



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2009

Service ~ Sharing ~ Supporting ~ Caring

by Jack Standt, Executive Director

These words are popping up around us so often these days. At a time when the press reports that most people are concerned about the economy, jobs and healthcare, we also see people being more aware of others in need, the world around them and the difficulties our brothers and sisters live with. Many more of us are perhaps realizing what is really important in life seeing that others are living with so much less and recognize that we really can help. We discover - there are things we can do! And in that "doing" we can feel empowered, instead of power-less.



Like so many organizations, donations have been impacted significantly at Bridge, and yet our staff remains encouraged. People, congregations, businesses and foundations are stepping in to fill the voids that others have struggled to continue supporting. Come visit the Bridge office, tour the mobility center or attend any one of our events and you will see folks volunteering, church doors opening to events, businesses sponsoring community connections and hear about foundations who believe in the work we do.

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

- Philippians 4:19

Isolation is not in a Recession! Disabling illnesses, accidents, and conditions such as Autism are not in a downward cycle. People in ever increasing numbers need free mobility items, professional guardianship care, resources and most of all spiritual care. All of us during this time at Bridge remain dedicated to reaching out with programs, collaborating with partners and other agencies to deliver spiritual care and outreach to foster inclusion; joyful relationships and blessings for those we serve, their families, friends and caregivers.

Konnecting Kommunity at the Kirkland Karnival

By Colleen Dodson, Stewardship Director



I want to thank our primary sponsors, Wendy Sue Fellers with Kirkland Lodge at Lakeside and Carolyn Kelso of Lifecare Center of Kirkland who co-chaired and hosted this annual event to connect people with disabilities with the community. I also want to thank the city of Kirkland who has been widely recognized in the Puget Sound area for their advocacy of building an accessible community. This was an opportunity for the sponsors and the city to shine. And shine they did.

If you were unable to attend, you missed the carnival tents, the energy in the air, the music, prizes, clowns and just plain fun that radiated all through the downtown Kirkland Marina Park. The people we serve connected with kids and families, seniors and the public as they played games together, got their faces painted, indulged in cotton candy, popcorn, a delicious Barbeque lunch donated by George's Restaurant and sing-a-long karaoke put on by Event Source NW. Visit www.kirklandkarnival.org and be sure to watch for and don't miss next year's event!

Celebrate our Differences!

by Sheryl Haile — Program Administrator

In this congested, fast paced, driven world, it's easy to be too busy to realize how quickly a life can be changed. In the blink of an eye, an accident, or an unforeseen complication at birth; life in some way can quickly become different than we expected. Or differently-abled.

Through Bridge, I love to hear stories and exchange thoughts with the people I meet that use our services - thoughts about labels, challenges, successes, the need for patience and a good sense of humor in life, gifts and their ability to minister to and teach others about life. I enjoy how differently-abled we all are. Every day all of us at Bridge are blessed with inspirational stories of poets, painters and musicians among us. Beyond Bridge there is Joni Erickson Tada who paints with her mouth instead of her hands, and Domingo Santoyo of Brownsville, Texas, a teen born without arms who joined his high school swim team. Did you know that wheelchair basketball has become an international sport and wheelchair rugby is the fastest growing wheelchair sport in the world today? Each of us can do, be, and participate in aspects of life, though perhaps just in different ways.

Whenever you can, slow down. Look for opportunities to support and celebrate our differences. Come to a Bridge event or volunteer your time and friendship. Get to know differently-abled people. Be a part of our mission and let your life change in an amazing way!



From the Outside Looking In

by Connie Kragt, guest, small group ministries, Roots & Wings

This summer, as a student with Lake Washington Technical College I was able to participate at one of Bridge's small group ministry gatherings called Roots & Wings. It is a group of peers with disabilities that meet to support one another through life's struggles. While I wrote a more comprehensive paper about the group, I'd like to share briefly about my visit.

In summary, the Roots & Wings group is effective! All were celebrated that day. They were accepted fully by one another and by the helpers and people serving. For two hours they could just be themselves. They received unconditional, positive regard. One member announced he had finally received disability status after a long time of waiting and paperwork. The whole group chimed in, familiar with the issues and able to relate to the huge hurdle he had overcome. I think the group accomplishes its greatest goal by just showing up for each other. They need to know they are not alone and that there are others that must deal with some of the same issues. The room was so full of love and care. Bridge Disability Ministries is doing something right!



Guardianship - Who Will Care For my Loved One If I Can't?

by Jack Standt, Executive Director

Guardianship has grown to become a much needed as well as a complex ministry for Bridge and the community. By 1999, Washington State court standards required certification. An appropriate move to protect a vulnerable population of citizens; our Certified Professional Guardians meet or exceed all requirements. One of our Board members is also certified. In total, our Guardianship Ministry is gifted with over twenty-five years of experience in this field. A brief history might serve to better understand this ministry.

In 1990, Jeannine King, a caring and gifted teacher at Fircrest (state operated care facility for the developmentally disabled) approached Bridge to consider ways for residents to live in the community and enjoy independence from their institutional and often restrained environment. Though social service agencies thinking at the time encouraged independent living, the developmentally disabled residents lacked advocates for their well being and often had little to no family or financial

resources. This led the Board to approve and establish the non-profit Bridge Guardianship Agency. Today, beyond court compliance, the guardianship program, provides safe and caring oversight and promotes full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

Clients receive frequent visits by our Chaplain. Each client also receives monthly Guardian visits and more to ensure they experience community and social activities, a calming walk in the park, shopping, lunch with their Guardian or to participate at a Bridge event. Their birthdays are celebrated in various ways and an annual picnic is hosted for them to attend with their invited friends. During Christmas a local church and its members volunteer to host a gift program for each client, tailored to clients'

needs or tastes. Even through to end of life, we assure those who need it have a fitting memorial and internment in our Bridge Disability Ministries' crypt. From on-call schedules 24/7 to sharing fries at McDonald's, Guardians and staff are dedicated and demonstrate a heartfelt commitment to personal care and interest in each and every life. Many thanks to our devoted guardianship sponsors, foundations, individual and church donors who support this vital ministry.

Did You Know That....

The ARC of King County has an online publication regarding guardianship including forms and helpful how to's created by an attorney specializing in guardianship law.

October is Disability Awareness Month!

Take a step to learn something new about the issues or reach out to someone in your community. Given that nearly one in five people in the US are living with a disability it is likely that someone in your neighborhood or church is isolated or homebound and could use a friend or helping hand!

King County now has three accessible voting centers available. Visit www.kingcounty.gov/elections or call 206-296-VOTE (8683)

If you set your browser to Goodsearch, they will donate to the charity of your choice each time you use them. Visit www.goodsearch.com for more information.

Workplace Giving

There are many employers that encourage employees to contribute to charities of their choice and some also offer a matching gift program! If you participate, please consider designating Bridge Disability Ministries. We are so grateful to these local campaigns and the employees who give through:

- Boeing Employees Community Fund
- Washington State Employees Combined Fund
- Microsoft Workplace Giving Campaign
- Symetra
- JP Morgan Chase
- Costco Wholesale
- Regence Employee Giving



Bridge Disability Ministries

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Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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Redmond, WA 98052



Return Service Requested

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)

Sept. 20th	Calvin Presbyterian Church 18826 3rd Ave, NW, Shoreline, 98177
Oct. 18th	Newport Presbyterian Church 4010 120th Ave SE, Bellevue, 98006
Nov. 8th	St. Margaret's Episcopal Church 4228 Factoria Blvd. SE, Bellevue, 98006
Dec. 5th SAT 12-2:30	St. John Vianney Catholic Church 12600 84th Ave NE, Kirkland, 98034

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

**Want to receive our next newsletter via e-mail
or be removed from our mailing list?
E-mail your request to bridge@bridgemin.org**



2009 Benefit Dinner & Auction

Saturday, October 3rd, 2009
at the Experience Music Project

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

Please call (425) 885-1006 for a reservation.

Family Transition Retreat: "Guardianship and More"

Friday, October 10th 10am - 3pm

Advisor Panel and Round Table
Includes lunch and onsite care

Canyon Hills Community Church, Bothell

RSVP by September 30th

e-mail: events@bridgemin.org

Mobility Matters – Battery Campaign

by Bob Meyer, Mobility Center

I want to thank all of our donors who have responded to this year's battery campaign. Many people don't realize that dry batteries used for power chairs are sealed and must be specially manufactured to be maintenance and leak free. Because power wheelchairs are not like owning a car parked in a garage and are used inside homes, You don't want them leaking. Powerchairs donated to Bridge have typically been stored for some time in such a way that the batteries have not been charged or dead for non use so they are no longer useable in any way.

No one wants to experience a leaky battery while sitting and operating a power chair. A dead battery is not only a safety concern but a health concern to ensure power chairs are properly ready for use with a new operating battery. We are grateful for the opportunity to educate the community about the mobility center and the operating needs through this campaign and how we can ensure that people receive the mobility they need to participate in every day activities. Thank you all for your kind gifts and support.



Frank Wallace "doing his thing"

From the BOARD...

In spite of a difficult year so far for so many, we see what God has already done at Bridge and know that He is good and gracious. We praise God and give thanks for His faithfulness, counting all of our staff, donors, and volunteers as blessings and are inspired by the words of Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1856-1922.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings—wealth can never buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

Welcome Dr. Wright!

Bridge has been gifted this summer with a new Board Member. **Dr. Ursula Wright, PHD, CPE**, a Principal Ergonomist with Hampton Ergonomics. Dr. Wright is also an advocate for training and employment of people with disabilities, a volunteer mentor to college bound students and a member of the Christian Faith Center. In addition she has served as an Ergonomics consultant to Microsoft and previously employed in Ergonomics divisions with Boeing and General Motors.

Spiritual Care... What We Do...For Each Other

by Dave Emery, Chaplain, Spiritual Care

There are certain core beliefs and understandings that have been true from the beginning of Bridge Disability Ministries and continue today. That is, everyone deserves to be acknowledged, respected, welcomed, and needed. We hold centrally true that those with disabilities have something to offer and we are certain that we have much to share with them. From belonging to leading; from accepting to needing; from inviting to engaging; and seeing to listening, Bridge is committed to including and sharing in ways that hold dear the dignity and worth of every individual.

In providing Sunday Evening Celebrations, holiday and community events like the Kirkland Karnival, we seek to connect each guest, client, visitor and attendee with disabilities with others through peer support, circles of support, and churches. We seek to share with individuals their worth and value through personal, friend to friend and chaplaincy visits. Alleviating isolation and connecting individuals with the community remains a highly prized mission in our ministry.

What is frequently hidden, is what I as a chaplain, receive in return as the Mission is carried out through spiritual care ministry. It is much more than just celebrating and connecting. When faced with sadness and hardship in my own personal life I can call on any number of folks and hear what I need to, see what I need to; and find what I am looking for. I receive invitation, welcome, acceptance, care, expressions of value and worth given without reservation and without expectation.

Wow, this is really cool. So as I seek to open more doors, include more churches, welcome more people, I am energized by knowing this is what we do for each other through spiritual care. It is really cool!

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

- Philippians 2:4

Welcome Middy

Middy Goldade joined Bridge in April as volunteer coordinator for our Spiritual Care ministry. She will also lead the Sunday Evening Celebrations and small groups such as Roots & Wings and Family Transition gatherings. She is an experienced volunteer, pre-school teacher, food service business owner and loves to "clown around". Middy is also blessed with special needs persons in her family. We are blessed to have her.

Remembering

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

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

Ann Knofel
Clem Simpson
Forest Skinner
Eva Gurley

Bridge thanks this year's supporting foundations:

- Catherine Holmes Wilkins Foundation
- Elizabeth A Lynn Foundation
- The Lucky 7 Foundation
- The Norcliffe Foundation
- The Violet and Nada Bohnett Foundation
- The Northwest Christian Community Foundation

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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.