary Galvin, Jeannine King, Bruce Knofel, and so many more were called, and served as His miracles continued.

Over the last two years I have witnessed and recounted many more miracles in this place. I am surrounded with them every day I come to work. Had these miracles not happened we would not be able to survive the coming year through a very difficult economy facing all of us. In fact, we might have had to cut staff and programs in half just to survive. The Miracle is seen in our professional and caring Staff, our giving volunteers and our efficient facilities. But looking beyond the miracle to the **message**, I see the future. I see so many messages that God is calling us to know that the needs for our unique services are growing and we must grow to meet them:

"What will happen to my son when we are gone? Who will care for him, how will he live, who will make sure he is taken care of? He is completely dependent on us." - Easter Seals Study on the impact of Autism on families

"700,000 American adults with Autism or some form of intellectual disability live with aging parents (at least one of whom is over age 65)" - ARC report to 111th Congress

"...under-funding of SSA's administrative budget" ... (results in a) ... "backlog in decisions on disability claims ... Congressional hearings have documented the hardships suffered by people with disabilities as the backlog in decisions on disability claims continues to grow and access to other key services is diminished." - CCD report to 111th Congress

Thank you for hearing the messages in 2008 and for your future support of Bridge Disability Ministries' programs to meet the needs of people living with disabilities. We have proven that together we can make a difference yet so much more needs to be done. We look forward to continued support through your gifts of time, talents and yes, treasures to answer God's call.



Tending God's Gifts Responsibly, By Colleen Dodson, Stewardship Director

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

I want to thank Mission Increase Foundation and the Bridge Board of Directors for the opportunity to serve this year as Stewardship Director. As I begin to "tend God's gifts" on behalf of the people living with disabilities, I look forward to the immense responsibilities with an equal dose of immense joy. Planning is already underway for (fun) fund raising events for our caring supporters including our annual Benefit Dinner to be held October 3rd at the Experience Music Project center in Seattle. There will be many new and creative ways to participate and experience the joy of giving this year in support of our programs. Hope to see you!



The Gift of Celebrations

A Sunday Evening Celebration Update by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

Every Sunday Evening Celebration is such a joyful occasion. I am always amazed at just how much love and planning host churches and organizations put into making the gatherings such a success. As with any event that includes a meal, servers and entertainment for as many as 100 guests (ever plan a wedding reception?), planning generally begins a year in advance and again months before the date to organize volunteers. Birthdays are also recognized and at Christmas, Santa comes with gifts. Christmas at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Federal Way had a record turnout of over 120 people! January's celebration at Crossroads Bible Church in Bellevue was another success. We welcome adding new guests to our mailing list.. call our office.. these are great opportunities to learn more about the gifts people with disabilities have to share and we love to see new faces!



"People know about you. They depend on you. You give them things they need. There's no worse feeling than needing help and having nowhere to go. Thank you for doing what you do. God bless you."

- a woman who received a walker in May, 2008

Salma's Wheelchair

Bridge collaborates with other organizations to provide mobility...even around the world. When available, refurbished surplus items are given for distribution to Europe, Africa, Mexico, Guatemala and the Philippines through Joni & Friends, Wheels for the World and Push Intl. Pictured here is 5 year old Salma who lives in Songea, Africa. Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church acquired a wheelchair from Bridge to bring with their mission team to Songea where they are building an orphanage (wheelchair accessible). Before getting the chair, Salma's knees and elbows were fitted with flip flops to crawl to kindergarten. Now, Salma's sister can push her every day! Bridge is so honored to be able to be a small part of making such a difference across the miles!



Mobility Matters

These are just a few of the messages we receive through the year... messages that affirm with your gifts, we are meeting needs...**THANK YOU FOR DONATING YOUR USED ITEMS!**

Harriet: "With a manual chair light enough for me to push my husband in I can finally take him with me on outings instead of leaving him at home"

Joe: "Since receiving a bath bench, my wife can take showers without fear of injury"

Bob: "My power chair was too big to sit at a dinner table with my family. I could not afford a manual chair too...but Bridge gave me a recycled one at no cost"

Delores: "Day or night, I couldn't turn myself in bed and had to wait for my husband to help me, until I received bed rails from Bridge"

Charlie: "I could no longer carry my 8 year old around on outings, especially with a back injury... thank you for the child size power chair ..it has changed our lives.."

New Board Members!

We are truly blessed to be able to announce the most recent addition of two new members to our Board of Directors...

Marion Cloutier, a Certified Professional Guardian, returns to Bridge after managing and developing our Guardianship Ministry from 2003-2008. Marion holds a BASW from the University of Washington, School of Social Work and has over 16 years of experience as an advocate for persons with disabilities which includes 10 years as a Care Manager for Guardianship Services of Seattle. In 1991 she became a certified Guardian Ad Litem for King County Superior Court.



Frank Wallace, who joined in November 2008, is a former VP with the Boeing Company and also served on the finance team of his church and as an Elder, (Calvin Presbyterian, Shoreline), as a volunteer for the past two years at our mobility center and

as a Board member for a number of other non-profits during his career with Boeing. He brings a depth of experience to Bridge in Human Resource management and organizational development. We are excited to reap the benefits from his experience!



If you have office skills for mailings, data entry, and research one day a week for a few hours, please call. We'd love to meet you!

Thank you to Our Retiring Board Members

Our deepest gratitude to:

Mike Hall, Board Chair, 2001-2008

who renewed and extended his term several times to share his valuable skills, professional knowledge, Board leadership and Legal Counsel "Pro-Bono" with us for these many years. Thanks to Mike and his association with Perkins Coie LLC, our Guardianship court reporting process improved significantly.



Claudie Cassidy, Board Treasurer, 2002-2008, always gentle and genuine in reminding the Board that *"We are not the destination. We are the bridge that closes the gap of isolation ... If we become the destination then how will our churches and communities be enriched by the gifts of the people we serve?"* **Your wisdom was treasured!**

Jack Roos, Board Member, 2000-2006 who, as Board Chairperson, followed by two years as Chair of our Resource Development Committee, Jack's tireless gifts to Bridge went beyond his personal and professional efforts in the community and included grant management, fund raising, connecting others, nurturing improvement in



Board members through participation and education and the wonderful support and talents of his wife Sharon – both of whom coordinated many years of Sunday Celebrations at their Church with volunteers.

THE GIFT OF VOLUNTEERING

KAROLEENA, AT RIGHT, A LONG TIME VOLUNTEER, ARRIVES FAITHFULLY EVERY TUESDAY WITH HER JOB COACH, KENITA, LEFT. FROM MAILINGS TO MAKING COFFEE, PHOTO COPIES, FOLDING OR SHREDDING AND THE MORNING HUGS FOR EACH STAFF MEMBER, BRIDGE REALLY TREASURES THEIR GIFTS.



Bridge Disability Ministries

Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns
12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103
Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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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

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

March 14th Newport Covenant Church
12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue

NOTE: St. Patrick's Day Dance, Sat., 1-4pm

April 19th St. Andrews Lutheran Church
2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue

May **Date and location to be announced**

June 13th St. Theresa's Catholic Church
3939 SW 331st St, Federal Way

NOTE: Parish Picnic, Sat., noon - 2pm

2009 Benefit Dinner & Auction

Saturday, October 3rd, at EMP in the Seattle Center
Stay tuned for details!



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.

Attention Parents and their Young Adults in Transition:

Don't miss the

2009 Transition Program Event hosted by:

Bridge Disability Ministries with Young Life Eastside Capernaum

When: Monday, March 23, 2009, 7:30pm-8:30pm
Monday, April 27, 2009, 7:30pm-8:30pm
Sunday, May 17, 2009, Time TBA,
Gasworks Parks

Contact: For location information and other questions, please contact Rachel Byrum, (206)325-8477 or RachelEAshley@hotmail.com

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