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*...and more!*

**K**aren Martin had been praying about the prospect of launching a Friendship program in Alberta, Canada, for quite some time when she met Justin and Linnette, a young married couple with learning disabilities.

“Justin and Linnette visited me while I was working for a program that identifies support systems for individuals with disabilities,” explained Martin. “They had just recently moved to Alberta from Ontario and were looking for some support within our community. One of the first questions Linnette asked me was, ‘Why is there no Friendship Group here?’”

For Martin, a member of Mile Zero Evangelical Fellowship in Grimshaw, Alberta, that was a sign.

“Linnette’s question was the answer to my prayers,” said Martin. “Soon after our discussion, I was consulting with our pastor and the board of our church and making plans to begin a Friendship program at Mile Zero.”

## FRIENDS ASK FOR FRIENDSHIP AT MILE ZERO

Mile Zero’s Friendship program began in the spring of 2009, with both Justin and Linnette in attendance. Over the years, Martin has learned much about Justin and Linnette and their family. Their story – and their dedication to Friendship – has been exceptionally impactful.

“Justin and I first met in 2000,” shared Linnette. “We were married in 2006 and shortly after we had Brooke. We started going to Friendship quite young in Dresdin (Ontario), where our Friendship leader’s name was Rita. We did a lot of field trips to different places to swim, golf, and bowl, and we went to the lake to barbecue. When we moved to Alberta, we met Karen, who wanted to start a Friendship group. We’re glad she did, because we’ve been attending ever since.”

“Justin and Linnette are two outstanding individuals, who have grown considerably since our first meeting,” explains Martin. “Linnette is a devoted and diligent parent who candidly expresses her ideas and opinions, while Justin is a wonderful artist and a quiet, unassuming dad who clearly treasures his little girl. I am so impressed by them and their commitment to Brooke and her well-being.”

Justin, Linnette, and Brooke, who just began Grade 1, currently live with Linnette’s mother, though they are working toward living on their own in the near future. The Mile Zero program has been serving individuals in the area since 2009. Many of the friends and mentors travel 30 miles or more during the winter months to worship with the Friendship program. The program has seen much growth since its inception and it is our hope that it will continue to do so in the coming years. God is good! ■



•• Justin reads the Easter story to the Grimshaw Friendship group.

# Christmas IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

Why not support Friendship with your gift giving this year?

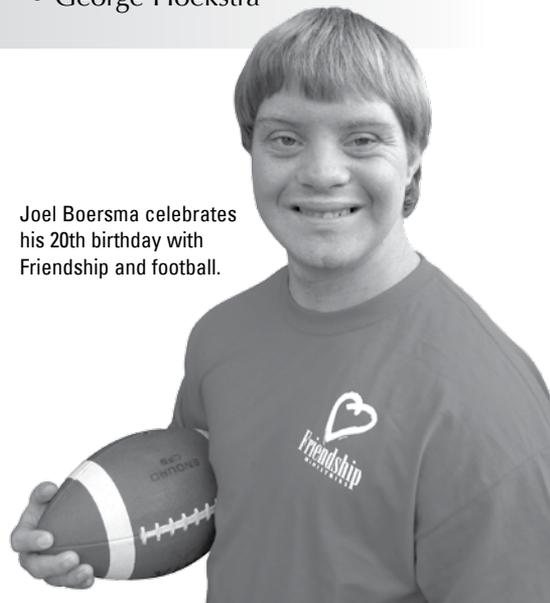


### IN HONOR OF:

- Ralph & Carol Honderd's 50th Anniversary
- Ken & Sally Hillner's 50th Anniversary
- Nella Uitvlugt's 60th Birthday
- Joel Boersma's 20th Birthday

### IN MEMORY OF:

- George Hoekstra



Joel Boersma celebrates his 20th birthday with Friendship and football.

## 7 reasons you should visit the Friendship Bookstore:

- ① **Key chains:** Creative, fun, and handmade in Columbia for Friendship Ministries!
- ② **T-shirts:** Wouldn't your Friendship group look good in these? We thought so!
- ③ **Jewelry:** Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but our Friendship jewels are a really close second!
- ④ **Tote Bags:** Make traveling to and from Friendship easy with our flexible tote! Carry your mentor guides, your schedule, and other materials you need with ease!
- ⑤ **Notecards:** Our greeting cards showcase the work of five of our friends!
- ⑥ **Friends Magnet:** This piece is hand painted in Michigan and designed by Carol Roeda!



### And the most important reason you should visit the Friendship Bookstore?

- ⑦ Proceeds from the sales of each of these items benefit the ongoing work of Friendship 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

**September 22:** Special Needs and Ministry Conference at Fellowship Reformed Church, Muskegon, MI

**September 29:** Growing Together Conference, Raleigh/Durham, NC

**September 30:** Terra Ceia Christian Reformed Church, NC

**October 11:** Linking Arms & Linking Hearts Conference, Calgary, AB

**October 17:** Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI



# Notas DE AMISTAD

## It's finally here!



I am pleased to announce that our new Ministerio Amistad website is now live!

Thanks to the prayers and support of you, our loyal friends, Ministerio Amistad can now offer informative resources to active and future Amistad groups in

Hispanic communities and across Latin America.

This new website, which is easily updated, will be a valuable tool for our ministry, giving Amistad groups the opportunity to download important supplies and helpful resources. Be sure to visit our new page at [www.friendship.org/es](http://www.friendship.org/es) and let us know your thoughts! We'd love to hear your feedback.

Thank you so much for your support. ■



God bless you,

*Elizabeth R.*

Elizabeth Rodriguez  
Ministerio Amistad

# FRIENDSHIP FAMILY



## Welcome to the family!

Join us in welcoming the following groups:

- Charlottetown CRC of Charlottetown, PE
- East Hill Foursquare Church of Gresham, OR
- Gender Road Christian Church of Canal Winchester, OH
- Hope Christian Church of Tustin, CA
- Lake Pointe Church of Rockwall, TX
- Mosaic of Colorado Springs, CO
- Passion Community Church of Rootstown, OH

## Be in touch!

What's happening in your part of the Friendship family?

By phone: 888.866.8966, or email: [friendship@friendship.org](mailto:friendship@friendship.org)

*"Being part of a Friendship Group is like getting glimpses of heaven."*  
--Margaret, via Facebook



## Find us on Facebook

[facebook.com/FriendMin](http://facebook.com/FriendMin)

& while you're online, Say "HELLO" to the All-New [friendship.org!](http://friendship.org!)

# TRY THIS!

## Praying with people who have Intellectual Disabilities

It's not uncommon for people with disabilities to feel dismissed, unwelcome, or unloved during conversations with friends, family, peers, and acquaintances.

Their conversations with God, however, are radically different. Friends' prayers are unhurried, unscripted, absolutely honest, and absolutely real.

Prayer is a one-on-one conversation with God and can communicate a powerful, personal message: God hears you. God wants you. God loves you. Though it may take some extra effort to pray with your friends with intellectual disabilities, it's worth it. Your prayer life – and the prayer life of your Friendship group – will be greatly enriched and enhanced if you keep these guidelines in mind:

### Know each person.

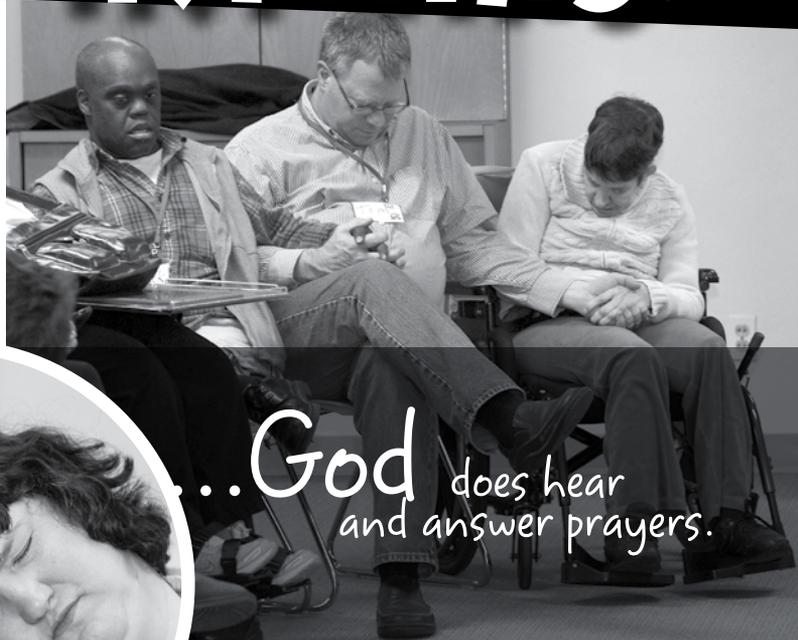
If you do not know a friend well, you will not know what's important to him/her. Make sure you know your friends. Know where they live and what they like, who's in their family and what they like to do.

### Use a friends' name.

When praying aloud, make sure you use your friends' names. This will effectively communicate to individuals that their prayers are heard by God and others.

### Use concrete language.

Symbolic language ("redeemed by the blood of the lamb") and synonyms ("reign" and "rain") can be confusing to friends, so avoid them when able.



Friendship participants bow their heads during prayer time.

### Repeat phrases.

Simple prayers that are said week to week encourage friends to learn them, understand them, and use them.

### Speak clearly.

Speak very clearly during prayer, but make sure you don't speak down to your friends in the process. By slowing down your prayer and being more succinct in your word choice, friends will have a much easier time understanding you.

You may also consider implementing different types of prayers to make speaking to God even more effective for your friends. Consider singing your prayers, saying responsive prayers, or implementing prayer litanies.

Finally, make sure you record your prayers too. By keeping track of prayer requests - on a prayer board or in a prayer journal – you will be able to teach your friends about answered prayers, ensuring them that, indeed, God does hear and answer prayers. ■

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

# 30 Years of Service

**30 years.** That's how long we've journeyed with you, working with you and ministering beside you. Because of your support and commitment, our ministry has grown to include more than 17,000 friends in 1,100 programs, serving 75 different denominations in 28 countries.

### THAT'S SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!

Our team won't celebrate with a big banquet or a bouquet of flowers (at least not yet!), but we will celebrate by recommitting ourselves to doing what we do best: sharing and spreading God's love with people who have intellectual disabilities.

One way that we share and spread God's love is by providing helpful suggestions and advice that may be of use to you and your Friendship ministry.

### HERE'S ONE OF THOSE SUGGESTIONS:

A few years ago I was speaking with Sallie Barre, a member of Christ Church of Oak Brook. Sallie was concerned about the upcoming year where her and her Friendship group would meet, due to the renovations her church was currently undergoing. After some discussion and a quick brainstorm session, Sallie and I decided that she and her group should spend the year exploring the people and places within the church.

Many of our friends – and perhaps many of yours too – do not attend worship on Sunday mornings and are, therefore, very unfamiliar with the places, people, and symbols within the church.

### WHY NOT GIVE THEM A TOUR?

There are some obvious things to be explored, including the chancel or the pulpit:

- Who plays the piano or organ? Would the organist come and show the friends how the organ works? Where are the pipes? Could a praise team demonstrate their instruments?

- Have your friends ever met your pastor? Why not invite the pastor to come and meet the friends? Perhaps the pastor can explain the meaning of the baptismal font or the Lord's Supper dishes?
- And what about the offering plates? Do your friends know what an offering is and what it means to give money to the church? Perhaps you can point out what the money is used for?
- How about the banners on the walls or the stained glass? Can you describe what those mean to your friends?

But what about the other areas of the church? The library, pastor's study, or church office? What about the nursery?

Visit those too! Visit with your elders, deacons, boards, and trustees, and ask them to explain what they do for their church community. Visit another Bible Study or group and ask them to visit your program.

The church itself is a wonderful learning tool, so be sure you use it! This exploration will help your friends see beyond Friendship to the entire church, hopefully encouraging them to see how the body of Christ fits so well together. ■

All the best,

*Nella Vitolug*

### Have you been serving with us since the beginning?

Thanks to these individuals for their good work over the past 30 years: Betty Vander-Zee, Volga Friendship Group in Volga, SD, and Carol Holste, Trinity Lutheran in Kalispell, MT.



## CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Heartfelt thanks to all **90** of members of our **Church Partnership Program!** And a special thanks to these new and renewing members:

### Sustaining Partners (\$250 per year):

- Listowel Friendship Club
- Community CRC of Frankford, ON
- Trinity CRC of St Catharines, ON
- Westend CRC of Grand Rapids, MI
- Blythefield CRC of Rockford, MI
- Twelfth Avenue CRC of Jenison, MI
- Grace CRC of Grand Rapids, MI
- Beckwith Hills CRC of Grand Rapids, MI
- River Terrace Church of East Lansing, MI
- Lafayette CRC of Lafayette, IN

### Growing Partners (\$500 per year):

- First CRC of Red Deer, AB
- Williamsburg CRC of Williamsburg, ON
- Maranatha CRC of Cambridge, ON
- Mountainview CRC of Grimsby, ON
- Wallaceburg CRC of Wallaceburg, ON

### Global Outreach Partner

- Community CRC of Kitchener, ON

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

- Smithville CRC of Smithville, ON
- Palmerston CRC of Palmerston, ON
- Fellowship CRC of Brighton, ON
- Clearview CRC of Oakville, ON
- Cornerstone CRC of Chilliwack, BC
- Plymouth Heights 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](mailto:admin@friendship.org)*

TAX FREE

**In Canada:**  
Christian Stewardship Services,  
tel: 800.267.8890.

**In the US:**  
Barnabas Foundation,  
tel: 888.448.3040.

**Thank you for your support!**

# Colleen and Grace

## return to West Michigan!

Ontario, Canada-based music duo Colleen & Grace will return to West Michigan on November 1, for an evening of worship with Friendship groups from across the region! Colleen & Grace will perform at Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church on Thursday, November 1. **Last year, the sanctuary was nearly filled, and we expect nothing less this time around! ■**

**RSVP to Nella at 616.452.7977 or email [veruallen@comcast.net](mailto:veruallen@comcast.net) to attend.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

If you list Friendship Ministries as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or, in Canada, your Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSP), the dollars you give to support this ministry will come directly to us, tax-free!

This is a great way to maximize your support for a ministry you believe in, and it takes no more effort than simply filling out a form. If you would like to know more, please call us, or connect with one of the Christian financial planning organizations we work with. ■



**We would love to hear from you:**

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