



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Spring, 2015

A Message From Executive Director, Brenne Schario

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Our work is never done. The more things change, the more they remain the same. But we delight in the work we do because we can see the difference in the lives of so many people. And this work could not be possible without you.

YOU make a difference!

A group of young men came into our Meyer Mobility Center a week ago, looking for a hospital bed and wheelchair for one of them; he was severely injured while fleeing their home country. They spoke little to no English. There was an interpreter. Lots of gestures for communication...lots of back and forth between the friends. It was clear one of the better beds and the power wheelchair would serve the young man best and make life so much easier for him.

He knew it; his eyes said so.

Our cost to refurbish said equipment far exceeded the amount of money they had (mostly from one of their church sponsors).

More back and forth between the friends.

In the end, it didn't matter to Gerry, our center's supervisor. He knew what he had to do.



Our Meyer Mobility Center exists to provide refurbished durable medical equipment to those who need them regardless of their ability to pay.

Happy and grateful that we were able to outfit the young man with equipment that would help immensely, our good Meyer Mobility Center folks went about serving the woman next in line.

Many people like this young man come to our center. You can make a huge difference in their lives. One way to take part is to make your gift today at www.bridgemin.org/donate.

The woman next in line had patiently and graciously waited her turn; she had seen and heard the exchanges earlier.

What happened next completely blew us away! She blessed us with a generous donation to Bridge for the excellent equipment the young man was able to get. Angel amongst us. There are, and we've seen, so, so many.

Thank you, to all of you. For giving us the courage to leap, because we know the net will appear.

With much appreciation and gratitude,

Brenne

PS. For the many different ways you can help, please visit www.bridgemin.org. And if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch 425.885.1006 x 111

Meyer Mobility Center: 2014 vs. 2013

by Gerry Barney, Mobility Supervisor

2014 was a year of change for Bridge's Meyer Mobility Center. We increased our total space 80% by leasing the vacated space adjacent to our center. This new space was unimproved and it was a big undertaking to make it useful. We might still be trying to accomplish that if not for Rebuilding Together Seattle sending in an 18 person construction crew, directed by a volunteer contractor to build us new office space over a weekend at no cost. This made it possible to switch our customer service area to the new space. A few weeks later we had a dozen volunteers help us over a weekend to set up racking and shelving systems and then move our entire available inventory into the new space, essentially doubling our room to work with visitors to our center. This freed us to use our old space to add hospital beds and lift chairs to our equipment inventory to distribute to people in need.

Regrettably we saw a decline of 30% in volunteer hours compared to 2013. Aging, health problems, increased travel and moves out of the area took their toll. This made it difficult to serve as many people while accomplishing the changes needed to make us more efficient in the future. We had a slight decline of about 1% in the amount of equipment we distribute and an overall decline of 2% in the value of medical equipment and supplies provided. We ended up just short of \$1.9 million.

At mid-year we moved to new inventory software developed by the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program, which helps us gather information we need to provide to current and potential new donors. In another change we added the services of a technician one day a week for electric powered equipment. This helped us make up for the decline in our volunteer workforce. At the end of the year we began supplying equipment to two hospital rehab centers, supporting their efforts to help low income patients with needed medical equipment. In effect, this increases our space and volunteer staff. Finally, we added limited Saturday open hours, thanks to the generosity of area physical and occupational therapists (PTs & OTs) volunteering time in our center. As demand grows, we hope more PT and OT volunteers will enable us to add additional Saturday hours.

Have these changes made a difference? If the first two months of 2015 are any indication the answer is yes! The amount of equipment we distributed was up 27% from 2014 to 350 items per month and the value of the equipment more than doubled, due in large part to giving out eight times the number of electric wheelchairs and scooters compared to the beginning of last year - guess all that effort was worth it.



A New Mattress for Cathy, by Gordon Ellison-Oslin, Certified Professional Guardian

Bridge Disability Ministries helps the disability community in a multifaceted manner. Our guardianship agency is able to utilize the other facets of our ministry for the advantage of our guardianship family. For example, we are often able to get equipment from our mobility center that our clients could not obtain through other avenues, and we are able to utilize our spiritual care ministry to help provide memorial services for our clients who have passed on.

Another recent example is Cathy, who lives in a group home on a very tight budget. She has very little left over after the essentials, and I try to be creative in getting her needs met. Recently I was faced with the fact that she had worn out the mattress that she had used for years and it needed to be replaced. It sagged so much that an extra blanket was being used to fill the depression in the middle. I was able to go to Bridge's mobility medical equipment ministry, obtain a high quality hospital mattress without taxing her bank account, and have it delivered to Cathy's home just a few days after the request was made. Without the help of the mobility center, it probably would have taken months to obtain the funds to purchase a mattress – and it would have been of lesser quality. I feel blessed to work at Bridge, where my clients are supported in so many wonderful ways.

Iron Sharpens Iron, by Denise Aanenson, Spiritual Care Coordinator

I was recently reminded of this Proverb by someone who summarized a previous conversation of ours with, "Iron sharpens iron." His comment to me was an acknowledgement of the fact that at the end of one of our many conversations, we both gain new knowledge or understanding. Learning and communication happen in a variety of ways, individual to each person, within formal education or simply by living. In other words, new understandings do not end with the last day of formal education, but continue throughout our lives.

"Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another."

- Proverbs 27:17

Since I joined Bridge Disability Ministries as the Spiritual Care Coordinator five months ago, the wisdom of Proverbs 27:17 has proven itself over and over again through my interactions with our Bridge friends, about joy, fellowship, friendship, community, and what it is to be a person living with disabilities. They have been my teachers and I have been their pupil. This teacher/pupil model is at the heart of Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 & 20,

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (NRSV)

Within my own life I know the transformative power of the Holy Spirit working through ordinary people who take Jesus' words to heart and call me into a mentoring relationship so that my life might be transformed also. The time that I spend in conversations with people living with disabilities and their caregivers has been a blessing, and at the same time a burden. The burden being, that I cannot be quiet about or ignore the barriers that prevent full inclusivity for all. Iron truly sharpens iron, and I am still learning. May it always be so for each of us.



**We
Need
YOU!**

*Volunteer
at Bridge
on
Tuesday...*

Volunteers are vital to the success of our programs. Without the faithful support of countless helping hands and loving hearts, we simply wouldn't be able to provide the support and attention that we do to those in need around us. **We just can't do without you!**

If you are interested in our volunteer opportunities, and would like to learn more, please contact Linda at (425) 885-1006, ext. 118 or lindam@bridgemin.org.



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: 11am - 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)

- | | |
|------------|---|
| April 12th | John Knox Presbyterian Church
109 SW Normandy Rd, Seattle, 98166 |
| May 9th | Newport Covenant Church
12800 SE Coal Creek Pkwy, Bellevue, 98006
PLEASE NOTE: Saturday, 1pm - 4pm |
| June 7th | Emmanuel Episcopal Church
4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island, 98040 |

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 Dates!

for our

First Annual Building Bridges Luncheon
Thursday, June 11th

and our

2015 Annual Building Bridges Auction
Saturday, October 24th

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