

extras



SUMMER ❖ 2012

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Sharing God's *Love* with People who have Intellectual Disabilities

LOOK WHO JUST TURNED 25

by Fran Aarnoutse, Friendship mentor

photo. Some of the original members are still attending the group!

We meet every Monday evening, September through May, in Covenant Christian Reformed Church. Our friends arrive by D.A.T.S (Disabled Adult Transit Service) or get a ride from a family member or mentor. There is always a lot of "catching up" to do before our evening starts.

We open each time with the same call and response: "God is good...All the time...And all the time...God is good." Next, a friend leads us in prayer. We

sing favorite songs enthusiastically and enjoy learning new songs too. Some friends help by accompanying the singing with a variety of instruments.

During our Bible lesson time we often use dramas with costumes and a narrator. (At our 25th Anniversary Celebration Service, the group acted out "The Parable of the Great Dinner Party.") We then have a snack and a closing prayer time.

Throughout the year we have special events that have included: Halloween parties, scavenger hunts, game nights,

In 1987, a few members of Covenant Christian Reformed Church and West End Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton, AB, came together to begin a Friendship Ministry for our community. From small beginnings (9 friends and 5 mentors) this amazing ministry has continued to flourish and grow into what you see in our 25th Anniversary





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an Annual Christmas banquet with special guest (Santa) and music by the Salvation Army Band, themed dances (Sock Hop, Western), talent nights, and our year-end BBQ at a park where we present attendance certificates. Some members have more than 20 certificates in their collection. We also celebrate birthdays each month by giving birthday cards and small gift cards to a coffee shop.

We have been blessed! We have 44 friends attending and nearly 44 mentors, a Bible Story leader, several musicians, two persons taking care of the techie stuff, and three wonderful ladies who help to get our snack ready.

At our 25th Anniversary, we all wore the red Friendship t-shirt, and as you can see in the photo, we look great! The service was followed with lunch and cake for about 180 guests, including our group, family members, past mentors and three other Friendship groups. A wonderful time was had by all. ■



Get the look!

Order your Friendship t-shirts at www.friendship.org or by calling 888.866.8966.

Another historic moment

by Mark Stephenson, President, Special Education Ministry of Holland Board

Both the Holland (MI) and Zeeland (MI) Special Education Ministry groups started before Friendship Ministries began. In fact, the co-directors of the Holland group wrote the first Friendship curriculum based on what they had been doing with their group for the previous 15 years.

But as far as anyone knows, in over 40 years, the two special education ministry groups never met together until this past February. Nearly 200 friends, mentors, and others gathered on a dark, blustery evening to light up and warm up Niekerk Christian Reformed Church with their joy, praise, and appreciation of each other. After an extended time of singing in the sanctuary, we moved to the fellowship hall for a snack, a game, and some fun just being together.

Afterwards, one of the Zeeland SEM co-directors, Kris Den Bleyker, exclaimed, "Whenever we try something new with our group and it goes well, we always call it the 'First Annual.' So this was the First Annual Combined Meeting of the Holland and Zeeland SEM groups!" ■



•• Judy dances during an historic meeting of two ministries



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

NELLA

May 18: Canadian Council of Churches, Ottawa, ON

June 18-21: AAIDD conference, Charlotte, NC

August 17: Friendship Challenge, Grand Rapids, MI

HEATHER

May 18: Canadian Down Syndrome Society, Toronto, ON

June 8: Christian Reformed Church Synod, Ancaster, ON

SCOTT & SUSAN

May 18: Joni and Friends West Coast Summit

www.friendship.org

is
all
new!



We would love to hear your feedback so that we can continue to improve the site. The first 50 people to email contact@friendship.org with one thing you like about the new website and one suggestion for improvement will receive a thank-you gift. Be sure to include your mailing address.

Send us feedback and be rewarded

We're thrilled to introduce you to our lovely new website, where you will find lots of helpful stuff at your fingertips, including:

- **Videos** like "Autism & Children's Ministry" and "What does a Friendship Group look like?"
- **Free downloads** including Game ideas, Art projects, and Program Guide
- **E-newsletter** sign-up
- **Bookstore**
- Quick links to **Ministerio Amistad** and other great resources!

The new website was made possible by a grant from an organization that wishes to remain anonymous in the spirit of Matthew 6. We are grateful to these **friends of the ministry** for enabling us to minister more effectively with churches around the world. ■

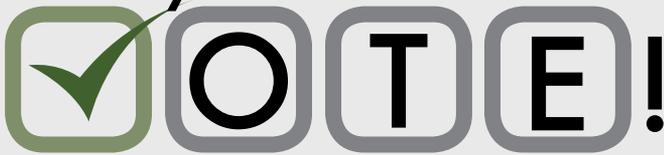
FRIENDSHIP FAMILY



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

- Bethel Community Christian Reformed Church of Edmonton, AB
- First Baptist Church of North Platte, NE
- First Church of God of Scottsbluff, NE
- Fremont Friendship Series of Fremont, MI
- Georgetown Christian Reformed Church of Georgetown, ON
- Graham Emmanuel Baptist Church of Graham, WA
- Journey Church of Kingman, AZ
- Northminster Presbyterian Church of Peoria, IL
- Park View Christian Church of Orland Park, IL
- Salem Alliance Church of Salem, OR
- St. Timothy Lutheran Church of Fremont, NE
- Trinity Reformed Church of Waupun, WI
- Vineyard Church of Kansas City, MO

Cast your



Would you like to see a webinar on: **Autism & Children's Ministry, Starting a Friendship Ministry, or What Friendship Mentors Need to Know?** Visit www.crcna.org/webinars and click on the "proposed" tab to cast your vote today! Once a topic receives enough votes it will be scheduled and you will be notified. ■



How important is a sound system?

by Heather DeBoer, Friendship Ministries (Canada)

One of the highlights of working for Friendship Ministries is receiving photos from Friendship groups. They depict lots of excitement, love, and participation. I just love that! We received a photo not too long ago that got me thinking. There were many people in the photo, and as far as I could tell, no sound system was being used. Whether or not my observation was correct, it was a good reminder that sound systems can benefit all groups.

I realize that some programs are small, and they meet in small spaces where sound travels well. But what about those with a hearing impairment? You likely have both friends and mentors with this challenge.

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

The microphone is a powerful tool (ask any preacher!), and there are some unexpected benefits of using one. We've heard stories of the unbearably shy willing to sing when presented with a mic. After lots of practice in the Friendship group, one normally timid friend sang in front of the congregation, and even to a classroom of seminarians.

Our non-verbal friends can also benefit from the microphone. Even those who do not produce a sound should be offered an opportunity to be in front of the group. In their own way, they can sing. Maybe it's just moving their lips or jaw, but it is worship. Not less, just different.

We know of one friend who sings by moving her jaw. When offered the chance to sing "Jesus Loves Me" in

front of the group, she practiced every night at her group home. She was thrilled, and it was a moving moment for the group. We need to remember that our high-needs and non-verbal friends are so important to every program. Like I said, the microphone is a very powerful tool.

SYSTEM OPTIONS

If you have access to the sound system in your church, take the time to learn how to use it or to recruit someone who will operate it for you. It will be worth the effort. The Friendship group I'm part of in Oakville, ON meets to sing and pray in the church sanctuary. With just thirty people in a great big space, sound is easily swallowed up. Last year we started using the sound system, and I began to notice I was less tired at the end of the night. The sound system makes it easier to keep everyone's attention, and members enjoy using the mic to share prayer requests.

If you need to purchase a system, there are fabulous portable systems that many schools are adopting for their classrooms. They come with wireless mics and portable speakers, and they fill a gym or classroom with wonderful sound. Clip-on microphones work well for members who cannot hold a larger mic. Ask your supporting church(es) to help you buy a system, or hold a fundraiser. I promise that you will not regret adding a sound system to your program. Everyone benefits--even those with perfect hearing! ■

FROM THE DIRECTOR

FRIENDSHIP IN THE Summertime

Summer is a break from the usual schedule for many Friendship groups. Group leaders especially may find that rest from the busyness is an important part of the rhythm of ministry. Break time can also be used to reflect on big-picture elements for your group, including recruiting and training mentors and planning for the fall.

Recruiting and training mentors

Both new and seasoned mentors will benefit from checking out the good stuff on the new Friendship website. Online tools include:

- What Friendship Mentors Need to Know (PDF download)
- Abuse Prevention Guidelines: policies to protect friends and mentors (PDF)
- Video: What is a Friendship Group Like? Show potential mentors what the program is all about and allay any concerns.
- Video: Mentoring High-Need Friends

Planning for fall

The website also includes tools to help you plan for the coming year. The Curriculum Overview lists every session of Friendship *Bible Studies*, *Life Studies*, *Living God's Way* (on the 10 Commandments) and *Psalms*, along with each session's Scripture passage and concept.

Towards the end of July we will be mailing our new catalog. Can't wait for that? Visit www.friendship.org for the latest offerings for your ministry.

Connect with Friendship staff

Summer is also a great time to connect with Friendship staff to learn how we can support you in your ministry. Do you have an issue or idea you would like to talk over? Have you updated us on the number of friends and mentors in your program so that we can send you newsletters? Do we know who the latest and greatest leader is for your program? If you have not been in touch with us--or we with you--summer is a great time to make that happen. Email friendship@friendship.org or call 888.866.8966 ext. 2-1.

Fellowship Opportunities

If your group does take a summer break, we encourage you to look for ways to continue relationship-building over the summer. Perhaps there are mentors who are willing to plan a picnic, or a trip to a baseball game or a zoo. One group collects new socks for a shelter and then celebrates with a sock hop. What fun in serving! ■

Nella Vitolug



CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Heartfelt thanks to all **76 of members of our Church Partnership Program!** And a special thanks to these new and renewing members:

Sustaining Partners (\$250 per year):

- Aylmer CRC of Aylmer, ON
- Beaverdam CRC of Hudsonville, MI
- Covenant CRC of Woodstock, ON
- Crosspoint CRC of Brampton, ON
- Ebenezer CRC of Jarvis, ON
- Hope in Christ CRC of Bellingham, WA

Growing Partners (\$500 per year):

- Blenheim CRC of Blenheim, ON
- Christ's Community Reformed Church of Fort Wayne, IN
- Covenant CRC of Edmonton, AB
- First CRC of Guelph, ON
- Fourteenth Street CRC of Holland, MI
- Friendship Bible Hour of Chatham, ON
- Friendship Club of Bowmanville, ON
- Graafschap CRC of Holland, MI
- Heritage Fellowship CRC of Brampton, ON
- Waterloo CRC of Waterloo, ON

Expanding Partners (\$1,000 per year):

- Anaheim CRC of Anaheim, CA
- First CRC of Hamilton, ON
- Knox Presbyterian Church of Listowel, ON
- St. Giles Kingsway Presbyterian Church of Etobicoke, ON
- Sussex CRC of Sussex, NJ

Global Outreach Partners (\$2,000 per year):

- Calvary CRC of Edina, MN
- LaGrave Avenue CRC of Grand Rapids, MI

To learn more about the Church Partnership Program, contact LaVonne at 888.866.8966 ext.2—3 or admin@friendship.org



Is your church looking for ways to make your children's ministry more inclusive of kids with disabilities? If so, we heartily recommend The Inclusive Church blog, where Amy Fenton Lee and her panel of experts address subjects like: Should parents lead the special needs ministry?, 5 things to know about the mother of a child with autism, and Providing a sensory toy box (and how a Slinky can help teach creation).

Find it at:

theinclusivechurch.wordpress.com



Special Gifts

- We are thankful for a gift in honor of Karyn Honderd's birthday.

WILL YOU TAKE THE CHALLENGE



WHAT? A 3K fun run/wheelchair/walk for pairs of friends and mentors -- and others interested in completing this fun and worthwhile challenge!

WHY? To raise funds and awareness for Friendship Ministries and Friendship House Partners USA, which is dedicated to spreading the vision of Friendship House to seminaries.

WHEN? Friday, August 17 at 7:00 p.m.

WHERE? Prince Conference Center at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI

If you can't make it to Grand Rapids, maybe you'd like to map out a route where you are and join us from afar! Stay tuned for more details, or call us with your questions: **888.866.8966**



We would love to hear from you:

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