

Volunteer Weathers the Disability Certificate Program with Joy to Help Others

Many of my students in the Disability Ministry Certificate program are directors of disability ministry in the churches. One, however, is not. When I comment by email on her lessons, I often tease her about not letting any bad weather come to Knoxville. Jennifer Narramore works for the Weather Channel's Radio Division in Atlanta. In her studies she has deepened her desire to minister with people with disabilities.

She has started working with the disability ministry in her church and is a tennis coach at a local high school. In the late spring she took a group to a Special Olympics competition.

Jen is a wonderful example of a person who feels led to ministry with people with disabilities and is doing something about it. May her tribe increase.

Jim Pierson

I have always had a special place in my heart for people with disabilities. For many years though, I lived in fear. My main fear was that if I began volunteering that my heart would not be able to handle it. I also feared saying something wrong and hurting someone's feelings. It was not until my early 30s that God worked through me to let the fears go and I began volunteering. And the more I volunteered, the more I wanted to learn.

I have had the wonderful opportunity thus far to complete DISM 2242, the Introduction to Disability Ministry. I am currently three-quarters of the way through DISM 3212, Survey of Persons with Disabilities. I have learned so much from both classes. With DISM 2242, I learned more about what the Bible says about disabilities. Also, I have seen that the church has a long way to go in terms of learning about disabilities and how to include those with disabilities in their worship service. DISM 3212 is a thorough overview of the different types of disabilities.

Through my learning and research, I have come to appreciate even more of the disability world and how to relate to those with diagnoses like autism, TBI or down syndrome.

The knowledge I have gained in the classes have helped me greatly in my current volunteering opportunities. I am working with a new special needs ministry at my church. We have had one Saturday respite and the next is coming up soon. I am able to take what I have learned from my studies and apply it to the church setting to help the children and adults with disabilities learn more about Jesus.

Also, I am now officially a tennis coach at one of our local high schools. I took our first group of kids to the Special Olympics at the end of May. My learning, especially with DISM 3212 has been especially helpful as I interact with the kids. I am able to apply what I have learned about the specific disabilities and relate to the student. It is not only about teaching them the game of tennis, but how to help them emotionally handle things like competitions and winning and losing and helping them learn to be more social.

Jennifer Narramore

The National Health Information System Lists July as Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Month

Visit 2009 National Health Observances <http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp?year=2009#531> for more information

About the Diagnosis

Also called: Childhood arthritis, JRA, Juvenile idiopathic arthritis, Still's disease

Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) is a type of arthritis that happens in children age 16 or younger. It causes joint swelling, stiffness and sometimes reduced motion. It can affect any joint, and in some cases it can affect internal organs as well.

One early sign of JRA may be limping in the morning. Symptoms can come and go. Some children have just one or two flare-ups. Others have symptoms that never go away. JRA causes growth problems in some children.

No one knows exactly what causes JRA. Scientists do know it is an autoimmune disorder, which means your immune system, which normally helps your body fight infection, attacks your body's own tissues. Medicines and physical therapy can help maintain movement and reduce swelling and pain.

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Source: Medline Plus: A Service of the U. S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health - <http://medlineplus.gov/>

Focus on All

Many resources focus on ministry with those with cognitive and/or behavioral disabilities. However we must also realize that some accommodations may be necessary for those with physical, health and sensory disabilities.

It may be as simple as a change in attitude.

The CCFH resources listed below will serve as a basis for being sure all are included in our mandate to spread the Good News.

How to be a Friend to Someone who Has Disabilities: Practical, useful ideas for breaking the ice and forming a friendship.

Disability Etiquette: Practical answers to What do I do? and What do I say?

How to Help Children Understand Disability: Children are curious and eager to learn. Use their natural tendencies to teach important truths.

Health Disorders and Physical Disabilities (Ministering to Persons with)

Please Go to the CCFH Online Store at www.ccfh.org to Order

Do you have a question for us? Email to info@ccfh.org and receive a personal reply.

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