



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Fall, 2015

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A Message From Executive Director, Brenne Schario



Twenty eight years ago, Bridge's founder Henk Wapstra started an "equipment" ministry, as it was called early on – to assist those who need medical equipment but cannot afford to obtain it, and also to provide the means to participate in community to those who were shut-in. In 2007, Bob Meyer took the reins of our mobility ministry and worked tirelessly for the next 4 years to relocate, organize and develop the mobility ministry. By 2011, our investment had grown tenfold to an annual distribution of \$1.1 million in equipment to people in need, thanks in no small part to him, our volunteers and our many donors.

How did Bob make this happen? By inspiring his friends, family and colleagues to join him – to volunteer, to find the equipment sitting in garages and storage everywhere and encouraging people to donate the equipment, their time, their financial support. He helped us see what was needed, and insisted we be part of the solution.

Bridge's Meyer Medical Equipment Center, named in honor of Bob Meyer (who passed June 2011), continues to be a significant resource – distributing almost 400 pieces of durable medical equipment to over 200 people a month. This year we are on track to distribute \$3M in durable medical equipment! As supporters of this community, we share in the passion and vision of a society that welcomes and values people of all abilities.

We see people from all walks of life come through our doors – children and adults recovering from physical illness, injury or who have disabilities, the elderly, our military men and women. The need is great and we are committed in continuing to offer durable medical equipment to those who need it regardless of ability to pay. If you have friends who can help as stewards and leaders of an active and strong organization, if you care about providing the resources so people of all abilities can participate in our society, join us on October 24th! One person has made a difference. You can make a difference.

Thank you for your continued support. **We look forward to seeing you on the 24th.**

With appreciation and gratitude,

Brenne

Transported

by Linda Martin, Support Services Supervisor

Recently I went down to our Meyer Medical Equipment Center to try to catch our Medical Equipment Supervisor, Gerry Barney, when he wasn't too busy to talk. Anyone who knows Gerry knows this is no easy task to accomplish. He is constantly buzzing around, moving equipment, fixing equipment, loading equipment, talking to people about their equipment needs...well, I'm sure you get the gist.

One thing I wanted to talk to him about was what equipment was being requested that he could not provide to people in need. One item he mentioned he was always in need of was transfer chairs – couldn't get enough of them. And he pointed to one. I looked at it. It just looked like a manual wheelchair to me. So, not being an expert in medical mobility equipment, I asked him, "What's so special about a transfer chair?"

Gerry explained to me that sometimes the caregivers aren't as big as the person using the chair. For example, an elderly woman may be the caregiver for her husband who is quite a bit larger than she is. And the transfer chair is a lot lighter and easier to manage when you're folding it up, lifting it in and out of a car, or pushing it around. Then he demonstrated the difference. First he lifted up the transfer chair as high as he could, and then he lifted up the regular manual wheelchair as high as he could. He didn't need to say any more. I got the picture. And I snapped a few for you so you could get the picture too. After seeing them, I think you'll agree, it's not too hard to figure out why caregivers would breathe a sigh of relief upon receiving a lightweight transfer chair! Gerry told me he really enjoys seeing that big smile on their faces when they realize how much easier their lives are going to be.

You might even say they are, well, *transported* by relief and happiness.



Lightweight Transfer Chair



Heavier Manual Wheelchair



Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Bridge's programs that would not exist without their efforts.

Please contact Linda for more information:
lindam@bridgemin.org or (425) 885-1006, ext. 118.

Angel by My Side

by Denise Aanenson, Spiritual Connections Coordinator

God will command his angels to protect you wherever you go.

Psalm 91:11

At the most recent Sunday Evening Celebration hosted by one of our faith community partners, Calvin Presbyterian Church, I was touched as I witnessed the convergence of compassion, love, and hospitality throughout the evening. There was one moment in particular that was especially impactful and represented well the vision behind Bridge's Celebrations, which is to work together with our church partners to build communities of belonging and inclusivity for people living with disabilities.

The moment came as the vocalist sang the chorus to the song, Angel by My Side, co-written by Alistair Griffin with James and Tom Martin. Here are the words to the chorus:

*Could it be that I have found an angel,
I can see heaven in your eyes
In my soul I never will be lonely
For there will be an angel by my side.*

In the moment that I heard these words I looked up and saw one of the volunteers from Calvin sitting beside one of our friends who lives with disabilities. The image in my mind captured what it is to come alongside someone and be a heavenly presence as Jesus commanded, by loving others as we are loved, loving our neighbors, loving those who are on the margins of society. Jesus' commandment to love is at the core of our Spiritual Connections ministry and our partner churches. That is why we continue our work with, and for, people living with disabilities. May God bless you with "angels" by your side, people who live out what it is to love as Jesus commanded.



Because of a Bridge Guardian

by Nadia Andrienas, Guardianship Coordinator

I was asked to contribute something for the fall newsletter about things I've seen recently that demonstrate the value of the oversight our guardians provide for adults with developmental disabilities. Here's the list I came up with.

Because of a Bridge guardian:

- Lena reconnected with a friend who is able to take her into the community to do what she loves: shopping and watching movies!
- Danya has a steady advocate during medical care management meetings throughout her recent hospitalization. Her Bridge guardian plays a critical role for staying in touch with her many temporary health care providers during her medical emergency and making sure she is treated with equity and respect.
- Mike has someone to call to make plans for his upcoming 40th birthday.
- Mallory received urgently needed medical attention, is now pain free and able to more consistently attend a day program that gets her out of the house and interacting with new friends.

Bridge's guardians visit our clients regularly, communicate with their program staff and health providers, and ensure that they are getting appropriate healthcare, housing and recreation. We also provide support to obtain their benefits, pay their bills and acquire anything they need. In a world that is often indifferent to the needs of vulnerable adults with disabilities, such oversight is invaluable to a happy, healthy life lived in the heart of the community. Every adult living with a developmental disability deserves good guardianship protection such as we provide, regardless of their ability to pay. Bridge serves as a model to the community, and Bridge supporters make that possible.



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

Medical Equipment Center (Tu, Wed, Th: 10am - 6pm)
(425) 885-1008, equipment@bridgemin.org

Spiritual Connections, Guardianship & Admin.
(425) 885-1006, bridge@bridgemin.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

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| Nov 15th | Newport Presbyterian Church
4010 120th Ave SE, Bellevue, 98006 |
| Dec 5th | St. John Vianney Catholic Church
12600 84th Ave NE, Kirkland, 98034
NOTE: 12:30 - 2:30pm |
| Jan 10th | Crossroads Bible Church
15815 SE 37th St, 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.

We have room for you at the table!

at our

2015 Annual Building Bridges Dinner & Auction

Saturday, October 24th

To RSVP:

events@bridgemin.org or (425)885-1006



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

To receive our next newsletter via e-mail or be removed from our mailing list, email your request to bridge@bridgemin.org