



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2014

A Message from Our Executive Director

by Brenne Schario

My son Josh has autism. He is 21 years old, nonverbal but understands most of what people say to him.

This afternoon, Josh and I were at the grocery store shopping for snacks. At checkout, he realized that he had taken the wrong flavor of corn chips and proceeded to go back with the two bags he had just purchased. I instructed him that we need to tell the checkout clerk before we swapped flavors and so we approached the cashier. After I had spoken to her and told her what we were doing, I motioned for Josh to say thank you. She said, "Oh yeah, I know Josh," and turned to him and spoke to him DIRECTLY, "Of course Josh, go ahead and switch it with the ones you like. Make sure they're your favorite brand too, ok?" Then to me, she said, "I know him, he comes here with the folks from his school every Monday - great kid". I smiled. I love that people in the community know him! I love that she spoke directly to him!

And while I stand there looking at my approaching son smiling from ear to ear, two bags of original flavor corn chips in hand, I could not help but feel incredibly grateful to the many men and women who work towards inclusion for our adult sons and daughters, take them out in the community, and model everyday what respect for every individual, regardless of ability, looks like.

Bridge Disability Ministries, through its three core ministries – Spiritual Care, Guardianship, Mobility -- continually seeks not only to empower our friends with physical and/or developmental disabilities, but to keep alive and active the vision of a society that values their God-given dignity and gifts.

It is this vision that drew me to Bridge. I feel blessed to be given the opportunity to apply my professional experience and help a population I deeply care about build meaningful relationships in their churches and communities.

Bridge leverages its every function and activity to promote inclusion and build relationships. We find and extend the reach of experience that works, from growing our guardianship ministry to working with the faith community. Fundraising is an important and necessary part of this work.

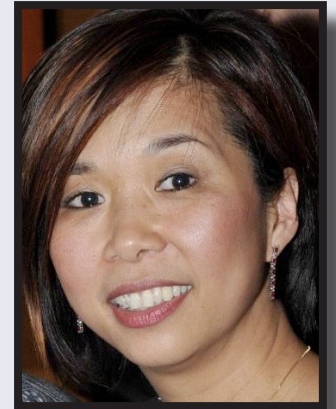
Building Bridges, our annual dinner and auction event, will be held on October 18, 2014, at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. Bridge's fundraising needs have grown every year since starting the auction, and 2014 is no exception. Success requires the support of not just the Bridge community, but beyond it as well, in the places where we all live, work, and pray.

On the Bridge website, you will discover activities underway to make this annual fundraiser a success. Hopefully, you will spy fun ways to contribute and help out--no amount of time and energy is too little. For those of you new to the quest or just thinking of getting involved, please call the office and jump right in. But probably the most valuable contribution anyone can make is bringing the cause to the attention of friends and family who can support it and have a good time at the auction in the process.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25

We work to realize the promise of a society imbued with beautiful diversity, a society that embraces each part as unique and incredibly valuable, just as God designed it. That promise, I believe, creates the connection and sparks the necessary support. Each of us can help forge that link to the broader community.



A Legacy

by Patty Croteau, Guardianship Agency Supervisor

It is hard to believe that they are both gone, two people I shared so much with. The mother, thin, frail Betty, seemed to be held together with just determination to find help for her daughter; and Caryn, a timid private person with so many disabilities that I wondered how she stayed alive. Betty had lost her husband barely a year before. "He took care of everything," I heard Betty say again and again. Betty came to me with the question I hear so often - "Who will care for my child when I am gone?"

Board Members

Daniel Coppin

Board Chair/Treasurer

Erica Cohen Moore

Board Vice-Chair

Patrick Hicks

Secretary

Frank Wallace

Member at Large

Rev. J. C. Mitchell

Member at Large

Sigrid Laegreid

Member at Large

Staff

Brenne Schario

Executive Director

Linda Martin

Spiritual Care Programs &
Volunteer Administrator

Patty Croteau, CPG

Guardianship
Agency Supervisor

Gordon Ellison-Oslin, CPG

Guardianship Specialist

Lynn Shomber

Guardianship Administrator

Susan Dougherty-Guild

Guardianship Associate

Nadia Andrilenas

Guardianship Assistant

Gerry Barney

Mobility Manager

Kim McLaughlin

Mobility Customer Service

Kristy Thurmond

Bookkeeper

Michi Williams

Office Assistant

Betty was a long-time supporter of Bridge, and when the Guardianship Agency began to provide private pay services, she asked Bridge to be stand-by guardian for Caryn. She also needed additional help providing for Caryn's needs, so she signed a stand-by contract with case management services. In particular, she needed a new place to live where her high medical needs would be taken seriously by the staff. At the Adult Family Home (AFH) where she was currently living, Caryn lacked adequate nutrition, medication, and respect. The lack of respect for Caryn's human need to feel at home with the people who cared for her was the worst part. As Betty catalogued the shortcomings of the AFH, she added, almost as an afterthought, "I think Caryn is going to die."

My first step was to find a new AFH for Caryn close to Bellevue. It was an adventure in which I got to know Betty - a fastidious woman with every silver hair in place and her pastel cashmere sweaters always spotless - despite her own fight with cancer. Betty got to know me, as well.

It was difficult to find an assisted living situation with adequate supports for a fragile person like Caryn for an affordable rate. One day we prayed on this together, and she poured out her need for God's help with a fierce, honest courage that amazed me. Then she sighed, and said, "Now it is in the Lord's hands," and gave me a crooked smile. And the Lord did come through with a loving place for Caryn.

As I grew to know her and helped her provide for her daughter's needs, I came to understand that Betty had her eyes on eternity. I will always remember her whispering her greatest fear, "What if I die first?"

Betty Martin's prayer that she would not die before her daughter Caryn was answered. Caryn passed first, and Betty followed a short 3 months later. After her passing, we discovered that Betty had made a sizable bequest to Bridge in her will. Her generosity to Bridge has helped us to continue providing for the needs of people living with disabilities and their families through difficult economic times. On behalf of the people we serve, we wish to express our eternal gratitude for her thoughtful, caring and selfless gift.

Stewardship
Beyond
This World

Questions?

Contact:

Frank Selden

(425)990-1021

office@frankseldenlaw.com

Bless others as you
have been blessed
with a provision for
Bridge in your will.

Mobility Moment, by Gerry Barney, Mobility Manager

Three years ago a 34 year old husband and father went to bed in pain because of his back. Unbeknownst to him he had internal bleeding along his spine. The next morning he woke up in greater pain and shortly thereafter passed out while taking a shower. He had developed a hematoma on his spine and as a result lost the ability to move below the point of the injury to his spine, leaving him a paraplegic overnight.

Recently he came to our center in an older power wheelchair that wasn't working well for him. He and his family live in a rural community and his chair's relatively small drive wheels weren't reliable for getting traction when he needed to travel over the many rock or gravel surfaces where they live. Getting stuck was emotionally painful for him because he couldn't keep up with his two children when they were out together. Instead he frequently needed their help to get his chair moving again – not an experience a young father wants.

We had several chairs with large drive wheels and front wheels that substantially reduced the chance of high centering the chair and losing traction, so we chose the one that fit him best. The new chair was a big improvement over his old one, but wouldn't enable him to be of more help to his family by cooking for them – something he had done in the past and that they all enjoyed. For that he needed a chair that would raise him up high enough that he could look down on the stove to see what he was doing and avoid burning himself trying to reach things from a low sitting position. His family missed his cooking and he especially wanted to do it again to help relieve some of the burden his wife carries since he became disabled.

Unfortunately we didn't have a chair with a lift seat available at the time. However, a few weeks later we had a donated chair with both a lift seat and the ability to raise a person to a standing position so we called him and arranged a time for him to come and try it out. His wife came with him to see the chair and they were both excited by the possibilities it presented. Not only would he be able to cook from a standing position, but he would be able to exercise his leg muscles and improve his circulation by raising himself to a standing position throughout the day. He still has the hope of someday walking on his own again. Getting exercise by standing, assisted by his new chair, helps him work toward that goal.

The chair was also a timely morale boost for him and his wife because after they left our equipment center, their next stop was the hospital where he was to undergo another surgery. It seemed important to pray for him about this before he left and so we did. A week later we called to see how he was doing and were delighted to learn that the surgery had gone well and he felt good. He also told us we wouldn't believe what a huge difference the chair was making for him and his family. This is just the kind of thing Bridge Ministries' Meyer Mobility Center is here for – helping this man bridge some of the frustrations partially separating him from his family within the home, and giving him much greater capability to bridge the difficulties preventing him from getting out into his community more often. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than receive, and having the opportunity to help people like this proves it to us every day.



Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Bridge's programs, which would not exist without their efforts. Currently our greatest need is help repairing electric wheelchairs and other power equipment. If you have the skills needed to work on power equipment, or are interested in other volunteer opportunities, and would like to learn more, please email Linda at lindam@bridgemin.org or call her at (425) 885-1006, ext. 118.

Thank you!



Bridge Disability Ministries

12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103

Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

Honoring People Living with Disabilities



What We Do:

- Spiritual Care Programs
- Guardianship & Case Management
- Mobility Medical Equipment
- Community Connections
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Disability Advocacy

www.bridgemin.org

Mobility Medical Equipment (Tu, Wed, Th: noon - 5pm)
(425) 885-1008, equipment@bridgemin.org

Spiritual Care, Guardianship & Administration
(425) 885-1006, bridge@bridgemin.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| August 17th | Summer Picnic with Sunshine Ministries Game Farm Park, 3030 R St. Auburn, 98002 Please Note: 12-2pm |
| September 21st | Calvin Presbyterian Church 18826 3rd Ave NW, Shoreline, 98177 |
| October 26th | Newport Presbyterian Church 4010 120th Ave SE, Bellevue, 98006 |

Our Mission

Because Bridge Disability Ministries honors the God-given dignity of people living with disabilities, we build relationships to alleviate isolation and enrich our churches and communities.

Save the Date
for our

Annual Benefit Dinner & Auction

Saturday, October 18th, 5:30pm

Building Bridges



Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue

Tickets: \$100 per person

WE CAN HELP

Parents & Guardians of people with Developmental Disabilities:
Our Guardianship Agency now offers private pay case management.
For more information call: (425) 885-1006 x102

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