



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Fall, 2010

Dedicated to Bridge

by Ron Birum, Board Chair

For the last nine years as a volunteer on Bridge's Board of Directors, I have witnessed what I truly believe to be divine intervention. New staff and volunteers arrive every month, each having a passion and gifts for the work to be done. I know firsthand how meaningful it has been to participate in this ministry to persons so often marginalized rather than recognized and accepted for their incredible gifts and abilities they want to share.

Today we are an organization that is dedicated foremost to Spiritual Care, transcending into dividing Mobility and Guardianship services in spirit and deed to build relationships with others. Our Chaplain, Reverend Dr. Dave Emery has brought enthusiasm, heart, and gifts to Spiritual Care and we have seen tremendous growth in programs and relationships; more churches are becoming inclusive and more disability ministries are forming for the community.

My greatest blessings have come from the interaction with the people we serve. Especially meaningful is a relationship I have formed with an 89 year old gentleman, blind and needing a wheelchair. With help from the Mobility department I was able to offer a wheelchair. Now, my friend and I are able to fellowship together on a regular basis. He has the means and a friend to take him safely to appointments for medical care, shop for basic needs and visit establishments to share a meal or just a smoothie. Following the example set by Jesus to serve others, brings as great a pleasure to the one serving as to the person being served. Each is stronger when they lift up and care for each other. Bridge is thankful for the many years of support and will continue to bring the message about the need to alleviate isolation and promote relationship building for people living with disabilities. It takes all of us together to make a difference.



Spiritual Care building relationships & community.

In This Together

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

If you or someone you know is involved in charitable causes, you have probably attended an annual fund raiser for a favorite charity. While fund raising events are fun, more important is the message about a community need and a call to help meet that need. It is a delicate balance to ask for support, to ask people to learn about a mission and to show how they can make a difference in someone's life. The secret is showing people how through their gifts, **they** will be transformed in amazing ways.

Discover why we are called to serve....
www.bridgemin.org/you_tube_video.html

At our 2010 Annual fund raising dinner at the Space Needle, guests heard the message of God's call to be in Relationship with Him, and with our brothers and sisters who live with disabilities. Because they have often been rejected and separated from relationships in our community, they live in the shadows and are isolated. One in five persons in our community lives with a disability, yet we often do not see them. We are called to "Bridge" that isolation, and to take the time to look more closely and witness their lives amongst us. We heard parents share about their concerns for their child with a disability who will outlive them and be left alone without a protective and caring guardian. Bridge wants to be there with guardianship services, free mobility and spiritual care programs long into the future when they are needed. We thank all of our donors for their trust in our programs and for being part of the work God prepared in advance for our ministries to do.

Mobility Matters

by Bob Meyer, Mobility Manager

As we enter our fall season it is too soon to reflect on the year but we know that the demand for needed items continues to increase. So too have our donations! As I've mentioned to many, God is just giving us all an opportunity to help others through our mobility ministry. Every item through our door is another affirmation of what we are all doing together to help others in need.

Sometimes the question is asked if we have too much of a certain item. The answer is no. Bridge has been fortunate to work with other Christian nonprofits that work on an international basis doing what we do to provide free durable medical equipment. While it may be a delicate balance, know that all the items coming through our doors as donations, find a home either here locally or through one of these organizations.

So, as we approach the end of the year, we are reassured that God does provide. He continues to bless our mobility center through the many caring and considerate donors meeting the needs of those with short and long term disabilities. These donors include many who give their time and talent to repair and make ready for use, the gifts we have been given. It is through the support of our great community of donors with equipment, financial support, volunteer time, and prayer that we continue to build.

Volunteer Spotlight

Thank you **Loralee Deshazor**, a volunteer joining Bridge recently, who has helped in so many ways this year. Loralee initially expressed an interest in our guardianship ministry and without hesitation the guardianship team put her skills to use! Not surprisingly, she didn't just stop there. Loralee shows up at many of our Sunday Evening Celebrations with a bright smile, energized spirit and genuine desire to serve individuals and families who attend, a meal and fellowship.



Loralee also played a part in helping Bridge to put together a Disaster Preparedness plan for our facility to qualify for a \$1,000 grant award through United Way and volunteers from the Executive Service Corp of Washington. Last but not least she was a bright presence at our 2010 Annual Benefit Dinner registration table... She has blessed us with her many gifts!

"It is not the work we do that is so important. It is the people we work with. It is the work God does in our lives through them. And it's the work He does in their lives through us. That is what's sacred."

~ Ken Gire

Please consider volunteering.

Opportunities are listed on our website, or contact Linda at (405) 885-1006, ext 118 or lindam@bridgemin.org

Tight budget? .../...and so it is here at Bridge. So we have found a way to cut expenses, save time and trees!

Our 2011 newsletters and 2010 Annual Report will be available via email and online via our website.

However, in order to make this work, we need your e-mail address! Please send it to bridge@bridgemin.org.

If you really want to receive Paper in the US Mail, please call and ask to be placed on our paper mailing list. Thank you for understanding the need to save donor dollars and our need to "go green!"

What's New in Spiritual Care at Bridge...

Summer Fun!

On July 18th Sunshine Ministries hosted a summer picnic at Game Farm Park in Auburn. The people we serve enjoyed a sunny day outside, and a delicious barbecue dinner. Following dinner, everyone was entertained by musicians playing guitar and singing, as well as a juggler throwing clubs, swords and flaming torches. On August 8th Northshore Baptist Church hosted Wacky Wheelays, a field day for all abilities at Bothell High School Track and Field. People of all ages and abilities went out on the field to play fun games, and then moved to picnic tables to enjoy a delicious barbecue



"We are not about providing services for folks with intellectual disabilities, brain disorders, or physical disabilities. We invite them to remember that God is in their hearts too. They are here to be a flame in the community and in the faith traditions they hold dear."

Chaplain David Emery

lunch. It was a day filled with happy smiles. For these marvelous days of fun in the sun, and we sincerely thank our hosts, and all the volunteers who turned out to make it possible.

An Inclusive Morning Worship Service

On September 26th, Bridge had a unique Sunday Celebration experience – an inclusive morning worship service hosted by Calvin Presbyterian Church in Shoreline. A special effort was made to encourage local residents living with disabilities to attend, and we had a great turnout. People who live with disabilities mingled with congregants throughout the church sanctuary as exuberant music and an inspirational message were enjoyed. Afterwards, everyone moved to the Fellowship Hall to share a tasty lunch served by Calvin volunteers with musical accompaniment. It was a lovely experience of belonging and participating for the people we serve. Many thanks to the church & volunteers for an inspiring and memorable experience.



Bridge Donors Honor Loved Ones

We are grateful to have received gifts in the name of the following individuals

In Memory Of...

Carolyn Burell
Edward Burnell
Don Chandler
John & Alma Gebert

Carrie Hall
Sheryl Harbaugh
Jeannie Holcomb (Svege)

Michael Kent
Calvin Krebs
Carolyn Martin

Mildred Moberly
Elizabeth Ostbye
Robert Sheets
Wille Simmons

A Week of Respite for Two Lucky Bridge Employees

by Linda Martin, Spiritual Care Team

During the week of August 16th, my co-worker Patty Croteau and I had a most unique experience – a whole week in which we were relieved of the constant demands of parenting a child with special needs. At the Joni & Friends Family Retreat in Rockaway, Oregon, a short-term missionary (STM) was assigned to each of our children to stay with them for all but an hour of each day. 14 year old Lucas had a friend to go everywhere with him, and participate at his side, helping when needed. The high point of the weekend for Lucas was rowing the boat on the lake. 10 year old Quinn had a team of two friends who could keep up with him when he ran, and run they did! For the first time Quinn had the luxury of running to his heart's content, until he would finally collapse and relax each day.



While the kids were enjoying the activities planned for them, the parents were able to relax. Patty and her husband could linger over breakfast, and I was able to enjoy breakfast while chatting with other adults for the first time in years. Every morning we had a joint worship service, and if the kids got impatient they left with their STM's. We adults were allowed to stay and enjoy the worship service rather than having to jump up and leave with our kids. To us these simple things seemed like luxuries, and we enjoyed every minute of it!

Our thanks to Bridge and our churches, Raging River Community Church and Bethany Presbyterian Church, for sponsoring our week at the Retreat. There were benefits accruing to Bridge and to the people we serve as well, since the week at the Retreat taught us some valuable things we've been able to use at work, me on the Spiritual Care team and Patty as Lead Guardian. For example, at our recent Guardianship picnic we were able to borrow the STM concept to good effect by assigning Microsoft volunteers, who participated through the United Way Day of Caring program, as one-on-one 'friends for a day' with our guardianship clients. Attending this Family Retreat Camp was a blessed experience with far-reaching implications, and we are very grateful.

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

~ Matthew 18:20



Wedding Bells at Bridge!

Who doesn't love a wedding? We had a first at a recent Sunday Evening Celebration. A wedding of two of the people we serve who wished to share the joy of their wedding celebration with the community most meaningful to them. They were able to do just that at Newport Presbyterian Church on October 17th, sharing their vows before their friends and starting their lives together in that familiar setting. It was amazing to see how the large, normally noisy crowd quieted when Chaplain Emery began the ceremony. The room stayed hushed until the ceremony concluded and Larry and Patty turned to them, now husband and wife. It was obviously very significant to the audience to see two of their own joined in Holy Matrimony. A joyful day indeed! We are grateful to the church & volunteers who made this day special.

Guardianship Vision Leads to New Opportunities

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

After 20 years of serving as Guardians to those who have little family and funding, those who may reasonably be called poor and disabled; the Bridge Ministries Guardianship Agency is changing. Our first client was appointed in 1991, and guardianship grew rapidly to 56 clients. We realized the hard way, this was too much responsibility, and we had too little support for our Guardians. We have not accepted new clients for many years as we learned to focus on the Quality of our care rather than quantity.

Along the way, the Superior Court of the State of Washington had the same focus and has continuously raised the bar for competency in Certified Professional Guardians. Our CPG's kept pace with the improved standards, and we are proud that they were one of the early agencies audited by the Guardianship Board and passed without comment. However, keeping up with standards meant not accepting new clients. The cost of our CPG services has risen to become the most expensive program supported by our ministry funding, generously supported by our donors.

With the significant change brought about by the economic recession in 2007, Non-Profit funding is more challenging than ever. "The nation's 400 biggest charities suffered an 11-percent drop in giving last year, the worst decline in the two decades since The Chronicle of Philanthropy started its ranking." At the same time, the number of people who need a Guardian (but cannot afford one) in Washington State is estimated at 4500 by the Bar Association. The change in funding and the demand for new Guardians brings new direction. The result of a yearlong study effort by our Board, our Guardianship Advisors, and our CPG Team, Bridge is stepping forward, as many Charities have, to embrace a mixed Private-Pay model for Guardianship.

Beginning in January of 2011, Bridge Ministries Guardianship Agency will accept new clients, on a fee for service basis. By funding the core administrative services of the Guardianship Agency administrative and accounting functions, this model will allow us to continue to serve the 39 indigent clients we have today and grow to accept more clients in need in the future.



Making a difference in a personal and heartfelt way

There are many ways to make a difference for someone living with a disability.

Consider budgeting out your annual gift to monthly pledges which can be designated to any one of our programs, such as our Mobility Center..."my son has cerebral palsy and required foot surgery with weeks of recovery using a wheelchair and later a walker. Our insurance will cover either or but not both. Bridge provided a wheelchair. It has made a difference in his care and our ability to care safely for him at home." Feel free to stop at the center first to see for yourself how your gifts are used, call or visit our website for more information!

If you prefer that your gifts go directly for care and advocacy services, Bridge specializes in Guardianship for the developmentally disabled - consider an annual Pledge commitment to become a **Guardian sponsor**. We are happy to honor such a request so give us a call.

Whether it is donating time, talents or treasures, there are many opportunities to participate in building inclusive communities. Please join and share your gifts this year as you are able. Send a gift today or donate online at www.bridgemin.org.

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Bridge Disability Ministries

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Honoring Persons with Disabilities



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)

Jan. 9th Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
10021 NE 124th St., Kirkland

NOTE: Sunday, 11am - 1:30pm

Jan. 23rd Crossroads Bible Church
15815 SE 37th St., Bellevue

Feb. 27th St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
3604NE 10th Ct., Renton

NOTE: Time to be announced.

March 20th St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2650 148th Ave. SE, Bellevue

April 9th Newport Covenant Church
12800 SE Coal Cr Pkwy, Bellevue

NOTE: Saturday, 1pm - 4pm

May 1st First Baptist Church of Kirkland
701 1st St., Kirkland

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.

We thank **The Lucky Seven and Mission Increase Foundations** for this year's matching grant opportunities! Because of generous and caring donors the challenges were met and their gift dollars doubled!

PS.... If your budget is a bit tight for holiday shopping, please consider money-saving online purchasing through **The CafeGive** site (www.cafegive.com) where you can direct retail earnings directly to a non-profit of your choice!

OR, as an alternative to buying more "stuff" for the one you love, donate a gift to Bridge in honor of your special someone and we will send a gift card announcement.

