

Extras



IT DOESN'T TAKE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT!

I wish you could all hear the testimonies we hear about the inspiring experience of worshipping with people who have mental impairments. No one could question the worth of doing ministry with people who are mentally impaired if they heard even half of the stories we hear. But you know that—you don't need to be convinced. Still, we can all use a little inspiration sometimes. So we like to share some of the stories with you.

A friend recently forwarded to us an article she had received from Kurt Goodenough. He leads a Praise Band which leads worship at the ForEver Friends, a program of JRG Ministries. He recently wrote about his experience in a weekly communication called "Until Next Week." We excerpted his article for you:

As we started our music set, we were immediately converged upon by several of the guests.

Some with arms raised, hands clapping, some dancing. One young man stepped forward with his guitar (which had only five of the original six strings still intact). Another man had brought his harmonica and played along. We had people virtually standing toe-to-toe with us. We played several high-octane praise songs. We even got

a conga line going, including wheelchairs and all. It was a marvelous time of fun and fellowship.

As the end of our allotted time drew near, we brought the music down to a more reserved level to provide for a quieter and more introspective worship experience. We sang the beautiful song, "Shout to the Lord," and it was at this moment that I experienced my "great epiphany."

As we sang, I heard the monotone and drone of a young woman standing directly in front of me. The words from her mouth were not the same as the words projected on the screen—she wasn't even looking at the screen. She and many others were singing their own lyrics and in their own keys. The words were indiscernible—to me anyway. But with hands raised and eyes looking heavenward, they were obviously filled with the Holy Spirit. I was so moved by this awesome display

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Kurt with the St. Louis Park Praise Band at ForEver Friends

"We believe everyone is created in God's image and can relate to God. We also

FOCUS ON GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

The New Life Church in Grand Junction, Colorado, is a new church. They have a lot of enthusiasm but very little money. They did start a Friendship club three years ago but had no money to purchase materials. For a couple of years they wrote their own materials, but are burning out. So, recently a group in Mt Pleasant (MI) donated two boxes of curriculum to them. Freda Kleine Deters, the director of the club, wrote us: "Things are going well in Grand Junction. We are starting our third year, and the club just keeps on growing. We received an award from the local agency in town thanking us for providing this ministry to their clients. God is good!" She also sent us an article written about their club by Zach Brill, a high school student, for his journalism class. We enjoyed it and are excerpting it for you:



Jeff is different. Mind you, he can speak, write, and do many of the things that others can do, but his speech is hard to understand, he has trouble comprehending, and he walks with a short choppy gait. Jeff has Down Syndrome. But he can do much more than anyone would expect.

And the Friendship Club program at New Life Church on 12th Street is the first of its kind in the valley to help people like Jeff capitalize on their various talents, "to allow people with developmental disabilities to use their gifts, be together, and just praise God," in the words of Freda Kleine Deters, the director of the Friendship club.

Jeff is one of the regulars. "I like this place...oh yes! I feel loved here," he said grinning. "I color stuff, [learn the] Bible, listen." (Although he is impaired by Down Syndrome, Jeff holds a job at Great New Homes as a janitor and is an amateur photographer). "I like to take pictures of everyone," he added.

Jeff is just one of the many unique individuals in the program. There's Stein, the cowboy, who plays guitar and sings; Danny, the perfectionist, who loves to organize and ameliorate everything around him; and Rick, a gentle man who always asks if you are having a good day, and tells you he is your friend. The list goes on and on.

After the last song fades away, the floors swept, and the chairs stacked neatly away, the lights go out in New Life Church, and it's just another dark Tuesday night. But the lights are still shining brightly in the hearts of the students and teachers as they make their way home. You can be sure those lights will never go out.

believe salvation is a gift that is not dependent on a certain level of intelligence.”

THAT ALL MAY LIVE!

We are excited about the arrangements for the next Friendship/CCPD Conference, which will be held in **Chicago** on **April 25-27, 2003**.

We think the **location is great**—The Hilton Hotel in Lisle (IL). And the **prices are right**—the room rate is \$79.00 per night, with free meeting rooms. For reservations or information, contact the Hilton Lisle/Naperville Hotel, located at 3003 Corporate West Drive in Lisle, IL (603-505-0900).

On Saturday evening, **a room will be reserved for Friendship Ministries** (with a moderately priced pizza buffet available). The purpose of this time is for anyone involved with a Friendship program to come together to share ideas, ask questions, and give mutual support.

We have some preliminary ideas for workshops. They include:

- Using Movement Therapy
- New, Revised Curriculum—what it looks like and how it works
- Liturgy and Worship for People with Retardation
- Using Friendship Curriculum with People who have Profound Mental Impairments
- Including Friendship Mentors in PCP (person-centered planning) Meetings
- Prayer in Friendship Classes

But there is still time for you to submit your ideas or requests for workshops. **Let us know what you would like to have happen at a Friendship conference.**



We can now customize the number of Extras we send you. Previously, we sent three if you have a Friendship class and one if you do not. So—if you would like a different number of Extras than you are presently receiving, please let us know. Call 1-800-333-8300 and ask for Grace (if you leave a message, **be sure to identify yourself carefully, including the name and location and especially, the zip code on the mailing label**). Otherwise, e-mail the information to pickaarg@friendship.org. *If you have any other information about yourselves, like whether or not you currently have a class and if you do, how many students you have, what curriculum you are using, any questions you might have, we would be happy to get that information also.*

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of the Power of the Spirit that I could no longer go on singing, and I simply stood there and wept.

I wept because it was at this moment that God made it clear to me that all of our high-buck high-tech equipment—sound boards, overheads, microphones, etc—was simply a “big-ole” pile of expensive electronic junk compared with the worship being offered to God by the ForEver Friends.

I was humbled as God revealed to me how sweet was the sound to HIS ears of a five-string (out-of-tune) guitar and the random, eclectic chords from a harmonica, and the angelic monotone, droning voices of HIS children in true unadulterated “Spirit-filled” worship. God used these blessed individuals, with all their imperfections, to teach the “worship leader what it truly means to worship HIM.



from the director

As I write this it is the beginning of September.

I have been worrying a bit about my Friendship class.

- We just completed the original three years of curriculum and have done several of the mini courses—what curriculum should we use this year?
- My Group Leader for the last five years has retired—who should replace him?
- Several group homes have called asking if they can join our class—we already have 27 students.
- Five of my teachers/mentors from last year cannot come back—who will take their place?
- Normally we meet the first three Tuesdays of the month. There are at least two concerts locally the student/friends would enjoy but they are on Thursday evenings—how do we fit this into the schedule?

- I need to travel for Friendship Ministries on both Thursdays—who will supervise the travel and make sure everyone has a great time?

I am sure you can all identify with these questions. You may have others that are even more pressing. As I reflect on these issues, I wonder if I am up to the job of organizing this class and finding solutions to all these questions. Then I am reminded of I Peter 4:11 “If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God’s very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides.” (NIRV) What a reminder that I am not on my own but that the strength I need will be provided. I need to quit worrying and start trusting.

- I need to start making phone calls for the positions that need to be filled.

- I need to remember that there are other mini courses. Experience tells me the students have loved the ones we have done in the past – so they will learn from and enjoy the ones we do this year.

- I know that Tom and Mary, and the other mentors in my class have been provided by God to serve. I can lean on them for ideas!

- A nearby Friendship class has just called and they can take four more students.

The Lord has already provided. I guess it just means I need to look clearly at what has been and what will be provided for the class this year. I am not on my own.

Nella Uitvlugt

Original Curriculum

As many of you know, we are revising the original three years of Bible Studies. This has brought up all sorts of issues. One is how much inventory of materials do we have left? Should we reprint? When will it run out?

As we looked over the amount of materials it looks like we will run out of Year One—*God Our Father* this year. No, we will not reprint it! You will be able to purchase the new Bible Study of *God Our Father* next summer.



Friendship
MINISTRIES

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