

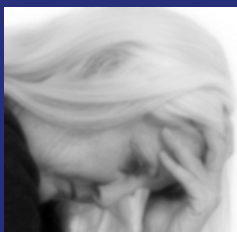


## Equipment Received, Burden Relieved

by Gerry Barney, Mobility Medical Equipment Supervisor

I knew immediately that she was anticipating rejection by her slumped posture and defeated expression. She appeared to be in her 70's, and as she slowly walked in the door her face was etched with stress. As she shared her story, she struggled to hold back tears, and I soon realized why she was feeling so overwhelmed: 2 adult children in their 50's with a neuromuscular disorder, and a husband recovering from heart surgery – all of whom were being released from the hospital to be cared for at home.

She explained that she had a plan she thought would make it possible to take care of all her loved ones, but she needed to find several pieces of medical equipment to help with daily living - things like transfer benches to help them move between bed and wheelchair, shower chairs so she could assist them with bathing, and portable toilets to prevent the need for the long and hazardous trip down the hallway to the bathroom. But the medical bills were piling up, she was running out of resources, and these items were not covered by insurance. This didn't surprise me. The type of equipment she needed is usually not covered by insurance or government programs. This wasn't the first place she'd tried to get help, but no clinic, agency or organization she could find was able to help her with this very basic need. It was no surprise she was feeling discouraged.



I listened quietly as she talked, taking it all in. The shaking of her own voice finally silenced her and her face suddenly crumpled, a reflection of her world crumbling apart. I gently touched her shoulder, guiding her to a chair, and did my best to comfort her until she was able to give me more details about the equipment she needed. I checked to see what we had in stock, and Eureka! We had every item she needed! So I told her, "We can help." It was then that I saw the first glimmer of hope in her eyes as she realized she wasn't going to be turned away emptyhanded this time. She was going to get help! I got busy and rounded up the equipment, loaded it in her car, gave her a hug and waved as she drove away smiling and thanking me profusely. I knew that this, by no means, relieved all her burdens, but it did show her there are people in the community who care.

As I watched her drive away I thanked God for the best job on earth.

*So that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed.*

- Romans 15:32



## Karoleena's Blessings

by Linda Martin, Support Services Supervisor

Before I even saw her, I knew she had arrived. I heard her voice from the hallway outside the door, and felt myself smiling. **"I saw you at church! I saw you at church!"** Karoleena made her way slowly and carefully down the hallway, her caregiver at her side, calling out to each person she met along the way. **"Hi! Hi!"** She moved with obvious difficulty, carefully placing one foot in front of the other in a deliberate fashion, her walker with the brightly colored chartreuse tennis balls on the back legs scraping along the carpet. But you'd never guess what her mobility challenges cost her in pain and discomfort by the smiles and the joyful hellos she gifted to each of us. **"I love you! I love you!"**

Karoleena has been a fixture at the Bridge office for many years, coming once a week to volunteer shredding documents, and hardly ever missing a week. She stopped by the door to my office and peered in at me with her bright, lively dark eyes, **"My mom said hi to you! My mom said hi to you!"** I replied, "Please tell your mom hi for me." She responded, **"I will, I will!"** And off she perambulated towards the shredder. This was our routine, and one that I've become very familiar with over the years I've worked at Bridge.

Later, when she finished her job and was leaving, Karoleena stopped by again and this time blessed me with one of her signature pictures – smiley faces she draws on scraps of paper – something she always does when she's here. **"I made this for you! I made this for you!"** she cried. I replied, "Thank you, Karoleena. And thank you for helping." **"You're welcome! You're welcome!"** She flashed one more of her brilliant smiles at me as she departed, and I felt the richer for the lightness she brought to my busy day – grounded once again in what's truly important.

## 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.

## What We Do

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

### Christmas Celebration at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, December 5, 2015



## Bridge Disability Ministries

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## Mark Your Calendars...

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

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Jan 10th</b> | Crossroads Bible Church<br>15815 SE 37th St, Bellevue, 98006      |
| <b>Feb 21st</b> | Highland Covenant Church<br>15022 Bel-Red Rd, Bellevue, 98007     |
| <b>Mar 13th</b> | Holy Spirit Lutheran Church<br>10021 NE 124th St, Kirkland, 98034 |

