



Honoring All Who Served – Veterans Day – November 11, 2007

Throughout the year we respect and honor those who give of themselves in military service. We must recognize that by rendering this service many have suffered injuries and illness that cause disabilities.

The church must be proactive in reaching out to military personnel and veterans with disabilities.

Jim Pierson recently received an email from Linda Starnes who currently sits on the President's Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID). She attended a PCPID quarterly meeting in Washington where a guest speaker was the newly appointed Associate Director of President Bush's Domestic Policy Council, Captain Daniel Gade, whose main oversight is Administration policy regarding disability and healthcare issues for active military personnel and veterans.

Mrs. Starnes wrote: "While listening to Captain Gade's presentation, I remembered an excellent piece I read in the July 2007 'Religion and Disability Newsletter' from Ginny Thornburgh at the National Organization On Disability. It is written by Chaplain Van Dickens, a United Methodist minister. He serves as a chaplain in the United States Navy who works closely with Marines returning from Iraq who have sustained disabilities as a result of combat injuries. I have taken the liberty of reprinting Chaplain Van Dickens reflections at the end of this email note.*

This article, along with the powerful documentary aired by HBO last night ("Alive Day Memories" <http://www.hbo.com/aliveday/>), gives hope that the world will change its perceptions and attitudes toward all of those with disabilities. At least this is my way of trying to find some silver lining and answer my inner question to God as to why so many of our veterans must face a life of disability.

Now, some ideas! I encourage those of you involved in some type of disability-related ministry or outreach to remember our soldiers and develop ways to include and support them in your activities:

- ⇒ Introduce yourself and your place of worship to your local Veterans Administration office;
- ⇒ Invite a veteran in your midst to church;
- ⇒ Include a veteran on your planning team;
- ⇒ Provide a support group for veterans and their families at your place of worship;
- ⇒ Add this group to your community service outreach activities if there is a need not being met;
- ⇒ Include a workshop on this topic at your next disability ministry conference;
- ⇒ Tell others within your network circle to consider these opportunities;
- ⇒ If you are not currently working in a ministry area, but have a heart for this issue, please feel free to forward this email to the appropriate person(s) at your place of worship;
- ⇒ And of course, remember our soldiers and veterans in your prayers -- especially on Veterans Day in November."

We thank Mrs. Starnes and are grateful to be able to *forward* this valuable information to you, workers in disability ministry, through this newsletter.

* *From Where I Sit- Flesh and Blood -- From Wings: A Faithletter For United Methodists With Disabilities And Those Who Care About Them (Spring 2007 -- Vol. 17, Issue 4, No. 68)*

CCFH Online Store

Have you visited our Online Store recently? Remember the resources available there can stand alone and/or complement *Exceptional Teaching Online*. Workbooks assist with formatting and enriching the training experience for ministry workers. The lesson materials and series are invaluable in a classroom setting. *No Disabled Souls* will warm your heart.

Go to <http://www.ccfh.org/store/index.php>. All resources except for books and DVD are available in Adobe® pdf format for expeditious sharing with others.

Thank You for Asking

Question: Our church has an inclusion process in place. However, a parent is asking for a designated "disabilities room" and we do not have the physical space in our building. How should we address this meaningfully with the parent?

Answer: *What function does the parent want the "disabilities room" to fulfill? Does the parent feel that the inclusion process is meeting the needs of the child and family? It would be a good idea to have the parent make a list of what they feel is needed and address each item with them from a resource standpoint (financial and staffing). CCFH offers a booklet entitled "Developing and Maintaining a Special Needs Classroom" which may enlighten the parent on some of the issues involved. Module Two of "Exceptional Teaching Online" also gives guidance on the issue.*

Be Prepared

Recent disasters remind us all of the importance of being prepared for emergencies. *Ready.gov* has made available on its website a section that addresses the needs of persons with disabilities and other special needs. The site has an instructional video and pamphlets to make the information easy to share with a group.

Some of the tips listed are:

- Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.

Go to the site <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html> for a complete list.

Organize a meeting or informational session to cover the information on this site with individuals with special needs, their families and workers in your ministry.

*Information in this CCFH **Connections** newsletter compiled by Sylvia Hemphill, Director of Administrative Functions and Resource Materials.*
