

events



FALL :: 2008

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

FRIENDSHIP GROUPS CANADA AND FRIENDSHIP MINISTRIES USA FORM CLOSER RELATIONSHIP

by Nella Uitvlugt

Over the past several months, Friendship Groups Canada and Friendship Ministries USA have been in dialogue about forming a closer relationship. Though the two organizations have shared a common ministry model and have promoted the same Bible study materials, we have each had our own consulting support, promotional efforts, and fundraising campaigns.

Together we have decided that we will be able to serve all Friendship Groups--in Canada and the United States--better if we coordinate our efforts more closely. This relationship will also make for better stewardship of the generous gifts that support this ministry.

For those of you interested in the details, Friendship Groups Canada

will now be called "Friendship Ministries Canada" and will be governed by a board. Friendship Ministries USA will also continue to be governed by a board. A joint board will convene under the name "Friendship Ministries" and will include representation from the boards of Friendship Ministries USA and Friendship Ministries Canada (including representation of western Canada).

While some of the details must still be settled, we have now consolidated our newsletters and will soon do the same with our websites. So, for example, you'll notice that in "Friendship Family News" (p. 2), we've welcomed groups in both the United States and Canada.

We hope that everyone will enjoy this enlargement of the Friendship family and that you'll appreciate the opportunity to share ideas across the border. (To share your ideas or for help with issues in your group, please be

in touch at 888.866.8966 or friendship@friendship.org)

Canadian members, we ask your forgiveness for our poor spelling (the newsletter originates in the U.S.), but we'll do our best to get it right when we quote you. And we ask for your *candour* in correcting any mistakes! ■





Friendship Grieves the Loss of Meta Shamrock

by Nella Uitvlugt



Members of the Friendship family in both Canada and the United States have been grieving the loss of Meta Shamrock, who passed away in February 2008. As Executive Director of Friendship Groups Canada, Meta was instrumental in providing a grant to Friendship Ministries USA to create new four-color visuals for the new edition of *Living God's Way*, which is dedicated to her. She was also one of the authors of the first edition of *Living God's Way* published in 1994.

During her four years as Executive Director of Friendship Groups Canada, Meta coordinated several conferences in Ontario and Alberta, began a website for FGC, and established connections with national disability organizations in Canada. We are grateful for her example of faith, and we miss her caring and encouraging personality, as well as her gifts in administration and public speaking.

One of Meta's visions for Friendship was that the Canadian and American branches of this ministry work more closely together. We are pleased to be able to announce that this vision is becoming a reality. (See page 1.) ■

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 17-19: Committee on Disabilities, National Council of Churches, Holland, MI

September 20: One Body Together in Christ, Holland, MI

October 20-22: One God, One Call, Minneapolis, MN

January 5-9: Children's Pastors' Conference, Nashville, TN

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

•••

Casey

October 24-27: Christian Educators Fellowship, Albuquerque, NM

•••

Ralph & Carol

Late November-December: Southeastern states & northern FL

•••

Tony & Diana

November 8: Circle of Support,

Arc of Greater Prince William, Woodbridge, VA

•••

Elizabeth Amistad

September 17-19: Committee on Disabilities, National Council of Churches, Holland, MI

September 20: One Body Together in Christ, Holland, MI

October 16-19: Expocristiana, Mexico DF, Mexico

November 20-22: Amistad workshop, Ciego de Avila, Cuba



Notas DE AMISTAD



¡Bienvenidos!

Join us in welcoming the most recent additions to the *Amistad* family:

ARGENTINA:

Iglesia Evangelica Rio de la Plata
Iglesia Bautista Cristo la Esperanza
CADIM, Centro Amigos del Discapacitado Motor

CHILE:

Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal
Iglesia Ekklesia

CUBA:

Fraternidad Iglesia Bautista

ECUADOR:

Iglesia Pentecostal
Parroquia San Pablo del Lago

PERU:

Iglesia Casa de Oración, Proyecto Betesda
Iglesia Metodista

WORKSHOP IN CUBA

Ministerio Amistad representative Elizabeth Rodriguez will be traveling to Cuba November 20-22 for a training session for some twenty churches involved in ministry with people with disabilities. What an exciting opportunity to spread the word about *Amistad*! ■



Welcome to the family!

Join us in welcoming the following groups:

- Anaheim Christian Reformed Church of Anaheim, CA
- Calvary Baptist Church of Kokomo, IN
- Calvary Christian Reformed Church of Flamborough, ON
- Calvin Christian Reformed Church of Ottawa, ON
- Community Bible Church of Sweet Valley, PA
- First Centenary United Methodist Church of Chattanooga, TN
- First Presbyterian Church of Shelbyville, TN
- Grace Church of Overland, KS
- Grace Community Church of Dallas, PA
- Hillsdale Baptist Church of Regina, SK
- Pennway Church of God of Lansing, MI
- Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church of Raleigh, NC
- St. Anthony of Padua of Grand Rapids, MI
- Thorntown United Methodist Church of Thorntown, IN ■

Know of a group that's not on this list?

Has your group or someone in it received an award? Or appeared in your local newspaper?

If so, let us know! Contact Gwen at 888.866.8966 or genzinkg@friendship.org

LIVING GOD'S WAY

The (Ten) Commandments

As you consider your group's plans for the fall, why not try "Living God's Way"? This rewritten study on the Ten Commandments begins with an Overview Session to introduce the two tables of the law: "Love God," and "Love Others." Ten sessions--one for each commandment--follow, using Bible stories and activities to teach friends and mentors how to live gratefully by God's guidelines.

The basic themes are expressed in the session titles:



LOVING GOD

Session 1: Trusting God Alone
Session 2: Worshiping God Alone
Session 3: Speaking Respectfully About God
Session 4: Honoring God

LOVING OTHERS

Session 5: Showing Respect
Session 6: Respecting Life
Session 7: Respecting the Gift of Sexuality
Session 8: Respecting Things That Belong to Others
Session 9: Speaking the Truth
Session 10: Living in Gratitude

A two-part Review Session and a closing Celebration Session wrap up the study, and an art project is also included. One friend's interpretation of the art project is on the cover (see photo above)!

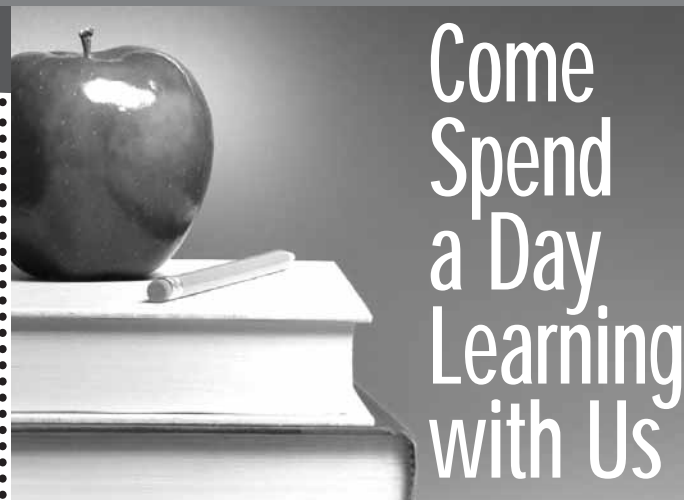
COMPONENTS:

Leader/Mentor Guide: Includes thirteen session plans (with ideas for both large-group time and one-on-one time), songs, signing, patterns, and other reproducible resources. *Order one for the group leader and one for each mentor.*

Group Leader's Packet: Includes full-color visual aids for the large-group session. *Order one for the group leader.*

Take-home Papers: Used during one-on-one time to review the material from the large-group time and apply it to everyday life. *Order one for each friend.* ■

For more information, visit
www.friendship.org/GodsWay or contact us at
888.866.8966 or friendship@friendship.org



Come Spend a Day Learning with Us

Sign up by September 13

Theme: One Body Together in Christ

Date: Saturday, September 20, 2008

Place: Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI

Time: 8:00 am – 1:15 pm

- Audience: friendship mentors, seminary and college students, pastors, children's volunteers, youth leaders, parents

- Co-sponsors: Friendship Ministries, CLC Network, Disability Concerns of the CRC

- Cost: \$35 / \$20 for students (includes brunch)

- To register: www.togetherinchrist.us or call Virginia: 888.463.0272

- Keynote Speaker: William (Bill) C. Gaventa, M.Div., Director of Community and Congregational Supports at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities and Associate Professor, Pediatrics, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Bill is also editor of the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* and a columnist for *Insight*, the national newsletter of the ArcUSA.

- Workshop Sectionals include:

- Autism and Your Church
- A Compassionate Journey
- Disruptive Behavior
- Fresh Friendship Finds
- G.L.U.E. Teams
- Learning from Inclusion at Hope College and Western Seminary
- Panel Discussion: Faith Stories
- Recovery, Healing, and Ministering with People with Disabilities
- A Theological Framework for Ministry with People with Disabilities
- Your Church and Respite



FROM THE DIRECTOR

THE SPEED OF LIGHT

So much has happened over the past several months in Friendship Ministries that sometimes it seems like we need to move at the speed of light! We have pushed hard to meet our yearly goals. Some of them are purely administrative, but others are much more exciting. We have been telling you about our desire to start 40 new Friendship programs this year (for us the year matches our fiscal year of July 1 –June 30). **The exciting news is that we are closer to 50 new groups than 40!** This means that approximately 500 friends are being included, along with their mentors. In Latin America an additional 50 new groups have begun in the last year.

CANADIAN CONNECTIONS

Earlier this year we lost our dear friend Meta Shamrock, Executive Director of Friendship Groups Canada, and we miss her. But it is also exciting and challenging to carry forward her vision of greater cooperation between Friendship Groups Canada and Friendship Ministries USA. We hope that in the “Friendship Family News” column you will begin to see new Canadian programs on a regular basis. There are already three in this issue! For me personally this is fun because I am a dual citizen of Canada and the USA and have lived in four of the provinces while growing up as a PK (preacher’s kid).

YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

We could not do any of this without your support. In the year to come, we especially need to connect with more Friendship groups to explain how important your financial support of Friendship Ministries is. Many program leaders see us simply as a publisher of curriculum, when in fact much of our time is spent consulting with church educators and group leaders about how to include children with disabilities, how to begin a Friendship program, how to support someone with cognitive impairments through the process of baptism, confirmation, or profession of faith.



Crystal and Nella ::

Please read the column from Casey on p. 6 and consider supporting this work via our new Church Partnership Program or the Friendship Legacy Fund.

Many of you through the years have called for help and we have gladly spent time via phone or e-mail--and even in person--to answer your questions. We have loved building relationships with you.

We are also grateful for the work so many of you have done to spread the word about Friendship Ministries. Maybe you told a neighbor about this ministry, or helped a church down the street start a program, or represented Friendship Ministries at a local conference. We thank you!

God has been so faithful to Friendship Ministries. We have been able to meet our goals for new programs and the budget for this past year. Now as we move forward into the next fiscal year with new goals and needs, we ask for your support and prayers. ■

Nella Fitzlugh



How You Can Support This Ministry

As Nella mentioned in "From the Director" (p. 5), Friendship Ministries not only publishes materials, we consult with approximately 1,000 Friendship Groups across the continent.

We strive to do this work on as small a budget as possible. Friendship has been blessed with many, many generous donors, and we know that our ministry could not continue without you. In fact, **donations account for over 70% of our revenue.** In order to continue the important work before us, Friendship is introducing two new ways to give:

• The Legacy Fund

Gifts to the Legacy Fund are an investment in Friendship's future. By providing an ongoing source of income for Friendship, The Legacy Fund will allow us to focus our attention on ministry, not fundraising. When you designate your gift for the Legacy Fund, 50% of the gift will be used for the general fund, and 50% will be invested for the future.

• The Church Partnership Program

The Church Partnership Program is a unique way for Friendship churches to support Friendship Ministries. For an annual commitment of \$1,000, churches will receive the following:

- 20% discount on purchases of Friendship materials for your group
- Discount on any requested training from Friendship staff
- Discount on any Friendship-sponsored conference
- Newsletters for your congregation

We will continue to keep you updated in future Extras regarding these programs and other ways to support Friendship Ministries. **If you have any questions, please be in touch with Casey Kuperus at 888.866.8966 or kuperusc@friendship.org** ■

Thank you for your generous support-
this ministry could not continue without you!



Wayne Kuipers, MI State Senator and former director of SEM Holland, and Rich Dornbos, charter member of SEM since 1968, celebrate the group's 40th anniversary

Group's Example Inspires Churches around the World

Who could have imagined that a local ministry formed in 1968 would inspire more than a thousand churches in twenty countries around the world? As the Special Education Ministry of Holland, MI celebrated their 40th anniversary this spring, that's the impact Nella Uitvlugt, Executive Director of Friendship Ministries, described to them.

That's because the Friendship Ministries model was based on SEM Holland's way of doing things: sharing God's love in the context of one-to-one mentoring relationships. The group has thrived with strong community support for four decades, and several members have been there to see it all! (One of them is Rich Dornbos, pictured here.)

Please join us in congratulating SEM Holland on reaching this milestone anniversary. May we all be inspired by their example so that we may experience the blessing of lasting friendships. ■



For a limited time only, if you buy both *The Christmas Book* and *The Easter Book*, you'll receive 25% off--that's a savings of \$20!

Each resource contains enough ideas (songs, dramas, crafts, patterns, and more) to be used year after year.

Offer good August 1-October 31.

To learn more, or to order, call 888.866.8966 or visit www.friendship.org



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