

outings



SPRING :: 2009

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Sharing God's *Love* with People who have Cognitive Impairments

WHAT FRIENDSHIP MEANS TO CHRISTIE AND RAYCHEL



Christie and Raychel are members of the Friendship group at Christ United Methodist Church of Fairfax Station, VA

"It is important to be with Jesus in church and let people know how nice God is. I really love Raychel to come [to Friendship group], and I just want her to come all the time."

—Christie Mayo

"Thank you for the Friendship program. I never attended church as a child (I use the term loosely, I'm only 18, but you know what I mean). Religion has never really been a huge part of my life. But my friend Christie's mom asked me to help get a Friendship program started at her church. I enjoy every day I get to go, and I'm learning the stories along with the class. I have grown closer to Christie. And I want to start actually

attending church as well. I had been going through some really tough times, but I'm doing better now, and honestly I think a lot of that has got to do with the Friendship group. So in no way is this program just for the "friends", because we are all "friends" in God's eyes, and he's sent each and every one of us to teach the world of his love.

'You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping

and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that.' --E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

Christie has been a good friend of mine for quite a few years, and in those years I have been through a lot. She was one of the constants through it all. Most people don't realize how important it is to have friends like that--the friends who will just call you up because they're bored.

Sometimes I would be trying to work on homework and see the caller ID and just think, 'Do I really have to



...continued from page 1

pick up?" But as soon as I did, and I heard her voice, everything would go to the simplicities. She would tell me what she did that day, and how it was soooo much fun. And I would remember that feeling, the feeling of happiness, that sometimes a few years back I seemed to be forgetting on a regular basis. When I did stuff with Christie, like lunch or her just coming over to see my dogs, I would just feel like I was supposed to feel like I was the one helping her, like I was the one doing the favor. But that's not how I felt. It was exactly where I wanted to be. A teenager's life can be a mess, trying to find their place in the world, and perhaps what I was trying to do when I opened myself up to this friendship, was to lift my life up a trifle. ■

--Raychel Trump

Share your stories about what Friendship means to you! Call us at 888.866.8966 or email friendship@friendship.org

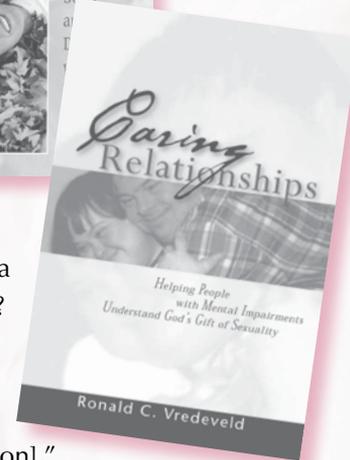
Resources on Sexuality

Have you ever wondered about issues of sexuality as they relate to members of your group? Perhaps your group studied the *Living God's Way* session on the seventh commandment and difficult questions were raised.

Are you aware that having a disability contributes to a higher risk of being a victim of sexual violence? According to an Arc Fact Sheet (available at www.thearc.org), "...intellectual disabilities, communication disorders, and behavioral disorders appear to contribute to very high levels of risk [of victimization]."

We strongly encourage all Friendship groups to have abuse prevention measures in place, including contact information for local resources, such as the Community Mental Health Board and Adult Protective Services, to notify in case abuse is suspected. **Download Friendship's Abuse Prevention Guidelines** at www.friendship.org/support or call us for a free copy if you don't have Internet access.

Friendship Ministries also offers two books to help you tackle questions about both healthy sexuality and abuse. *Caring Relationships* is a brief book that provides guidance from a Christian perspective. It is meant to be read alongside *Sexuality: Your Sons and Daughters with Intellectual Disabilities*, which is not written from a Christian perspective but does provide indispensable, in-depth information. To learn more, visit www.friendship.org or call 888.866.8966. ■



**Will one of us be in your neighborhood?
Give us a call or send us an email if you'd like to meet!**



Nella

January 28-31: Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, San Antonio, TX

Rhonda

January 23-24: Joni & Friends West Coast Summit, Pasadena, CA

Elizabeth (*Amistad*)

May 14-19: Expolit, Miami, FL



Notas DE AMISTAD

LA FUERZA DE LOS FRAGILES

In November I had the opportunity to participate in "Children, Church, and the Plentitude of Life," a conference in Guatemala City attended by 160 people from 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In addition to the exhibit booth we hosted, Ministerio Amistad was represented by a new Amistad group from Guatemala called "La Fuerza de los Fragiles," which means "The Strength of the Fragile." They participated in workshops and helped with conference logistics.

During my visit to Guatemala, I also made connections at a camp for people with disabilities in Chimaltenango, as well as with a foundation called Fundabiem, which provides support for people with disabilities. Fundabiem will be piloting an Amistad group at one of their 24 sites, with the expectation that this will spread to their other locations. Several other new groups have also begun in Guatemala:

- Segunda Iglesia del Nazareno, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala
- Iglesia del Nazareno, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala
- Segunda Iglesia del Nazareno, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala
- Consejo Evangelico general de las Iglesia, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala ■

Thank you very much for your prayers and financial support for this ministry!

Elizabeth Rodriguez
Amistad Representative

FRIENDSHIP FAMILY

NEWS

TUESDAY THE 17

Welcome to the family!
Join us in welcoming the following groups:

- Calvary Baptist Church of Alexandria, LA
- Calvary Church of Souderton, PA
- Calvary United Methodist Church of Frederick, MD
- Cornerstone Church of Harleysville, PA
- Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church of Leduc, AB
- Faith Baptist Church of St. Thomas, ON
- Fellowship Church of Grand Junction, CO
- Saturday School of Pompton Lakes, NJ
- Trinity Lutheran Church of Baton Rouge, LA

FRIENDSHIP GROUP LEADER NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Hilda Berghuis of the **Ingersoll Friendship Club** of **Ingersoll, ON** received the J.C. Herbert Citizen of the Year Award from the Ingersoll Community Foundation in recognition of her work with the Friendship group, which she founded in 1985 and still leads today. Congratulations! ■

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Contact Gwen at 888.866.8966 or genzinkg@friendship.org

FRIENDS SPEND A WEEK SERVING OTHERS

by Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen

Individuals with special needs deserve the chance to serve, said Ron Hosmar, youth pastor of Calvin Christian Reformed Church in Ottawa, Ontario.

That was the idea behind an innovative SERVE project the church organized this summer. SERVE is an opportunity for young people to travel to various locations to spend a week doing service projects.

Calvin CRC already reaches out to individuals with special needs through its Friendship group, but the congregation wanted to do more.



Alex Noort serves at a school

“Often [people with special needs] are the forgotten ones who are served,” Hosmar said. “We wanted them to have a week where they could do the serving.”

In July, 11 individuals with special needs were

matched with 13 youth mentors to take on service projects throughout the Ottawa region. Team members came from Ontario, Michigan, and Manitoba.

Hosmar said the week taught participants that while everyone has needs, everyone has gifts and everyone can serve.

“Each one may have some sort of special need, but as we went through the week and shared stories together, we found



SERVE team member Shona Paterson, who is also part of the Ingersoll, ON Friendship Club.

that each one had at least one unique gift that they brought to the group,” he said.

“God has given each participant something special in their lives with which they could bless others.”

Reprinted from *The Banner* (October 2008) with permission.

HOW THEY SERVED:

- Sorted and boxed food at a food pantry
- Cleaned lockers and pulled weeds at a school
- Organized library at a senior living facility
- Prepared and served meals at a shelter
- Sorted office supplies and cleaned windows at a radio station
- Made cards and handed out as random acts of kindness ■

Want to organize a week of service? Pastor Ron Hosmar would be happy to share what he learned as project co-coordinator. tel: 613.225.2889 ext. 3 / email: youthpastor@calvincrc.ca

Get More Friendship

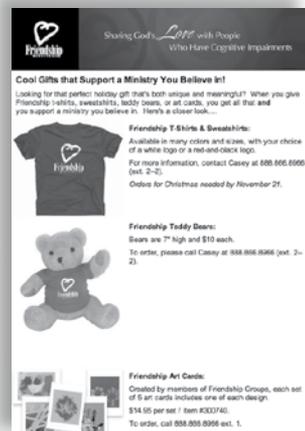
Wisdom

JOIN OUR E-MAIL NEWSLETTER TODAY

Did you know that you can get more helpful tips, news items, and special offers from Friendship Ministries by signing up for our email newsletter? The email newsletter is sent out every six weeks or so, whenever we have something to share that we think you'll find worthwhile.

Sign up on our website at www.friendship.org/newsletter/subscribe.asp or send an email to friendship@friendship.org asking us to add you to the list.

When you sign up, you'll receive an email asking you to confirm your subscription. Be sure to respond to this--otherwise you won't receive the newsletters. This is one of our policies to make sure that only those who want to be on the list are added. You can also be sure that we will not pass your email address along to other parties. ■





FROM THE DIRECTOR

A CALL TO *Rejoice*

On Sunday I sit with my friend Peggy during worship. This week she seemed antsy. Her mouth ached as she had recently had some teeth pulled. She had been up late the night before. Our service was longer than usual, with reports from the youth group.

I am not always sure what Peggy understands, but I do know that she can quickly echo words or gestures she recognizes, such as the pastor raising his hands for the blessing. Peggy reminds me to pay attention to the liturgical portions of the service. Her focus on them teaches those of us sitting around her how important they are.

Singing with Peggy is fun. She dances to the rhythm, and if the song is one she knows from Friendship she smiles, claps, and sings lustily.

On the other hand worshipping with Peggy can be distracting. She does unexpected things, like poking people around her or waving to get their attention. She makes large motions during worship, imitating the minister. She claps louder and longer than anyone else, laughs boisterously, and makes loud comments such as "Minister! I like him!"

But the best part is watching her and understanding that she actually adds to our worship experience. Seeing her imitate the minister doing his benediction reminds me that all of us need God's blessing. Peggy's enthusiasm brings smiles to the faces of other worshipers. People who are visiting watch her and the large number of people with disabilities in congregation. They wonder about us. Often our pastor will receive comments about the acceptance of our congregation for people who often do not participate in church.



During communion this week, I was reminded that I need to be as enthusiastic as Peggy is. Her enthusiasm does spill over a bit when she takes two pieces of bread and throws one back. I take that one and have to decide whether or not to gag--or do I see it as more than that? Do I need to stop myself and think about what this really means to share in the sacrament with Peggy? Yes, I do. As she squishes her little piece of bread and then smiles with delight as she chews, I remember to rejoice in my own participation. Thank you Peggy; I love you. ■

Nella Vitellug

"ALWAYS BE JOYFUL BECAUSE YOU BELONG TO THE LORD. I WILL SAY IT AGAIN.

Be joyful!"

Philippians 4:4 (NIRV)



Consider these People-First principles:

PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

The point of "People-First Language" hit home for one of our staff members recently as she was reading her son a book in which two characters argued over whether one of them was an "allergic." If you visit the Friendship offices, you're pretty likely to see Gwen reach for the stash of tissues she always keeps nearby (and you'll never catch her eating shellfish), yet she would not define herself by this one characteristic.

And that's just the point. To emphasize one thing about a person not only reinforces stereotypes, it also ignores the complex (and changing!) set of strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, each one of us possesses. In light of this, we would like to challenge the Friendship family to reflect on the way we use our words to describe each another.

1. Identify individuals first, before naming disabilities. For example, "my friend who has Down syndrome" instead of "my Down's friend."
2. Children with disabilities grow into adults with disabilities. Avoid calling adults children.
3. A person "has" a disability, rather than "suffers from," "is a victim of," etc.
4. Each person has their own interests and talents. Avoid using stereotypes, such as "they're all so friendly," to describe people. ■



Special Gifts

We are grateful for the generous donations we received in 2008 from individuals, churches, and organizations. We are also thankful for those donors who have contributed to our new Legacy Fund. Without them—without you!—Friendship Ministries would not be able to carry out our mission *to share God's love with people who have cognitive impairments and to enable them to become an active part of God's family.*

We give special thanks for **gifts received in memory** and **gifts received in honor** of people whose lives have intersected Friendship in various ways.

IN MEMORY OF:

- Mary Louters
- Gabriel Reith
- Minnie Wachter

IN HONOR OF:

- Marjorie Costello



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