



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Fall, 2009

Reflections...My Journey with Bridge

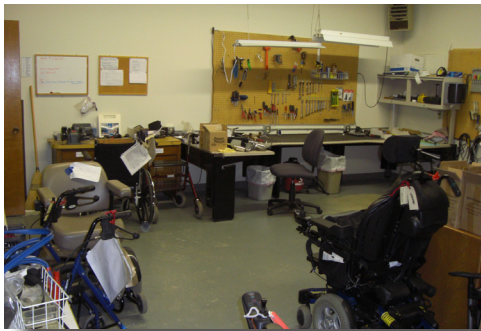
by Frank Wallace, Vice Chair, Board of Directors

As I sat down to share my thoughts for our Fall newsletter, I began to reflect about my personal journey with Bridge Disability Ministries and the impact it has had on my life. I knew nothing about Bridge a little over two years ago, and today I volunteer weekly at the mobility center and serve on the Board of Directors. It all began when my friend, Russ Quackenbush, asked if I would be interested in visiting Bridge with him on a Thursday to see the volunteer work he did at the mobility center.

That first visit with Russ's encouragement was the beginning of my participation and support. Volunteering with Russ, who is also a retired teacher, taught me how to reclaim used equipment and give back to those in need, who are unable to afford items that would give them improved mobility. I enjoy working with the other volunteers and the challenges of repairing mechanical and electrical equipment. I soon realized that Bridge Disability Ministries provided me a way to use the talents and skills God has given me. I was giving but receiving a gift as well.



Russ (a Cougar) and Frank (a Husky)



Mobility Center Workroom

I also began to volunteer at Sunday Celebrations and helped with the Annual Benefit Dinner. The more involved and engaged I was with Bridge programs, the more I felt a strong calling to serve in its ministries in many more ways. After being asked to serve on the Board and giving prayerful consideration with my family and friends, I was elected and continued my journey with this wonderful organization. As a volunteer Board member, I have attended workshops and seminars to learn about the value of individual participation, getting engaged in and taking ownership within non-profits that exist to transform people's lives in positive ways through their programs. Volunteers who take ownership

also become transformed as they help the organization realize their vision and truly make a difference. From Russ' initial invitation to visit and participate at the mobility center to becoming engaged in other programs of service, I grew to experience genuine ownership in Bridge. As I meet people every week who come to receive items and hear their stories about isolation and being unable to afford what they need, I knew I had connected to a deeply committed ministry serving people with disabilities. I am grateful to my friend's invitation and guidance. Whether or not you give or use our services, I invite you to visit Bridge, see for yourself and begin your own journey using your God-given talents to help others. Ask for Frank or Bob or Russ or Marlene or any one of our many volunteers ... I look forward to being your guide!

"It is God who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others."

- Ephesians 2:10

Fund Raising ... Dessert Dashing and Raising Awareness!

Colleen Dodson, Development Director

This year, Bridge's annual benefit dinner and fund raising event was "sweet" at the Experience Music Project in Seattle. The evening was made possible by many generous donors to the silent auction, dessert cakes for the dash, quilts, a hand crafted carousel and getaways to bid on. We enjoyed music and dancing for all and experienced the blessings of many new guests hearing the message about the mission of Bridge Disability Ministries. Each year the reservations seem to fill sooner and we see more new faces. That is good news! More people are being reached who want to participate and support programs for people with disabilities.

Though individual and foundation giving is down overall (across the country), we remain grateful to everyone joining our ministry to alleviate isolation for people living with disabilities. Several new churches have already signed up for 2010 Sunday Evening Celebrations and twice monthly dinners are being offered. More churches are connecting with Bridge and that means more inclusion opportunities. Planning is also underway for more Spiritual Care Retreats in 2010 to help parents with young adults transitioning from high school. Thank you again for caring about the people who are served by our programs.



GUARDIANSHIP...Special Moments and Memories

Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

Bridge's guardianship care and advocacy along with the compassion and depth of our guardians has brought us recognition and many new client requests (more than our present funding permits us to accept). It really takes a special sort of person like Patty and Gordon to devote their careers to the care and protection of others. Patty shares a moment worth remembering with us:

*"One guardianship moment really stood out to me when I took *Joan out to lunch last month. We sat down with our food, and Joan fell silent, looking at me expectantly. Now you have to know Joan. She is bubbly and chatty, even with speech impediments and rarely quiet. Joan held out her hand to me and I took it, then she bowed her head. She wanted me to bless the food. I took a breath to say a simple prayer she could understand, and Joan started praying. She thanked God for the food and for me and our time together and went on thanking God for the sunshine, and many other things I could not make out. She asked for blessings on us and each of her housemates, all by name. Joan prayed thoroughly and fervently. Then she said, "In Jesus' name, Amen," and looked up at me. I was full of wonder, and humbled. I had forgotten to bless the food; I had forgotten that the Lord was at the table with us. Joan had not; she practiced the Presence of God more naturally than I did. In the future, I will look to Joan for leadership in lifting us to the Lord."*

*name changed

This Grateful Season

by Rev. Dr. David C. Emery, Chaplain

At Bridge, I often find myself feeling overwhelmingly grateful for many amazing and incredible chaplaincy moments with clients.

Last year during the holiday season, I shared my morning coffee with one of the folks I am privileged to know and minister to. She has struggled with a physical disability for some time, but has a special spirit about life. I am always moved by her spirit, filled with acceptance of others, with generosity, humor and grace. In the midst of constant challenges, for people living with disabilities, their hospitality and strength, I feel it is a gift to be invited into their life and world even for a few moments. These simple opportunities and invitations to hear a bit about another person's life experiences bring us all to a better God-minded place and a grateful season.

As the holidays approach, we all tend to feel pressed to make this year the best ever. We set our hearts to send the best cards, give the best presents, decorate with the best ornaments, baking the best holiday

goodies, attending the best parties, singing and listening to the best music ever and giving to the best caring ministries - all in another yet exhausting attempt at having the best holiday season ever possible.

I am not going to suggest that you not do all of the above again this year but rather I invite you to reflect on what made that very first Christmas the best one ever.. the one we are constantly trying to recreate and recover... the one I am convinced in many ways was made the best by that Heavenly Star. It is the star that invites all of us to see God in front of us right here and now, that is revealed in so many wonderful ways when we see, hear, listen and care about another person

before us, with us, around us and truly connected to us, as we visit someone else's life and world even for a moment. Through genuine relationships and connecting people who care about others, we can all re-experience the blessing of that very first Christmas... seeing that God was and is always with us ... All of us at Bridge wish you a blessed, grateful season..

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

- Philippians 2:4

Spiritual Care ... the Gift of Belonging

Linda Martin, Spiritual Care Team

Having recently joined the staff at Bridge Disability Ministries, I brought my 14 year-old son into the office to see my cubicle. He was so happy to see his picture on my desk because it made him feel as though he belongs. My son is autistic and for that reason my work supporting the Spiritual Care Team has special meaning near to my heart. I support Chaplain David Emery and Volunteer Coordinator Middy Goldade in their programs to help people with disabilities feel that they belong. As a Christian, I feel that one of the most important places to feel that you belong is in church. When I inquired about the position, I told Jack Staudt, Bridge's Executive Director that my son and I had been unable to find a welcoming home church. He pointed me in the direction of the Raging River Community Church whose Pastor believes in inclusiveness.

We met Pastor Roy Peacock and indeed felt welcomed and have attended ever since. We also started attending Sunday Evening Celebrations last month, finding yet another place through Bridge where we belong and can participate in worship and service. Of course, I also feel that all of these events are answers to prayers, because I prayed for an end to the isolation and loneliness that my son and I have experienced as so many other families in our situation do. I also prayed for an opportunity to serve, and next thing I know I saw this ad on Craigslist and now here I am working at Bridge. It is my joy and pleasure to do the Lord's work to alleviate isolation and build bridges for other families living with disabilities.



Ready for an Emergency? My Story...

Saan C. Saeteurn, Volunteer

Are you ready for any disaster mother-nature may throw at you? Don't be stuck in a situation like mine when I discovered I couldn't depend on others, even at a medical facility, because unexpected things happen during disasters.

Not long too long ago after surgery, I was transferred from a hospital to a nursing home facility for 24 hour nursing assistance, rehabilitation and use of electrical equipment to monitor and dispense my medications. One evening a very nasty wind storm knocked out the power. The generators were constantly shutting off and on and only ran in parts of the facility which didn't include my room. I suffered through the night without IV-antibiotics or pain medication along with a one week supply of medication. Quickly facing the worst time of my life, I imagined that emergency personnel would soon have to transfer me with other patients back to the hospital for urgent care.



Saan and wife, Stacie (center) enjoy the benefit dinner with their guests.

Luckily I was charging my mobile phone before the power went out. I dialed my wife to bring my personal emergency bag from home and our neighbor's gas generator to power up my equipment and the medications dispensing unit for other patients. My emergency bag contained: a pre-filled medicine box with a medication list and week's worth of medication, summary of medical conditions, 3 days of clothing, small blanket, wheelchair repair supplies, a leatherman tool, protein bars, canned food and opener, bottled water/juices, battery flash light/radio, deck of cards, family and physician contact list, cash (bills & coins), family photo and a small NIV Bible!

Your emergency items probably won't be the same as mine, but everyone should make a list of **must haves** for medical, food, clothing, etc., adding it to the suggested government preparedness list. It may not seem like a big deal right now but when the time comes and you really need those critical things, you or a loved one may have a very hard time finding them available or accessible. So please...be ready, BE PREPARED !!!

Volunteer Spotlight: Dale Gunnoe

Recently we heard from Dale Gunnoe, a Bridge volunteer with the mobility center who needed to relinquish his position driving the Bridge van this year due to an old military-related back injury. Dale has gratefully offered to talk to anyone to share his experience if they are interested in volunteering at the mobility center to collect donated items.

To Bridge and his friends he wrote: "As you know, I have been helping out at the Bridge Mobility Center since you put me in touch with Bob Meyer who contacted the Bluebills last year for a volunteer to drive Bridge's van around the greater Seattle area, (picking up wheelchairs, power chairs, and other equipment). I found it gave me an opportunity to interface with people donating equipment, many of whom were either recovering from the loss of a loved one and needed to just talk about it or who were shut in for the most part and relished having someone to come into their day"

Thank you Dale for your giving and caring for the people served by Bridge Disability Ministries. Interested in volunteering at the Mobility Center? Call 425-885-1008.

The measure of life is not its duration, but its donation.

- Peter Marshall

THANK YOU!

A huge thank you goes out to all of those who made our **October Spiritual Care Ministry's Family Transitions Retreat** (with Guardianship speakers) a special time. As families attended to learn about guardianship care and navigating new programs for their loved ones, it was also a time for Spiritual Care, making community connections, sharing and healing for families. Bridge Disability Ministries helps provide resources for many important aspects of our loved ones living in the midst of disability concerns. (Look for more information on 2010 gatherings scheduled which will tentatively offer topics on **Employment and Human Value Issues**).



Thank you again to our host, sponsors, volunteers and speakers:

**Canyon Hill Community Church,
Bothell, Washington**

The Medtronic Foundation

**John R. James, President and Founder of
Special Solutions**

**Shirley Bondon, Manager, Washington
State Office of Public Guardianship.**

Sharon Jodock-King, Disability Advocate

**James Mhoon, Consultant & Marketing
Specialist to Non-Profits**

**Keith Thomson, King County
Guardian ad Litem**

**Dr. Ursula Wright, PHD, CPE,
Bridge Disability Ministries, Board Member**

**Marion Cloutier, CPG, Member,
Bridge Disability Ministries Board Member**

The Violet and Nada Bohnett Foundation

**Mary Jo Magruder, Manager of Individual
Advocacy, The Arc of King County**

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Guardianship Specialist

Gordon Ellison-Oslin, CPG

Guardianship Specialist

Lynn Shomber

Guardianship Assistant

Bob Meyer

Mobility Center

Alison Erickson

Accountant

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.

Consider Bridge Disability Ministries in your planning.

...The IRS has a tax tip for *Special Charitable Contributions for Certain IRA Owners (Tax Tip 2009-23 www.irs.gov) applicable to the IRA owner who is age 70 ½ or older.

*As an alternative method for donating to a charity, certain taxpayers may transfer funds from their IRA to an eligible charitable organization. Consult your tax advisor.

...You can effectively share your cause to further the kingdom even beyond your lifetime, through planned giving! There are several references in scripture, about what we are called to do with the resources that God provides for us:

"Honor the Lord with your wealth,
with the fruits of all your crops."

- Proverbs 3:9

"And do not forget to do good and
to share with others, for with such
sacrifices God is pleased."

- Hebrews 13:16

The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved. Even the rich are hungry for love, for being cared for, for being wanted, for having someone to call their own.

- Mother Teresa



Bridge Disability Ministries

Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns
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Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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Honoring Persons with Disabilities



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)

Dec. 5th	St. John Vianney Catholic Church
SAT 12-2:30	12600 84th Ave NE, Kirkland
Jan. 10th	Crossroads Bible Church
	15815 SE 37th St, Bellevue
Jan 24th	Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
	10021 NE 124th St., Kirkland,
Feb. 13th	Newport Covenant Church
	12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue
Feb. 28th	St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
	3604 NE 10th Ct., Renton
March 7th	St. Andrew Lutheran Church
	2650 148th Ave, SE, Bellevue
April 11th	John Knox Presbyterian Church
	109 SW Normandy Rd., Seattle

Did You Know That...

...We are often asked by families in need about renting mobility items including things we don't ordinarily take, such as hospital beds, adaptable vans or ramps.

It is such a joy to respond that we don't charge for, nor rent mobility items. However, we almost always have a contact or resource to connect families elsewhere to find what they need.

At Bridge, we love making connections – especially for the unusual or uncommon such as a hooyer lift or custom crafted device (like one that allows someone with a disability to be lifted into a pool for water therapy). We'll take the caller's number and soon after, a donor often calls in with a matched item they wish to donate. Surely our amazing God is at work when this happens!

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