



# Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Winter, 2010

## Everything Happens for a Reason

by Dr. Ursula Wright, Board Member

*There are no coincidences...everything happens for a reason.*

This is a phrase I've heard quite often and looking back, it's an appropriate explanation for how I became acquainted with Bridge Disability Ministries. Prior to my introduction to Bridge, my family and I were in the midst of planning for the care of a family member. Reviewing state, federal, and local care-giving resources was exhausting. Despite the challenges, we managed to establish our plans. Though we were thorough in reaching our decisions, the uncertainty of the future was still very present!

In discussing my concerns, a friend suggested I research Bridge to learn more about care-giving options. In addition to guardianship services, mobility equipment and other programs, I learned that Bridge provides outlets for spiritual support by connecting churches and other community resources to clients at risk of isolation. As a person of faith, I was very pleased to see spiritual care as a recognized need. I also know that encouraging inclusive churches and communities enriches us all. The more I learned about Bridge, the more I wanted to ensure these services remained available now and in the years to come.

Soon I began volunteering. Being involved gave me an opportunity to witness Bridge's commitment to serve with kindness and compassion. In my desire to serve, I found that I received so much more than I gave. Bridge's demonstration of unconditional love and acceptance was reciprocated by clients and guests, providing me with experiences that are both heart-warming and inspiring.

My involvement with Bridge not only helped in revising my family's care-giving plans but like other families we now have the peace of mind in knowing that organizations like Bridge exist if and when needed. Today, I still volunteer and sit on the Board of Directors. I'm convinced that divine intervention brought our paths together. My introduction to Bridge was no coincidence. Everything happens for a reason.



Dr. Wright (right) with a friend  
at Bridge's Annual Auction.

## Stewarding the Mission, By Colleen Dodson, Stewardship Director

Every non-profit organization serving to meet their community needs has someone responsible for raising awareness for a cause, the mission and for fund raising. Reflecting on my role as Stewardship Director and the events of 2009, I realize that something genuinely stands out about Bridge: *We aren't just responsible for carrying out our mission of alleviating isolation through financial support of programs - but we operate with an intense and intentional drive to transform people's lives - not only for the person living with a disability that comes to us but for their friend who cares or friend they will make, for the family, care-giver, church or business owner.*

This past year we have witnessed new churches joining to host relationship building celebrations and new first time sponsors. Our volunteer pool is growing and it is delightful to see many return guests and supporters at events, spreading the word, or helping to connect more individuals to more resources. The continued support from all who value building a community inclusive of all of its citizens - is deeply appreciated. Bridge cannot and could not do it alone. Thank you again for your part in all of the joyful smiles you'll see on the pages that follow and for a blessed year.



# Mobility Matters *by Bob Meyer, Mobility Manager*



Hillary a PT attending Holy Spirit Lutheran's SEC, gives Sue a "quick adjustment".

At Bridge, we always like to say that gifts of mobility are gifts that keep on giving. Because the mobility center is a "recycling" facility, used items can be repaired for use by someone else in need. The gifts are free and when no longer needed, are returned and recycled again, and again – keeping 1,000's of items out of our landfills each year. Items Bridge can't use are forwarded to other agencies that serve global mobility needs. Even more amazing though are the smiles of clients who come to see us at the center and those who really know how to show off their mobility, and who are able to participate at community events!



Greg's wheelchair is decorated for the season.

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



## Happy Birthday Joyce! *by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator*

Meet Joyce... a wonderful example of a person with a lifelong disability who has gifted the community with her art and poetry. A number of her pieces have been donated for our annual auctions.

Her independence and presence at almost every monthly Sunday Evening Celebration is a joy. Joyce recently celebrated her 80th birthday with friends and family at her home. It was a privilege to be surrounded with love and the magnificence of her many paintings. The wall to wall sized painting and the self portrait (shown here) are my favorites.



## GUARDIANSHIP, *Guarding the Vulnerable and God's Guidance*

*As told by Patty Croteau, CPG*

When I got the call that my client was in the hospital, I knew that she would need a lot of advocacy for even the most basic pain medication. Her doctor attempted to pressure me to approve a DNR – do not resuscitate – status. For the patient, living with CP, blind, deaf and non-verbal with limited mobility, he claimed she had no quality of life. Not taking no for an answer and fearing my client would not get proper care, I fired the doctor. Hours later, praying with the care-giver and staff, I knew the Lord was with us, holding our precious friend in His hands. When I got home, I could exclaim with peace - "I did my job today! Thank you God for a job where I work with the Lord to bring His Kingdom to earth!"

P.S.... My client is home and comfortable!



# Spiritual Care Ministry

## Who We Are... A Reminder!

by Rev. Dr. David Emery,  
Spiritual Care Chaplain & Director



*"God, who is rich in  
mercy, made us alive  
together in Christ."*

- Ephesians 2:4, 5

First and foremost we are a spiritual ministry. The primary focus for everything is our spiritual awareness and belief that the spiritual presence of God in life makes a difference. We are all about our relationship with God! This means that by sharing the spiritual aspect of life we enhance, support, deepen, and enrich the lives and relationships of ourselves and others. Spirituality is a healing, helpful possibility for folks with all kinds of disabilities.

From the spiritual contemplative side of life, Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen realized and shared the importance and transformational way of being that is seen in the disability community.

From the western rationalistic and academic side of life, Sharon Betcher at the Vancouver School of Theology shares that the disability community offers the world a way to be transformed... and transformative.



## Rock 'n Roll Fundraiser at Newport Covenant Church

This year's theme was St. Valentine's Day. People flocked to hear the 'Durable Goods' band and take a turn on the dance floor. Everyone was encouraged to wear Valentine red, pink and white so it was a colorful sight as the dancers moved to lively music. A delicious dinner and dessert was followed by a craft for guests to create their own valentine cards. Fund-raising is made fun for guests who take pledges for their dancing.

Stephanie Martin won a commemorative T-shirt for the most pledges. Others received Snoopy dolls donated by Met Life, and commemorative T-shirts were also sold to raise funds. Mary Klug and all her team from Newport Covenant Church helped facilitate a fantastic event. Decorations, food and hospitality, so thoughtfully provided, created a wonderfully festive atmosphere. Volunteer face painters and Cupid also injected more fun and playfulness.

We thank everyone who contributed to so many smiles of acceptance and joy on the faces of guests moving on the floor, gliding in their wheelchairs and singing along... smiles that went way beyond words to express.





## Sunday Evening Celebrations: Opportunities for Spiritual Growth and Reflection

by Nobutaka Ono, Intern Staff

Since joining Bridge Disability Ministries last year, I have attended a number of Sunday Evening Celebrations. I greet guests, share a meal, get to know them and help with crafts such as making a necklace of beads. Enjoying my time and helping others at SEC reminds me of a simple fact: it is heart-cleansing and fulfilling to give to help others enjoy their time, make friends, and build relationships.

People whom we serve at SEC may need help to do things such as buttering bread or pouring a beverage. While enjoying the



Carolyn, Alison and Nobu with "Gingy"  
at the Dec. SEC at St. John Vianney.

guests, I also carefully observe to see if anyone needs assistance. A challenge for me is to know to what extent I should respectfully help individuals in order not to treat them as if they are totally dependent on others. This is a challenge I am grateful to face and experience, because it makes me

think a lot about what it means to care for and help others. Do I help others to make myself feel good? Do I help to impress people watching me? Do I help because I care for them? SEC gives me an opportunity to remind myself of the importance of spiritual growth and to reflect on my values and purpose in caring for others. It is also just joyful!

## Thank you Sherry Lookabill!

### Board of Directors, Emeritus

Sherry has been a respected and contributing member of the board for over a decade (1995-2009).

In addition to general board duties, she has been speaking on behalf of Bridge locally and as far ranging as the State Legislature. The Board, staff, volunteers and those we serve greatly appreciate her dedication.



To honor Sherry for her long and meritorious commitment and service, as she transitions off of the Board, the members unanimously bestowed on her the honorable designation of Director Emeritus. We will miss her but know that she will always have a heart for Bridge and be thought of fondly as one of our greatest champions!

### What a Gift!

Although financial gifts are always needed, an equally important need is the gift of time. Being a presence with friendship and serving at our Sunday Evening Celebrations is an invaluable (and rewarding) way to support our work.

Consider joining us in 2010 along with Eastlake Community and Raging River Community churches. Both have a small group of folks who have committed to come help at these monthly events. If this is something your church feels called to do, contact our Spiritual Care Team for more information.

## 2009 Volunteer Fairs Bring Resources

Volunteers are invaluable to Bridge and 2009 was an amazingly active time of growth. Our presence at these events connected new Pastors, churches and faith groups with Bridge and led to new opportunities and hosts to build inclusive communities. We thank



all of those who partnered with us to make these valuable connections possible (and many more not listed):  
**Crossroads 9th Annual Resource Fair ...Raging River Community Church in Preston ...The Eastside Volunteer Fair ...The Bellevue Kirkland Interfaith Alternate Giving Fair ...The City of Issaquah's 10th Annual Hobby and Volunteer Expo ...Sammamish Hills Lutheran Mission Fair ...City of Bellevue Volunteer Fair ...and NW Universities Annual Mission Festival.**

## Did You Know That...

**July 26th, 2010** is the 20th Anniversary of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Often this is promoted as a day of celebration for people with disabilities...but truly it ought to be cause to celebrate for all people!

**The Master Builders** of King and Snohomish Counties take applications to build wheelchair ramps for free for families who have a need and are financially unable to pay for the construction of one. They built about 30 last year. Check their sites for more information.

## Gifts-In-Kind More than kind...invaluable!

The complex legal requirements of the Guardianship Ministry clients at Bridge are sustained by Gift-in-Kind support offered by the Pro Bono legal services of eight law firms including Perkins Coie, LLC.

Without the gifts of Pro Bono representation by Perkins Coie, LLC and other attorneys we simply could not offer guardianship services to our 40 clients. It is estimated that the combined volunteer hours exceeded 1900 hours, or the equivalent of nearly one half million dollars in 2009 – legal expenses our clients could neither afford nor could we have raised from donors; more than kind... invaluable.

MANY THANKS!

## Community Transit Matters Too!

Bridge wants to acknowledge the role that many King County Access drivers play in providing safe and caring transportation for the many guests attending events through the year. Drivers who deliver warm, caring friendship and concern make an enormous difference in the quality of time for our guests. Without Access, many people would have no way to get to church, or participate in community and public gatherings.



St. Margaret's Episcopal Church - SEC



St. Mark's Episcopal Church - SEC

## Bridge Donors Honor Loved Ones...

We are grateful to have received gifts in the name of the following individuals

### In Honor Of...

Chris Comley	Larry & Jane Turnbull
Karen Fieser	Kathleen Tyers
Diane Gaskill	Elaine Williams
Teresa Robins	Ron Birum
Highline School Dist PT/OTs	

### In Memory Of...

Dick Anderson	Eva D. Gurley	Marian Paeper PT
Brian Anholt	Ann Knofel	Jim Palmer
Gladys Collins	Aurora Letrondo	David Paul
G. Paul Davis	Carolyn Martin	Clem Simpson
Clarence Foster	Elizabeth Ostbye	Koreyne Simpson
Mary Anne Gottstein		Melvyn White



## Bridge Disability Ministries

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

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Seattle, WA



### 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](http://www.bridgemin.org)**    **[bridge@bridgemin.org](mailto:bridge@bridgemin.org)**

## Mark Your Calendars...

### Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

April 11th    John Knox Presbyterian  
109 SW Normandy Rd, Seattle

May 16th    Highland Covenant Church  
15022 Bell-Red Rd, Bellevue

June 13th    Emmanuel Episcopal Church  
4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Is

## 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.

## 2010 Benefit Dinner & Auction

**Coming in October, 2010**

*Stay tuned for details!*

*Help us continue to reach out and build relationships.  
Send a gift today, or donate online at [www.bridgemin.org](http://www.bridgemin.org).*