



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2015

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A Message From Executive Director, Brenne Schario

We believe in a society that values and welcomes the participation of people of all abilities. We believe that relationships are transforming; and that God reaches our hearts through others.

Our Spiritual Connections ministry connects our friends with their faith communities. Our goal is to help create natural, holistic opportunities for people with disabilities to engage socially, emotionally, and spiritually with their faith community. We believe that every part of the body of Christ matters, no matter how strong or weak we seem. And that each faith community has a calling to include all people.

At our Building Bridges Luncheon on June 11, Dr. Richard Steele will speak about belonging and inclusivity. Dr. Steele is Professor of Moral & Historical Theology and Associate Dean of Graduate Theological Studies in the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University. He and his wife, Marilyn Hair, have three children; their eldest daughter Sarah has a complex array of medical problems, which has significantly shaped family life in the Steele/Hair household, and which will form the basis of his remarks.

This Building Bridges Luncheon benefits our Spiritual Connections ministry. As people who know Christ, we are called to act differently and unexpectedly. With your support, we hope to be able to move the needle of inclusivity. We hope to come closer to what God has called each one of us to do – to include all, to love all.

Join us:

Building Bridges Luncheon

June 11, Thursday, 12 -1:30 PM

Bellevue Presbyterian Church

\$25/person; \$200/table for 8

Call 425.885.1006 or
email events@bridgemin.org
to reserve your spot today!



We would love to see you there!

Brenne

PS. For those of you who would like to support our ministry but are unable to attend, [please visit our website to make a donation.](#)

Going the Extra Mile

by Patty Croteau, Guardianship Supervisor

What does it mean, in our day, to go the extra mile? It is one of the expectations we have for ourselves in the guardianship ministry. We aim to do as the Lord commanded - do more for the people we serve than the minimum required by law. Technically, legal guardianship ends at death. However, at Bridge guardianship goes quite a bit further.

When our long time ward, Debbie Watson, passed away last month, we knew there was more to be done. In this case, all her family lived out of town, and had a family burial plot in another part of the state. So, we didn't need to open our guardianship crypt at Floral Hills Memorial Gardens this time. However, we knew that others besides Bridge staff and volunteers would be grieving. The staff of the supported living agency that served Debbie for many long years were grieving right along with us. So Debbie's guardian, Gordon Ellison-Oslin, turned to our spiritual connections coordinator, Denise Aanenson. She agreed to officiate at a memorial service for approximately 30 people who had been key in supporting Debbie so that she could live outside of an institution. In this way we could all grieve and say goodbye to her.

Gordon and I attended the memorial service, bringing flowers and sharing good memories of Debbie. It was a celebration of Debbie's spirit, full of shared stories and laughter, and poring over photos taken over the years. The house was decorated with wisteria blossoms that grew in the back yard of Debbie's home where she had lived for most of the more than 22 years that Bridge had served her. She was a very social, friendly person who loved to show affection, and those who cared for her returned that love. With the careful oversight of her Bridge guardians looking after her interests, she was given many opportunities to be out in the community where she enjoyed people watching. During her life, and after her passing, Bridge staff and volunteers went the extra mile for Debbie. And as we commend her spirit to the Lord, we know she'll continue to be well cared for.

Go with God, Debbie. We'll see you on the other side.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two."

Matthew 5:41

Lifting the Burden

by Gerry Barney, Mobility Supervisor

Recently a Bellevue woman in her 70's came into the Mobility Center because a care giver had broken a leg on the tub transfer bench she had purchased for her husband. She wanted to know if we could repair it, as she had not been able to find any other community resource to do so. She was obviously feeling overwhelmed and shared that she had cancer and was at the same time trying to care for her husband who had heart disease and their child who was developmentally disabled. We could see that she was in need of emotional support and prayer every bit as much as she was in need of equipment. We couldn't help her by repairing the broken leg she brought in, but we did have another transfer bench available to give her - along with some empathy and kindness. She appeared to feel less burdened as she left than she had when she arrived, and was grateful for the help. Sometime later, she returned with a donation, and was clearly feeling less stressed than on her first visit. We knew that none of the difficulties she faced were due to anything she had done wrong - she didn't deserve them, but bore them to the best of her ability. And though we couldn't help with all of her problems, we were very gratified to be able to help her with one of them.



**We
Need
YOU!**

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.

Of Timbrels and Harps and Rock 'n' Roll

by Denise Aanenson, Spiritual Connections Coordinator

On Saturday, May 9th it wasn't a timbrel or harp that played as we gathered at Newport Covenant Church for Bridge's annual Rock 'n Roll Dance. The timbrel and harp was replaced with an electric guitar, bass, keyboard, and drums. The music was a wonderful mix of Rock 'n Roll from the 1960's and 1970's performed by The Usual Suspects. The Point Defiance Pirates joined in on the fun dining, dancing, and posing for pictures. It was a joyful celebration of community and fellowship. It took many volunteers from several different communities to make an event like the Rock 'n Roll Dance possible, for which I am grateful.

One of the communities that sent volunteers was my home church, Faith Fellowship, who sent our youth as a service opportunity. What began as an opportunity for service outside of the community, quickly became much more for these young women and their leader. I was told by parents, their leader, and the youth themselves how much they felt that they had made a difference that day. I agree with their assessment. They indeed made a difference. How they knew they had made a difference was the responses of Bridge friends, people living with disabilities, whose smiles and words of gratitude touched each one of their hearts. This is a theme that I have seen over and over again at each of our Celebrations as communities come together with a common purpose of promoting inclusion and connections for people living with disabilities and faith communities.

Thank you to all who made the day a fun celebration filled with music, dancing, food, and fellowship. God's peace be with you.

"Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp."
Psalm 149:3





Bridge Disability Ministries

12356 Northup Way, Ste. 103

Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

Honoring People Living with Disabilities



What We Do:



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

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

- | | |
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| June 7th | Emmanuel Episcopal Church
4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island, 98040 |
| August 16th | Picnic with Sunshine Ministries
Game Farm Park
3030 R St., Auburn, 98002 |
| Sept 20th | Calvin Presbyterian Church
18826 3rd Ave NW, Shoreline, 98177 |

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.

Time to RSVP!

for our

2015 Annual Building Bridges Luncheon

Thursday, June 11th

Contact us:

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

Don't Delay!

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 x120 or nadiaa@bridgemin.org.

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