



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2010

A Vision of Bridge's Future

by Dan Coppin, Board Member

What will Bridge Disability Ministries look like in 10 years? Who will we serve? How will we serve? In the past year the Board of Directors and Staff have grappled with these questions and many others. Spending many hours analyzing, discussing and visioning the future of Bridge was not an idle exercise. It's critically important that organizations reexamine themselves in light of changing demographics, needs and resources. It's also critically important that – during these times of reexamination - we *listen* for God's guiding voice and *look* for where He is already at work.



Dan Coppin (left) at a board meeting.

Our visioning is still a work in progress, but one conclusion we came to was to reaffirm Bridge's long-standing Mission Statement: ***Because Bridge Disability Ministries honors the God-given dignity and giftedness of persons with disabilities, we build relationships to alleviate isolation and enrich our churches and community.***

We believe this statement still captures the essence of what all three of our Ministries – Spiritual Care, Guardianship and Mobility – try to accomplish: the building of relationships and the alleviation of isolation. Our visioning led us in some new directions as well. For example, it became clear that there is a large and growing need for our guardianship services in this region. Currently, Bridge serves as legal guardian for 40 persons with disabilities. We are determined to find innovative ways to expand our guardianship services to help meet this need (you can read more about our guardianship services elsewhere in this newsletter).

Wherever God may lead us, we are convinced that Bridge Disability Ministries' programs are needed now more than ever. Your support – as a volunteer, donor, board member, staff, or person we serve - enables us to meet the needs of today and the needs of tomorrow. Thank you for joining us.

Spring Reunion and A Common Vision

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

June is a popular time of year for family and high school reunions – for reconnecting. Bridge was recently blessed to be able to host a reunion of former Directors and Board members including Chaplains Bruce Knofel and Henk Wapstra, founder. The event was made possible as Bruce made his way home to Alaska after visiting family in California. Also joining us for the event and tour of the mobility center were former Board members Jack Roos, Bob Meyer, Tronda Quinn, Mary Tyers, Mike Hall and Cheryl Fox. Current Board members Ron Birum and Dan Coppin also participated - sharing stories that reunions are all about.



Bruce Knofel and Henk Wapstra

We also toured the new House of Bridge ... the Mobility Center. Seeing where God has led us to build was an inspiration to Bruce, Henk and guests. Discussing guardianship, on-going care and long term goals for serving families with adult children in transition was equally satisfying to our old friends. Not to be missed was a wonderful opportunity to hear Chaplains Bruce, Henk and Dave talk about their common vision of inclusion for all people in God's houses of worship. It simply inspired all in attendance. We are truly blessed to have such devoted support today because of past leadership that began in 1987. All of us came away thinking about what God might do in the next 20 years for His ministry through Bridge. We can't wait to see what happens and plan the next reunion!

Mobility Matters

by Bob Meyer, Mobility Manager

We are blessed again to welcome yet another new volunteer to our recycling team! Our newest member turned to Bridge after contracting a diabetic related infection which resulted in an amputation of his leg. Without resources to meet all associated medical expenses in particular, a wheelchair, Bridge provided one. Having just received a prosthetic and with the help of physical therapy, our client turned volunteer is now giving back at the center one day a week.



Board volunteer Frank, "tooling" around.

Another client who lives in an adult living center called to thank us for the manual wheelchair she had received from our center. Instead of having to eat all her meals alone in her room, she can now join friends and family for meals and socializing in common living areas. These are just a few of the examples of people in our community who are helped to regain independence and relationships through the generous donations of our donors and volunteers. I hope that you will agree that nothing feels better than helping others and our community!

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



Mobility items ready as needed....come on in!

Volunteer Spotlight



Thank you **BOB UPRIGHT**, Mobility Center volunteer and 2009 Sharon Black Award recipient. The Sharon Black Rainbow Award was created in 1988 in honor of Bridge's first Associate Director, herself a person living with a disability who spent her adult life in service to others. For many years, Bob has faithfully given his time every week to the center repairing items for those in need and mentoring to other young adults who help our center through various transition programs such as North Shore's Transition Academy. The center provides opportunities in a welcoming environment to youth living

with disabilities to build skills and to adults who serve the community with their talents repairing mobility equipment. We have been blessed by Bob's dedication and skills and are grateful for his part in transforming lives through the center.

MIDDY GOLDADE, thank you so much for your all your bling and blessings in connecting people in the community through volunteer fairs and other partnerships you formed on behalf of Bridge. Your unflappable spirit will be missed and we promise to continue the good works that you brought to the Spiritual Care Ministry!

During Middy's term as Volunteer Coordinator, our volunteer ministry program got an amazing boost of energy and enthusiasm not to mention great volunteer recruits from the community to support our cause to come alongside people with disabilities.



Spiritual Care - Alive and Making a Difference!

by Dave Emery, Spiritual Care Director

Freddie* said to me last week: "I woke up not dead this morning, so I decided I would face the day." I must admit that I have never said those exact words myself, but I do know that I have been discouraged from time to time. I know that I too have seen the world around me as sometimes too difficult to deal with. I have questioned whether what I do, or who I am makes any difference to anyone.

In serving through Bridge Disability Ministries I rarely feel that way anymore, because I know that I can share with Freddie and others, all the time; that life is special. No matter what happens around us or even to us, life gives us a chance to be blessed and to bless others.

At Bridge Disability Ministries we don't provide just another activity, social program or support group in our community for folks with disabilities. We are something more, because we believe in something more – that each of us is unique and each of us matters. Each of us – makes a difference and we intentionally work at that belief.

The spiritual nature of our lives reminds us that God is a flame in our hearts, not to be extinguished or ignored. We are not about providing services for folks with intellectual disabilities, brain disorders or physical disabilities, we invite them to remember that we know they have God-given gifts and a heart on fire for sharing those gifts with others and to care for others too. They are here to be a flame in the community and to participate in the faith traditions they hold dear.

So when they wake up in the morning, they may share with me and those around me a simple truth to claim: I am alive and I want to do more than just get through this day!!!

*name changed

Sunday Evening Celebration Gatherings ...Success Stories!

Over the last year, our Spiritual Care team was able to connect with ten new churches interested in supporting Bridge through hosting Sunday Evening Celebrations, volunteerism or giving. This year, Highland Covenant Church, one of Bridge's founding SEC churches, returned to host a wonderful event in May. John Knox Presbyterian Church, another leader in hosting SEC, also has a magnificent Team Leader in Nhi Duong who is sight impaired. She managed the entire April SEC event from planning, organizing, securing presentations and overseeing the menu and preparing volunteers. What a great job!

In March St Andrews Lutheran hosted its third SEC for the community. In February we were able to host two celebrations in the month made possible by Newport Covenant Church of Bellevue and St. Andrew Presbyterian Church of Renton which helped us to spread opportunities to connect people across the county - Northend to Southend locations. These participating churches are blessing our



region with inclusion and welcoming guests to return for services and other caring supportive programs. Guests and volunteers enjoy activity booths, singing, skits by youth groups, puppetry, great food and friendship making! At Newport we had to add tables to keep up with arriving guests. Word is spreading as is the joy and uplifting experiences shared by all.

Family Transitions Retreat, "An Unpredictable Life with a Predictable God"

Our third event for families with adult children transitioning from high school, was hosted by John Knox Presbyterian Church in Burien. Reverend Dave led us through a wonderful outline of thoughts about living an unpredictable life- as a spiritual journey – within ourselves and with a very predictable God who is always present with us. Moreover, it was reaffirmed that the experience of gathering to celebrate Spirituality within families living with disability is important and needs to continue. Families come to share their journey together, connecting and supporting one another in many ways.

Our hosts provide a welcoming setting for all of our guests and activity for young adults in which helpful volunteers serve and participate. A great lunch is provided as well. Our



Transitions Spiritual gathering started over 3 years ago, and each year has been new and refreshing. The initial funding from The Medtronic Foundation grant made it possible to springboard this program and more recently Bridge was blessed with gifts from The Bohnett Family Foundation and the Jordan Fund. We also receive gifts from churches. Bridge and all of the parents, volunteers and young adults are so very grateful for all of the support to be able to meet through the year, renew connections and form more relationships. A fourth retreat is being planned for the fall to be held this year at Calvin Presbyterian in Shoreline. Please visit our website for more information about all of our programs. Hope to see you!

Spiritual Care
The gift of enhancing,
enriching, and sharing
a significant life.



"Now, as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10: 38-42

Remember...
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!

Welcome Linda Martin

We were blessed last year when Linda agreed to join Bridge part time in the Spiritual Care Ministry and accepted more responsibilities to help in the Volunteer area filling in where Middy left off. There was no mistaking Linda's skills from the get go as she jumped right in to learn about Bridge, attend events, get mailings and announcements out and coordinate volunteer work. She is also the talent behind the E-announcements folks get each month about gatherings and events. If you didn't get our 2009 Fall Newsletter, visit our website to learn more about Linda and her heart for families living with disabilities.



Bridge Donors Honor Loved Ones

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

In Honor Of...

Frank Wallace
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Crane

In Memory Of...

Carolyn Burell
Marjorie Christensen
Gladys Collins
G. Paul Davis
Douglas Graesser

Walter & Mary Helensky
George Hood
Cal Krebs
Jim Palmer
Nannette Westhead



Guardianship – Serving the Vulnerable

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

A recent study estimates that there are 4,500 people in our state who are in need of but cannot afford a Guardian. The State of Washington in 2008 recognized a growing and critical need to fund a Pilot program offering “Public Guardianship”. Sadly, only about 100 cases are funded. Many people and families are desperately waiting for help. Some of these citizens are struggling with homelessness. Others may experience difficult or misunderstood behavior in the community and may even face arrest. Though they will be found incompetent to defend themselves or to be judged they may be incarcerated unjustly or retained at a hospital or other institution at a high cost to taxpayers. Often they are denied social justice, freedom or independent living options that a Guardian could have advocated for on their behalf.

To best of my knowledge, Bridge is the only Charity organization serving Western Washington State with a Certified Guardianship Agency. This means we are the only established Agency that primarily serves indigent clients, people who cannot afford to fully pay for Guardianship service.

Just as with our Mobility Center where we offer free wheelchairs to those in need, in Guardianship we accept clients without family, living on public assistance that are unable to pay for full guardian support. While there are many Agencies who accept “pro-bono cases” as a small part of their client list, Bridge specializes in providing this service to the Developmentally Disabled.

Currently, Bridge serves 40 clients. Donor gifts, court fees allowed and grants cover about 25% of the Cost of Guardianship. The “Uncompensated Care” is covered from Bridge reserve funds. We are hopeful that as the economy recovers we will again be able to add new clients in need and deserving of our caring services.

Is there a solution to the widening gap between the number of people in need and available services and at a lower cost in our state that best serves all of our citizens? **Yes.** Several other states follow a proven *Public Guardian* model that saves taxpayers as much as \$100,000 annually per person. ***Together, we can be part of the solution.*** All you need to do is make a monthly pledge to sponsor one person. Contact me directly at 425-885-1006, ext 111 for more information.

Board Members

Ron Birum

Board Chair

Frank Wallace

Board Vice-Chair

Daniel Coppin

Secretary/Treasurer

Marion Cloutier, CPG

Sherry Lookabill

Mike McDonald

Dr. Ursula Wright

Staff

Jack Staudt

Executive Director

Colleen Dodson

Stewardship Director

Rev. Dr. David Emery

Chaplain, Spiritual Care

Linda Martin

Spiritual Care Team

Sheryl Haile

Program Administrator

Patty Croteau, CPG

Guardianship Specialist

Gordon Ellison-Oslin, CPG

Guardianship Specialist

Lynn Shomber

Guardianship Assistant

Bob Meyer

Mobility Center

Alison Erickson

Accountant

Thank you for helping through **DONATIONS and PLEDGES...**

Donations come to Bridge in many ways: a wheelchair left at our front door, a check in the mail, cash dropped in ministry or event boxes, and yes... electronically. The new website for Bridge invites champions for our cause to donate online. By clicking on the “**Make a Gift**” button on the first page, you can reach a secure site that accepts credit cards donations.

An on-line option is available to make a recurring gift through pledge giving. One of the many definitions for the word **pledge** is: “an assurance of help when needed”. Pledge giving is becoming a popular way to give simply – you choose an amount, whether \$10 or \$100, decide on a frequency, and your generosity is spread throughout the year. Online pledge giving benefits your cause too by providing a reliable cash flow, and it is a “Green” process that saves paper. On-line giving overall works more efficiently to benefit those in need.



Bridge Disability Ministries

Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns
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Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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Seattle, WA

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)

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

July 18th SEC Picnic at Game Farm Park
3030 R Street, Auburn

August 8th Wacky Wheelays
9130 NE180th St., Bothell

NOTE: Sunday, 4 - 6:30pm

Sept 26th Calvin Presbyterian Church
18826 3rd Ave NW, Shoreline

NOTE: Sunday, 10:30am - 1pm

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.

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

Oct 17th Newport Presbyterian Church
4010 120th Ave SE, Bellevue

Nov 21st St. Margaret's Episcopal
4228 Factoria Blvd SE, Bellevue

Dec 4th St. John Vianney Catholic Church
12600 84th Ave NE, Kirkland

NOTE: Saturday, 12 - 2:30pm

2010 Benefit Dinner & Auction

Save the Date.....

**October 9th, 2010
at the Space Needle**

