



Connections

The Newsletter of Bridge Disability Ministries

Summer, 2011

Blessings and Loss

by Jack Staudt, Executive Director

We are blessed people in this Land of the Free. While we see too much news of budget deficits, Congressional conflict, civil strife, natural disasters, and other headline news, we are living better than our grandparents. They had all of these troubles plus 2 World Wars in the early decades of the 20th century. But we expect we can do better...and we should. It might be said that there will always be the good and bad in life. We will always see ourselves as the haves, or the have-nots.

Jesus said "the Poor you will always have with you," Matt. 26:11a. I see this phrase as both an acknowledgement of life in our world, and a call for us to see others in need of our bounty. This is a call to share our gifts, skills and wealth that God has given us. We do this every day at Bridge, but today I am thinking of our loss of a friend, and what a blessing his life was to others here at Bridge.

Bob Meyer accepted my invitation to come back to Bridge (he had been a Board Member years earlier) when we were forced to relocate our facilities. All this is now revealed to have been more of God's good work. Bob was a giver, a worker, an organizer, a leader, and one of the kindest, most caring men I have ever known. Every day for the past five years he demonstrated these gifts by sharing them with our staff, the many faithful volunteers in our equipment ministry, and the seemingly endless numbers of the poor who come to the doors of the Mobility Center he created. I estimate Bob personally served some 10,000 people in those years. And he blessed them with much more than the

equipment they needed and could not afford. He gave of himself; always a warm smile, a hand shake, a greeting. His "how can I help you?" was from the heart. *(continued on pg. 2)*

Volunteer Hours in 2010 = 10,420

Value = \$208,400

Volunteers enrich our community,
are individually enriched,
and improve the quality of life
for others.

Mobility that MATTERS

A good trade off ...for a glimpse of Hope

After almost 2 years of volunteer service at the center, Nobutaka Ono, ("Nobu") returns to Japan to work in his family's engineering business. Sharing memories and stories of people he has helped, he recalls a sixteen year old who arrived with her father and physical therapist. Born with diabetes, she was losing much of her hair and was having surgery to remove her right leg. Nobu was able to track down all five essential items she would need to regain some mobility and rehabilitation including a walker. With the help of her father and therapist, the young girl successfully walked from the threshold of the center to the car. An emotional embrace follows. Imagine a common walker ... providing a glimpse of hope.

Nobu reflects further on his time at the center, helping those in need, "People are valuable. I find this a good trade off (experience), not as an engineer, as a human being. Everyone here is wise with much more experience than I have and they have a strong spiritual foundation. You must have a base to determine justice - what's right...I think I have improved a lot since I came to Bridge. In the sense of spirituality, social awareness, mentality and life ...I don't know if I should call it maturity, but I feel I have bettered myself as a result of being here." We believe our community has been blessed by Nobu and many volunteers like him who help make a better life for people living with disabilities.



Malcolm Powell, volunteer

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... I Peter 4:10



Gerry Barney, Mobility Mgr.



Inspired Patience, Joy Received

by Caroline Horrigan, Guardianship Intern -
Thank you for joining Bridge, Caroline!

I am thinking about my friends, those we serve at Bridge, and what they mean to me. To be with them is to walk with Jesus – you have to be wholly present, there for them and not bound up in yourself and your own worries. I thought of this yesterday as I walked with Marty. He shuffles along. He doesn't hurry. There are

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Galatians 5:22 – 23

times I would like to hurry a visit and go and get other chores done that are on my list for the day.



Where I am impatient they inspire patience. When I feel like rushing, I notice their slowness and gentleness, especially as they reach to take hold of your hand. To experience joy in their way, so spontaneous and real, is a gift. I realized that when I am in their presence the fruits of the Holy Spirit that Paul writes of in Galatians are born in me. They bring the Holy Spirit to life in me. But this is because the Holy Spirit is alive in them and is so plain to see – it makes being around my friends an absolute joy and privilege. I feel blessed to be part of the Bridge family!

A Man Named Bill, by Tom Wagner, new Board Member - Welcome to Bridge, Tom!

Some years ago I lived with a man named Bill who was aging with Down Syndrome. He was also a very faithful Christian. He made sure we prayed before every meal and attended church every Sunday. During communion Bill would make a point of shaking hands with everyone sitting on the aisle. It would take a good ten minutes for him to get back to his seat as he smiled and waved to anyone who wasn't within distance of him.

Bill made people feel welcomed and loved. No matter the pain in their hearts or trouble in their lives congregants felt the gentle love of God as Bill walked by. While different churches have a different take on the theology of communion I believe we can all agree a central tenant is that of Christian "community". We are all in the family of God and sharing in His gathering meal. Many times we go through the motions at communion, thinking about what we're doing after church, anxious about one concern or the other. Bill, in his simple way, reminded everyone why we were there, to take Christ's love for us and pass it along to those around us.

Bill died some years ago but I believe he reminds us of the lessons of discipleship persons with intellectual disabilities can teach us. Their presence in a church community gives them so much, but I truly believe they give back to the community so much more.

Blessings and Loss (continued from pg. 1)

We will honor Bob's memory, his commitment to serve the poor, the disabled, the often unseen in our community, by naming our "equipment ministry"; the Meyer Mobility Center. You can honor Bob with your gift of volunteered time. Come and work with our volunteers and all of us, to reuse durable medical goods that are wasting away in storage lockers and garages. I am proud to share with you that our Mobility Center, this place that Bob envisioned and assembled and nurtured, has recently received national recognition by staff from the Pass-It-On Center for Reuse, as one of the largest such centers in the U.S. Help us to continue Bob's vision and build this ministry even more. Help us continue the service to those who are the have nots... by sharing what we HAVE.

Caring and Community

by Linda Martin, Spiritual Care Programs & Vol. Administrator

People of all ages and abilities joined together at our Wacky Wheelays Celebration July 17th for Fun with Wheels! We saw everything from wheelchairs to adaptive bikes to wagons - even some rollerblades, a Segway and a 70 year old tricycle! This event, hosted by Northshore Baptist Church of Bothell, is a community outreach to provide a quality outdoor event for people with disabilities and increase awareness and understanding of what it means to live with a disability.



At Bothell High School Track and Field we started setting up that morning in stormy weather, praying hard for a break in the rain so that the people we serve could enjoy the activities planned for the day. Our prayers were answered as the guests began to arrive and the rain slowed to a stop. The clouds lifted and sky brightened a bit, and we dried off the tables and served a barbecue lunch.

After lunch people joined their assigned teams for a variety of events such as the power chair race and the bubble relay where people would go to the bubble station and blow a bubble before turning around and returning to the starting line. Everywhere there were smiles and people laughing as they joined in the fun, and volunteers were helping folks participate - obviously enjoying the event just as much as the folks they served. Miraculously the rain held off until the last participant boarded his Access van, and then as I packed my car to leave it began to fall again. This truly was a blessed day.

Mobility Center Reduced Hours

Until further notice, our new open hours of operation will be:

TUESDAY-THURSDAY Noon-4:30pm.



Volunteers are always needed to take calls and assist clients visiting the center. If you can help, call Linda Martin at 425-885-1006 x118 or email her at LindaM@bridgemin.org.

Board Members

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Tom Wagner

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Guardianship Intern
Caroline Horrigan
Guardianship Intern
Gerry Barney
Mobility Manager
Alison Erickson
Accountant

Bridge Donors Honor Loved Ones

We are grateful to have received gifts in the name of the following individuals. Our prayers are with the families who grieve over the loss of loved ones.

In Honor Of...

Patty Culley
Bruce Knofel
Dorothy Kranz
Larry & Patty Moss
Teresa Robins
Mary Kathleen Tyers

In Memory Of...

John Blanchard
Mary Carroll
Patricia Clarke
Richard E. George
Carrie Hall
Don Ham
Charles Holcomb
Jeannie (Svege) Holcomb
Anne Knofel
Carolyn Martin
Bob Meyer
Peggy O'Day Zabala



Bridge Disability Ministries

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Bellevue, WA 98005-1956

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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 Tues-Thurs, Noon - 4:30pm)

www.bridgemin.org

bridge@bridgemin.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday Evening Celebrations (4-6pm)

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Sept. 25th | Calvin Presbyterian Church
18826 3rd Avenue NW, Shoreline |
| Oct. 23rd | Newport Presbyterian Church
4010 120th Ave SE, Bellevue |
| Nov. 20th | St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
4228 Factoria Blvd, SE, Bellevue |
| Dec. 3rd | St. John Vianney Catholic Church
12600 84th Avenue NE, Kirkland |

NOW ACCEPTING NEW GUARDIANSHIP CLIENTS
Specializing in serving people with developmental and age-related disabilities.
For more information call: (425) 885-1006 x102

2011 Benefit Dinner & Auction

SAFE HARBORS

Save the Date.....

October 8th, 2011
at the Harbor Club Seattle

For more information, or for advance table reservations, contact us at:

events@bridgemin.org
(425) 885-1006, ext. 113

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.