



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2008

Growing Stronger Every Day

by Ron Birum, Board Chairman

We have been off to a wonderful start for our 21st year of serving persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers in the Puget Sound area. Earlier this year, Bridge Disability Ministries received a \$15,000 grant award from The Medina Foundation with an additional matching program grant of \$15,000 to come. In addition, we were selected by Mission Increase Foundation for a matching grant award of \$30,000. You will be hearing more about these campaigns through the remainder of the year.



Marion Cloutier & Ron Birum
at the 2007 Benefit Dinner

While we are in the process of raising community awareness about our programs, and realizing matching financial support through these grants, the most important news is that Bridge is working harder and smarter to get the message across about the needs of people living with disabilities. Individual donors, area churches, businesses and foundations are responding and believing in our mission to provide programs that honor, build relationships, alleviate isolation and enrich our communities for people living with disabilities. Just this summer, we have been blessed with over 100 new donors, including churches and businesses,

whose gifts qualify for a matching award. The real award however will be the increased opportunities to reach more people with more bridges to our community.

Bridge is also expanding efforts to collaborate with other organizations to better utilize resources, volunteers and individuals with outside expertise, church and business leaders. Some of these organizations include Jubilee Reach Center, Kirkland Lodge and Good Samaritan Counseling Services and Young Life Open Door. Again, in so doing, collaboratively, we can all reach more people in need.

Last but not least, we are very excited about this year's fundraising events like June's Rock 'n' Roll dance, at Highland Covenant Church, and the games, food and music for kids and families in July at Kirkland Lodge. This summer we also held an outreach retreat at Westminster Chapel for families with children transitioning from high school to adulthood. In October, our upcoming annual benefit dinner will be at the Museum of Flight. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

On behalf of all of the Board and Staff at Bridge, we thank all of you for your caring, compassion and support again this year. I hope too, that you will feel the excitement about both the old and new directions that our ministry will be taking. With God's help, we are reminded every day of our purpose, His will and what He wants us to do to continue to serve His people and help others to experience the joy of embracing persons with disabilities in our community.

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.

Heroic Everyday

by Rev. Dr. Dave Emery, Chaplain



Many of us love to hear about the person that has overcome extraordinary obstacles and achieved amazing success. We love to hear about the person that grew up in poverty and becomes rich and famous. We enjoy hearing stories about the person without direction and purpose that is transformed into someone who makes a huge difference in our world.

I want to tell you another kind of hero's story, about heroic folks that too often can't lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. We know many people that can't get out of bed without assistance to get up, get dressed, and into a wheelchair for the day.

We often hear about the older person with a great attitude that is still active in many places and writes, paints, or makes things. We look at efforts of people that we can see. We tend to see and hear about folks with extraordinary efforts and accomplishments as those that are heroes.

Herein lies my greatest joy. The people I am blessed to visit on an everyday basis are in no uncertain terms heroic. Their heroism isn't in pulling a body out of harm's way, or saving our country from terrorism, or making the greatest product ever made. Yet, it is still as real, and significant if not more so than any of these. I can name countless folks that wake up and wait on someone else for assistance in every part of their routine daily activities. In my book they

are heroes. Even when they get upset because someone treated them like a child instead of an adult, still they are incredible just to be so willing to keep going without hesitation.

You may know that I am a firm believer in the here and now. That anyone willing to face this moment without distraction about what has been, or cerebral dreams about what may be is without exception a hero in my book. Being open and available to this moment not encumbered by the defining nature of past experiences, and not hindered by the countless dreams and hopes of the future is a person fulfilled, actualized and realized in the present.

This is true for all of us. Still, the person that is physically limited or developmentally challenged is in very remarkable ways present in the here and now. Regardless of constant pain and constrictions they get up and face the day. They rise to the occasion. They meet the here and now and keep going ever mindful of what is in this moment possible and potentially realized. The mere fact that we are not in control, the mere realization that life is not all about what we can do, or know, or believe. Being present in this moment aware of the true nature of our spirituality our connection with God may indeed give us all able bodied and seemingly mature people a better glimpse of our own spiritual needs and readiness.

I share with you that in my opinion the greatest hero of all is the one that is able to face the cross and truly believe in the resurrection and transformation of life in this very moment and every moment that comes as a gift from above. Bridge Disabilities Ministries is a haven for the heroic!

Mobility Matters, by Sheryl Haile, Program Administrator

One of my favorite success stories this year is about our very good friend Stephen. Stephen has provided the background music for our Christmas Sunday Evening Celebrations for the last few years. He plays a keyboard and gets everyone involved in singing along for the holidays. Recently, through connections with our chaplain and other staff, Stephen was able to secure an Access pass. He then came to Bridge to pick up a wheelchair. Since then, he reports that he has made trips to QFC and the Seattle



Center. Stephen is also looking forward to seeing a movie at the wheelchair accessible Crest Theater, right in his neighborhood. More choices and greater independence for all our friends and clients happen because of our caring donors and volunteers... GO Stephen!

Kim is another person who has benefitted from your generosity. She had to move quickly and unexpectedly by air across the U.S. to the Northwest. Unable to take her mobility equipment with her, a local friend with Special Child Exchange, put her in touch with us. Thanks again to our donors and volunteers, her mobility items were replaced and her independence was restored...just look at that smile!



Summer Sunday Evening Celebrations

June's Rock 'n' Roll Dance was a big success again this year thanks to Highland Covenant Church in Bellevue, repeat band "Durable Goods" and the awesome volunteer sockhoppers pictured here from Young Life Open Door.

July's carnival theme event hosted by the Kirkland Lodge was also a wonderful time for all. We thank the lodge and participating sponsors: Lake Vue Gardens, event host churches, donors and volunteers that make these celebrations possible, and provide an opportunity to bring the community together.

Visit our website for a complete schedule of SEC host locations and dates. While you're there, don't miss what Mercer Island Presbyterian's Janis McKenna shared about their March celebration! Thank you Janis for a great testimony.



If you know of a church or community group interested in hosting a 2009 Sunday Evening Celebration, call us at (425) 885-1006, ext 112.



"Wind Beneath Our Wings"

Annual Benefit
Dinner & Auction

Another great way to celebrate while helping us expand our ministry programs to reach more people is to attend our annual benefit dinner...

**Saturday, October 11th, 2008
at the Museum of Flight**

There will be live music, a small silent and live auction, dinner and free all day admission to the Museum of Flight for guests.

A table for 10 guests may be purchased by a host or sponsor for \$375, two tables for \$700 or 3 tables for \$1,000. We'll place guests for you as a table sponsor, or by hosting a table you can invite your guests to attend with you. If you are interested in attending, but don't wish to purchase a table, or if you would like to join an auction committee or volunteer group, please contact Colleen Dodson at (425) 885-1006, ext 113 or e-mail her at colleend@bridgemin.org.

We hope to see you there!

Did You Know That....

King County designates every October as Disability Awareness Month and arranges a variety of activities and exhibits to celebrate throughout the month. Details will be posted on their website in September:

www.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/ndeam2008.htm

Volunteer Spotlight

Thank You to Virginia Fiess for the beautiful handcrafted cards made for Bridge all year long. Our clients and donors enjoy getting them. They are precious in our sight and HIS!

A Word About Caregivers

Caregivers routinely attend SEC events and are a critical part of relationship building and quality of life for many people living with disabilities. We are pleased to learn that Jubilee Reach Center of Bellevue offers Relationship Skills Training this fall to learn effective one-on-one Christian caregiving. A sample class is available on September 10th. E-mail info@jubileereach.org or call (425) 746-0506 for more information.



Bridge Disability Ministries

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*Celebrating over 20 years
of
Honoring
Persons with Disabilities*

Return Service Requested

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)

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| Sept. 28th | Calvin Presbyterian Church
18826 3rd Ave, NW, Shoreline, 98177 |
| Oct. 26th | St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
(in partnership with Newport Presbyterian)
4228 Factoria Blvd, SE, Bellevue, 98006 |
| Nov. 16th | St. John Vianney Catholic Church
12600 84th Ave, NE, Kirkland, 98034 |
| Dec. 6th | St. Theresa's Catholic Church
3939 SW 331st St, Federal Way, 98023 |

Guardianship Picnic

Friday, September 12th, 11am - 2pm

Call Lynn at (425) 885-1006, ext 116
for more information.

2008 Benefit Dinner & Auction

"Wind Beneath Our Wings"



Saturday, October 11th, 2008
at the Museum of Flight

Come celebrate the life changing gifts and
experiences of persons living with disabilities.

Please call (425) 885-1006 for a reservation.

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

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