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INERTIA

is defined as "the property of a body by which it remains at rest or moves in a straight line unless acted upon by a directional force". We tend to think of inertia as it applies to inanimate, physical objects. The inertia of a car stopped at a stop sign or a teed up golf ball prior to being hit for example. Well, I think it equally applies to many of us "animate" objects. In our daily lives it always seems so much easier to "remain at rest" than to expend the effort and energy to apply a "directional force" and start moving forward.. I blame inertia for keeping me from becoming a mentor long before I did. I knew there was a great need for mentors in our community. I knew I could spare at least the few hours a month necessary to be a good mentor. I knew I enjoyed being around and helping young people. I observed friends mentoring and the positive benefits it had on them and their mentees. And yet, I failed to act. Inertia!

INERTIA CONT. ON PAGE 3



DENNIS AND SKYLER IN THE DUCK BLIND



11th Annual Chili Bowl

Saturday, Feb. 4 at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

The Rotary Clubs are gearing up once again to help with the 11th Annual Chili Bowl on Saturday, Feb. 4th from 11 am – 2 pm at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. All proceeds from this event support Bridges Kinship Mentoring and our programs. You will find a variety of chili - from extra mild to spicy, venison chili, chicken chili and Brewed Awakening's famous vegetarian chili AND new this year, the Rotary will make a couple kinds of soup, too!. The cost of the lunch is \$6, with kids 5 and under free. Bread, crackers, dessert and a beverage is included. Chili-to-go will also be available. (Peanut butter sandwiches will be available if you have a little one who isn't a chili lover!). We are once again providing the option for seniors living in the senior apartment/condo settings to "preorder" and have their lunch delivered. If you're interested in this option, give us a call at 326-4700.

The Chili Bowl will once again feature a bake sale and some \$1 raffles (displayed at the Chili Bowl). Our \$5 raffle tickets are also being sold prior to as well as at the event. See the insert with this newsletter for a listing of the raffle prizes. You do not need to be present to be a winner. Use the newsletter insert to preorder your raffle tickets as well as the chili bowl tickets.

This is one of our major fundraisers and the proceeds help tremendously in supporting our programs which, in turn, help kids in our community. Join us and your neighbors and friends on February 4th for this fun event.

Tickets are available through Bridges Kinship Mentoring or at the door. For more information, call Bridges at 326-4700.

WELCOME

New Board Members

Bridges would like to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors - Terri Friesen, with Itasca County Health and Human Services, and Ben Weerts with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Each one brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and expertise that will help Bridges to continue to grow and make a positive impact on our community.

Bob Holycross moves into the role of Chair of the board, and Greg Taylor is the new Vice Chair.

Retiring board members are Grace Derfler and Betsy Johnson. We sincerely thank them for being a part of Bridges.



New Matches

(Since our last newsletter)

Santana w/ Angela Montana

Willy w/ Jeff Schroeder

Tasha w/ Blake & Bonnie Stotts

Sterling w/

John & Laura Connelly

Abri w/ Natalie Adams

Nancy's Notes

It was definitely the "giving season" at Bridges Kinship Mentoring this past December. In addition to our annual Kinshop, where the MN Trucking Association provides toys and gifts for the children involved in our program (the kids "shop for free" for a gift for a sibling, cousin or friend), we also had the most families ever to be "adopted" for Christmas. Twenty families were "adopted" by couples, families, workplaces and group of friends who contacted us in the interest of making a difference for another family's Christmas. What a difference this made for those twenty families.

And now it's January. The time for New Year's Resolutions. The time when we take a look at ourselves and ask what we might do different this year. As wonderful as it is to make Christmas more joyful for kids, I would suggest that if you are interested in making a lasting difference in the life of a child, give them the gift of your time and your friendship. How much time does it take? Not really that much . . . 6 hours a month. Maybe a bit more if you can. Once a week, or once every other week. And it really doesn't matter too much what you DO with a child. It could be simply playing a game of checkers. Or walking the dog. Or having dinner together. Doing some errands. Helping with a homework project. Baking cookies. Playing a little basketball or throwing a football.

It's the little things that count. And over time, the little things along with your friendship add up to making a lasting impression. You don't need to be a super hero to be a mentor. You just be yourself. Take the first step. Call the Bridges Kinship office and get started. It isn't that hard. And it doesn't take an awful lot of time. And we will help you in the journey. You won't regret it.



SAVE THE DATE for the Taste of Itasca - Tuesday, May 8

Put this on your calendar as a must attend event of the year! To be held at the Timberlake Lodge, area restaurants and caterers will once again be providing samples of their specialties for you to taste. Wine and beer tasting will precede the dinner. This event has become the "talk of the town" and definitely a highlight of the year! What a great way to kick off the

summer season. Tickets will be available early April and can be purchased individually or for tables of 8. Business sponsorships which would include a table for 8 or a "half" table are also available. will be having a live auction and a variety of dollar raffles again and are seeking items to be included in both. Contact Nancy or Lori if you're interested in contributing to the live auction or raffles.

A year and a half ago I finally applied that directional force and overcame inertia. I took the steps necessary to become a mentor. The excellent staff at Bridges Kinship Mentoring provided training, support, and assisted in matching me with a mentee who shared many similar interests. Now Skyler and I get together on our own schedules, in activities we both enjoy. It might be for a few hours or an entire day. Fishing, hunting, boating, canoeing, taking in a hockey game or a movie, working in the shop, playing with the dogs or just hanging out are a few activities we can share. Additionally, the Bridges staff makes available numerous activities for mentors and mentees throughout the year such as the pizza & bowling party or the Tioga Beach picnic and fishing trip. Mentoring provides a way for responsible adults in our community to play a positive role in the developing lives of our young people. Mentors are not there to replace parents and family. We are there to assist family, to help fill in the gaps, to be there when a young person needs companionship or direction in their lives. I have learned, as I suspect most mentors have, that the benefits flow both ways. Becoming a mentor to Skyler has given me a way to reconnect with the friendship, energy, enthusiasm and ever present optimism of the youth of our community. Taking the steps to become a mentor has truly been one of the best decisions of my life!

The dictionary defines momentum as: “the speed or force of the forward movement of an object”. In other words, momentum is what we gain when we overcome inertia! There are many young people in our community waiting for a caring adult to do just that. As we enter 2012 and make our new year’s resolutions, decide to do that young person a big favor, do yourself a big favor, become a mentor today!

Dennis Neitzke

Waiting Kids

Jesse – age 14

Jesse is a super-nice teen who really wants a guy to hang out with. His dad died recently and he’s feeling the loss. Jesse enjoys sports, going fishing and woodworking. He lives in Pengilly and attends school at Greenway.



Summer—age 13

This young lady’s mentor moved away. She had a great relationship with her and is looking for a mentor who will help her continue to experience positive opportunities in our community. She loves to just bake, watch movies and go to concerts and plays.

Brenda— age 8

Brenda’s mom has a serious illness and cannot spend the time needed with her most of the time. She loves horses and fixing up her hair. She would like to do more arts and crafts and would like to work with horses when she is older.

Nellie – age 12

Nellie’s mentor could not continue due to work commitments and Nellie could really use a friend. She is looking for a mentor to just hang out with and chat. She’s a pretty easy going gal who would love to watch movies and then talk about them, read books and then discuss them or just have hot chocolate and talk about her day.

Baked goods Needed for Chili Bowl

HELP!! We need your specialty desserts, pies, cookies, bars, breads, snack mixes, etc. for our bake sale at the Chili Bowl on February 4th. For the last two years we have run out of items before the end of the event – so we really need your donations!!! Can you help by donating some items for the bake sale? Remember that Superbowl is the next day after the Chili Bowl . . . and folks may be looking for something special for a Superbowl party.

If you can help in this way, please contact Bridges and let us know! We also need pans of bars and cookies and cakes for the dessert table which is included with the lunch.





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FAMILY THANK YOU

A generous and hearty THANK YOU to all of you who donated, shopped, adopted, wrapped and served children this holiday season. The outpouring of warmth and support sure made this past holiday season extra special because of people like YOU!

more waiting kids...

Molly – age 10 This young lady is looking for a female mentor to become friends with & to have someone else to talk to about her parents pending divorce. She lives with her dad and two brothers and would like to have someone listen to her play her sax. She loves animals and would like to plan activities that include walking a dog, creating art and riding bike.

Dean – age 8 recently moved to Grand Rapids. He is high energy and loves all activities – especially sports, board games and reading. He loves to have someone read to him and he loves reading books himself. He loves swimming, too. He gets along well with other kids so he'd do great either in a one-on-one setting or a family setting.

Alex – age 6 – is a very creative boy who loves to draw, paint, make paper birds and airplanes, build with legos. He'd like to learn to carve. He would also like to be able to go fishing in a boat. Alex lives in the Cohasset area.

Alice – age 11 – is an outgoing, bright girl who wants a friend to hang out with and have great conversations together. She loves animals, likes movies, reading, cooking, art projects. Just about anything. She's very witty and has a very high IQ. She'll be a delightful friend for a mentor.

Ray – age 12 – loves four-wheelers and mechanical stuff. He would like to be a welder when he is older. He would like to go fishing and hunting, if possible. His mom has a new baby and he could really benefit from having a guy to hang out and do things with.