

FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Tips & Tools to Include Our Friends

SECOND QUARTER 2016



A Publication of
Friendship Ministries

 **Friendship**
MINISTRIES



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Blessed!

As we've said for a number of months now, we are really looking forward to introducing our new digital Bible study curriculum called **Together**. We are drawing closer to the official unveiling, and are happy to say that the first two units, *Choose Courage* and *Meeting Jesus*, will be available for purchase in July. More sessions will be made available as the church calendar year progresses through 2016-2017.

We are also pleased to announce that we have received a \$100,000 matching gift donation to help pay for development of this new curriculum.

Our budget calculations indicate that the costs to create 3 years' worth of material will total over \$400,000. As you can see, this matching gift has come at the right time to help us kick-start our campaign to raise the funds to create the curriculum. *Our donor will match every gift made, up to \$100,000 total.* This is where you come in.

Would you consider making a contribution to this project? Many of you are already faithful supporters of Friendship Ministries, but these development costs go above and beyond our daily operations budget. If you would be willing to give a bit—or a lot!—more this year, we will be able to offer a high quality and innovative opportunity for churches to lead, learn and participate in this full inclusion mission. And if you are not in the habit of financially supporting Friendship, now would be a great time to start!

So, my message is simple and clear this quarter:

We need your help! Please consider a gift to Friendship Ministries so that we can continue to empower the Church to share God's love with people who have intellectual disability. *See page 7 for information about how to contribute to our curriculum fund.*

Thank you for your past support, prayers, and shared love for this ministry. Thank you also for your prayerful consideration to this humble request.

May God be praised!

In Him,

Tom VanWingerden
Executive Director, Friendship Ministries
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NEWS FROM MINISTERIO AMISTAD

Notas de Amistad
Friendship Ministries in Cuba

Hello Friends,

Some years ago, we started an Amistad program in San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America. The group's name is "**Arcoíris de Amor**" (*Rainbow of Love*). This group has shared wonderful testimonies and it has grown not only spiritually but also in numbers. Currently, Rainbow of Love has 125 Friends, from three to 24 years old, plus volunteers.

As a director I thank God for His goodness because this group has allowed the creation of two more groups:

- "**Ministerio Torre Fuerte**" (*Strong Tower Ministry*) with 12 Friends, kids and teenagers
- "**Ministerio Manos que Hablan**" (*Hands that Speak Ministry*) with 45 Friends from 10 -18 years old

Thank you for your contributions, they have allowed for Friendship Ministries and Ministerio Amistad to send materials to all these groups and allow not only these 182 Friends but many more to continue receiving the message of God's Love.

We encourage you to continue to pray for this ministry and contribute financially, so that God may continue to bless our work, together.

May God bless you,

Elizabeth Rodriguez
Ministerio Amistad
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CANADIAN CORNER

Hello Friends,

Friendships. Some people are easy to form relationships with, and some can be more challenging. This is true in our Friendship Clubs across North America also. Some of our Friends are 'endearing' or 'cute' with high verbal skills, or charming personalities. Developing a relationship with these Friends is easy. But what about our Friends with low verbal skills? Those who seem disinterested in their surroundings? Or who have behaviors that are less than ideal (from our perspective)? How can we connect with them? How do we show that they are part of God's family too?

I think we need to take a good look at ourselves first. We won't be changing our Friends, so perhaps we need to change our own hearts and minds. Fear can be a big barrier for us. Maybe we're afraid to speak to someone who can't answer our questions. Maybe we have the perception that Friends can't understand us anyway, so why bother? Our Friends, no matter their ability, want and need community, even if it appears that they don't or can't enjoy it. It is a different kind of relationship, but a relationship nonetheless. Showing some love and care can go a long way with our Friends, so I encourage you all to put your discomfort away, be bold, be caring...you will bless your Friends and likely be blessed yourself!

Blessings,

Heather DeBoer
Canadian Representative
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800.730.3490 x 4279





A NEW BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM

TOGETHER

by Friendship
MINISTRIES

COMING THIS FALL

We'd like to introduce you to **TOGETHER**, an innovative, inclusive Bible study that will enable us to create a more collaborative community where all can participate fully as part of the body of Christ.



Read what trial participants are saying about **TOGETHER**:

“Our teacher thought that the material was put together very well. Specifically, the videos were very well done and appropriate (media is important in our generation).”

- Jay Williams
Regina, SK

“WONDERFUL, that’s what I have to say about the curriculum. WONDERFUL AND APPEALING. I think that many groups are going to like this and that it may be easier (less prep) for many to use.”

- Diana Englund
Erie, PA

“One friend traditionally does not engage much but during presentation 1 & 2, she was actively engaged.”

- Peggy Van Lowe
Manassas, VA

TOGETHERSMALLGROUPS.ORG



CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Heartfelt thanks to these new and renewing members of our Church Partnership Program.

Sustaining

- Beaverdam CRC of Hudsonville, MI
- Blenheim CRC of Blenheim, ON
- Calvin CRC of Rock Valley, IA
- East Strathroy CRC of Strathroy, ON
- First CRC of Hudsonville, MI
- Friendship Group of Peterborough, ON
- Friendship Group of Guelph, ON
- Grace CRC of Scarborough, ON

Expanding

- Anaheim CRC of Anaheim, CA
- Bethel CRC of Dunnville, ON
- First CRC of Hamilton, ON
- Friendship Bible Hour of Chatham, ON
- Goderich Friendship Group of Goderich, ON
- Meadowlands Fellowship CRC of Ancaster, ON
- Smithers CRC of Smithers, BC

Growing

- Aylmer CRC of Aylmer, ON
- Bethel CRC of Waterdown, ON
- Christ's Community Reformed Church of Fort Wayne, IN
- Covenant CRC of Edmonton, AB
- Faith CRC of Burlington, ON
- First CRC of Artesia, CA
- First CRC of Grand Rapids, MI
- Hope CRC of Brantford, ON
- Immanuel CRC of Langley, BC
- Ingersoll CRC of Ingersoll, ON
- Maranatha CRC of Calgary, AB
- Oakland CRC of Hamilton, MI
- Trinity CRC of St Catharines, ON
- Waterloo CRC of Waterloo, ON

Global Outreach

- Community CRC of Kitchener, ON

WELCOME TO FRIENDSHIP MINISTRIES

Join us in welcoming the following groups.

- American Lutheran Church of Prescott, AZ
- Friendship Group of Barberton, OH
- Goss Memorial Reformed Church of Akron, OH
- Great Bridge Presbyterian Church of Chesapeake, VA
- Immanuel Baptist Church of Paducah, KY

- Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church of Owen Sound, ON
- Rose Baptist Church of Rose, NY
- The Woodlands United Methodist Church of The Woodlands, TX
- Venture Christian Church of Los Gatos, CA

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

Last chance to order: *Life Studies*



Purchase *Caring for God's World*, *Learning the Lord's Prayer*, and *We All Have Gifts* before they are sold out at: www.faihaliveresources.org.

Look forward to Friendship including parts of these great Bible studies in **TOGETHER**, a new, inclusive Bible study curriculum releasing this July.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friendship Festival

Saturday, May 14, 2016, Oakville, ON
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Don't miss our next Friendship Festival, to be held at ClearView Church in Oakville, Ontario, on Saturday, May 14, from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Join us for a time of sharing God's love, singing and playing games. Lunch is provided. \$10 per person.

Please register at: www.weloveourfriends.com

Summer Institute on Theology and Disability

May 23-26, 2016, Holland, MI

The Summer Institute on Theology and Disability brings together academics, theologians, practitioners and others—people with and without labeled disabilities—to explore the inclusive intersections of theology and disabilities.

Umbrella Conference

Friday, June 3, 2016, Calgary, AB, Canada

Umbrella is a Canadian national disability ministry equipping conference sponsored by Centre Street Church in Calgary, AB.

Please visit the Umbrella website for more information at: www.cschurch.ca/umbrella

Golf Outing 2016

Monday, August 8, 2016, Grand Rapids, MI
12:30 pm

We had so much fun last year, we decided to do it again! Mark your calendars for the Second Annual Friendship Golf Outing at Railside Golf Club on the afternoon of August 8, 2016. Tell all your friends and get a foursome together! Already planning to come?

To register, go to: www.friendship.org/golf-registration

Would you like to contribute to this event?

For sponsorship opportunities, go to: www.friendship.org/sponsor

Schedule of Events:

- 12:30 pm - Lunch & Registration
- 1:45 pm - Opening Remarks
- 2:00 pm - Shotgun Start

Christian Horizons Family Retreats

August 22-26 and August 28-September 2, 2016,
Lakehurst, ON, Canada

Family Retreats are focused on encouraging and equipping families to face their challenges and to belong to communities in which each family member's God-given gifts are valued and respected.

More information at:

www.christian-horizons.org/family-retreat

Life to the Full

Friday, October 28, 2016, Niagara Falls, ON, Canada

Addressing issues of justice and Scriptural witness regarding disability in church, home, workplace, and community.

This conference is intended for people throughout North America who:

- Are part of Christian churches, including membership and leadership.
- Have disabilities, or are disability advocates, family members, or caregivers.
- Are staff who work with people who have disabilities.

Keynote speakers include Amy Julia Becker, David C. Onley, and Erik Carter

Please visit the Disability Conference website for more information: www.disabilityconference.org

Learn more about each of these events at: www.friendship.org/events



WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU:

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🌐 www.friendship.org

💬 www.friendship.org/blog

📘 [facebook.com / friendmin](https://www.facebook.com/friendmin)

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SUPPORT FRIENDSHIP MINISTRIES

Your financial gifts enable us to carry out the work of this ministry.

Give online at:

www.friendship.org/give-usa

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Mail a check to:

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MEMORIAL GIFTS:

Paul Buursma
Dave Evertsberg
Nella Uitvlugt



**FRIENDSHIP STORIES ARE POSTED
REGULARLY ON OUR BLOG!**

Friendship.org/blog