



The Voice

Voice of Care — In Christ among People with Disabilities

August 2015

Mission Statement

Voice of Care's mission is to equip the Church to nurture people with disabilities and their caregivers in their walk with Christ.



Pray For More Laborers

The theme for Voice of Care's Annual Meeting on October 3, 2015, is based on Matthew 9:35-37...

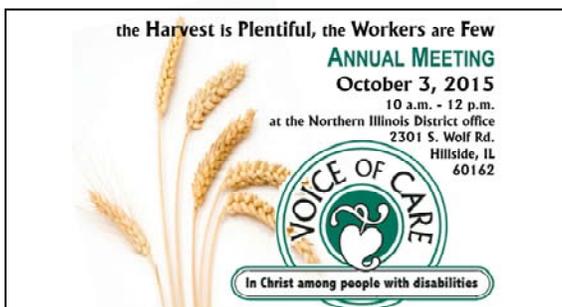
Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

In this issue, I hope to highlight more of what Voice of Care is doing to equip our pastors and laypeople to be laborers for Christ in His mission field among people with disabilities. With the current climate in our country, now more than ever, the Church must fill the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people with disabilities and their caregivers. Voice of Care is uniquely qualified to train volunteers for respite care and chaplaincy. God is providing both the opportunity to serve and the financial means to do so. How will YOU respond to the Jesus' call? Will YOU pray for more laborers? Will YOU be a laborer? Will YOU give financially to further the kingdom? All Glory Be to God!

Deaconess Kris Blackwell

Executive Director

Looking for a unique way to fund missions like Voice of Care? St. John Lutheran Church in Lena did!



Join us for a wonderful brunch and hear the latest stories of Voice of Care's ministry!

Celebrate with us the dedicated laborers in the field that serve at our congregational ministry sites! Hear about the many ways God is expanding His kingdom to include those with disabilities.



St. John Lutheran Church in Lena opened My Friend's Closet Thrift Shop in 2003. With over 100 dedicated volunteers, they gave \$78,408.49 to over 50 organizations in 2014 alone!

St. John gives faithfully give to Voice of Care EVERY MONTH!



Sharing Christ in a Camp Setting

**News by the numbers:
Walcamp served 104 special
needs campers over 6 weeks!**

Long before Voice of Care was incorporated, ministry to people with disabilities was underway at Walcamp Outdoor Ministry and Retreat Center in Kingston, Illinois, where multiple weeks of Special Needs Camp are offered each year. Voice of Care's current focus is on training Walcamp staff members and camp counselors to better equip them to care for campers with disabilities, however our Region Directors still take turns serving as Pastor of the Week during Special Needs Camp. There is space in this newsletters for only a few of this summer's heartwarming camp stories (below). Please consider supporting the scholarship program for special needs campers. Contact Walcamp at 815-784-5141 or via the website, www.walcamp.org, to learn how.

Pastor Paul Klopke, North Region Director shares this story...



This summer, I served as special needs pastor to people who have disabilities when they attended Walcamp, a Lutheran outdoor ministry and retreat center. At Walcamp, the campers swim, canoe, fish, and play outdoor and indoor games. They also learn about Jesus, hear Bible stories, pray and sing. At the end of week a special recognition, titled the Rubber Chicken Award, is given to a camper who 1) shows Christian actions and joy, 2) wants to do things in the right way, 3) puts others before yourself, and 4) has a positive attitude.

There was a special needs camper in my group named Renee. She quickly introduced herself to me with a smile and serious set out to achieve the objectives necessary to win the Rubber Chicken Award. Renee memorized the week's theme Bible verse: "God is Faithful." She participated in the Bible study lessons and created wonderful pictures, participated in cleaning duties and maintained a positive attitude overall. Renee won the Rubber Chicken Award! I presented to her a Concordia picture Bible—which I autographed for her. *[Voice of Care offers these Bibles as resource for congregations.]*

Renee was happy and delighted with her award and her new Bible. She excitedly showed them off to her friends and her pastor. A week later Renee was in a terrible car accident which resulted in severe injury to her back. On hearing the news, the camp counselors and volunteers all wrote letters to Renee and I was able to deliver them to her. As Renee recovered in bed, there beside her was her picture Bible. "Pastor Paul," she said with tears in her eyes, "I love this Bible you gave me and I am reading it. Thank you!"

Pastor Phil Gruenbaum, South Region Director, shares this story...



My very first week at Walcamp was a full special needs camp with eight women and eight men. This large a group presented staff and volunteers with a variety of medical issues and diverse personalities. Needless to say, staff and volunteers were all kept busy. To complicate things, during the Sunday evening move in two of the cabins lost power. That involved relocation of all our stuff—suitcases, bedding, Bible class materials...everything—to the main lodge.

Throughout the week, we faced a variety of challenges, including the ever-present mobility issues encountered while utilizing Walcamp's multilevel facility and natural terrain. These hardships seemed lighter, however, in view of the week's focus on Jesus' Resurrection. The lessons were prepared by Walcamp Program Director Louis Blocker (better known by his camp name, Caruso). Our adversities faded when viewed through the lens of Easter joy.

A month later, I returned to Walcamp while the pastor, Rev. Steve Okpisz, and youth group from my own church, Faith Lutheran in Geneva, were participating in a servant event. I received a surprise from Walcamp's Executive Director, Rev. Steve Geske. Using on hand materials and an hour of effort, the camp maintenance staff had constructed a ramp. The new feature allowed access to the outdoor amphitheater's stage, something that campers in mobility chairs had not previously had.

The true blessing of this labor of love soon became apparent. Nick is a young man with cerebral palsy and a regular attendee at Walcamp's Special Needs Camp. He had been nominated several times for the coveted Rubber Chicken Award (given in recognition of a positive Christian attitude and actions) but been unable to physically join the other nominees onstage. This year, Nick was able to access the stage with other Rubber Chicken Award candidates and be recognized by the whole camp—for the FIRST time. He was thrilled!

Dorothy shares her Walcamp experience!

Dorothy Larsen loves going to Walcamp. She, along with her parents, belong to the Evangelical Covenant Church in Belvidere, Illinois. While seeking a Christian camp that could accommodate Dorothy's special needs, they discovered Walcamp. Dorothy is now a veteran of Walcamp Summer Camp, as well as the retreats offered in winter and spring. She loves to write, especially plays, and enjoys performing: acting, singing and dancing.

Dorothy writes:

"[Summer Camp] starts out with a open invitation. I decide to invited my nephew to come along with me because it is his first time to attend summer camp. He went with his group "survival camp" and I am in my group—Special Needs. My counselor, Sundrop, is fun to be with. Having girl time is the best, together we laugh and giggled. [One] activity is playing Four Square. My nephew surprised me because he wanted to play with my group. It is fun to toss the ball around. My most favorite [activity] is the talent show. I enjoy watching lots of campers and staff showing their talents. When they call my name to my talent so I walk up and face the audience. I wrote a play called "the hyper" play and that was hilarious. Everyone love it so much. It's my idea. I write it, and cast it. At



the end of my play they all give me high fives, lots of encouragements. How much they enjoy it! I love going to summer camp and creating new memories."

Dorothy (pictured at right in each photo) enjoys 'girl time' at camp.

Ministry in Facilities

Pastor Dean Pittelko, East Region Director shares this story...

Two of the Aspire sites served by Voice of Care have seen dramatic shifts in physical space over the last couple months. Consequently, some of the residents were moved to locations with which they were not familiar. On top of that, onsite staff are not always notified of a client's relocation until after the fact. Jennifer* was one such reassigned resident. She is in her late 40s and has severe autism. She does not respond to new caregivers well. Recently, during a visit to her site, Jennifer was acting out her frustrations upon her new staff. I asked the staff if Jennifer could be allowed to stand next to me. We have had a good connection throughout my time of sharing Jesus' love with Aspire's clientele. Within two minutes at my side Jennifer had responded to my gentle approach. She was calm and ready for church.

**name changed to protect privacy*



REST Training: **Respite Education and Support Tools**

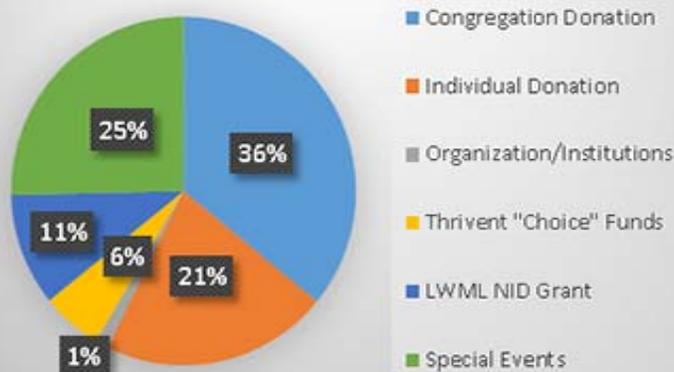
Voice of Care will offer two opportunities for REST training this fall. October 10, St. Paul Lutheran in Chicago Heights, Illinois, will host the day-long training session in the South Region. Immanuel Lutheran in Belvidere, Illinois, is the site for the West Region REST training event on October 24. Training through the REST program enables individuals church workers and volunteers to provide respite care for people with developmental, trauma-induced or age onset disabilities. With REST-trained staff and laymembers, congregations are able to offer short-term or emergency respite care in a person's home or at a church onsite drop-off event at church. Please contact Voice of Care to register for either October REST training session or to host a REST training event at your church.

4th Annual Mile for Mileage Challenge

What a difference from last year at the 2015 Mile for Mileage Challenge! Last year, less than 40 people braved pouring rain to walk a mile in support of Voice of Care. On August 22, 2015, over 80 people and seven Lutheran Church Charity K9 Comfort dogs joined Voice of Care staff for a gorgeous day at Castaldo Park in Woodridge, Illinois. Most participants walked the one-mile course at a leisurely pace and then gathered at the park pavilion for a box-lunch picnic. DJ Al Kelkhoff provided music throughout the day and Voice of Care was pleased to support Chick-Fil-A by choosing the openly Christian restaurant chain as the event caterer. Voice of Care is grateful to the 2015 Mile for Mileage Challenge sponsors: Anderson Shumaker, Aspire of Illinois, Edward Jones (Matt King's office in Wheaton), Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Quality Machine Corp, Rensburg Garage and West Chicago Printing. Matching funds will be provided by Northeast and South DuPage Chapters of Thrivent Financial. Donations are still coming in through our online fundraising platform, but we have raised at least \$9,000 after expenses.



Income As of July 31, 2015

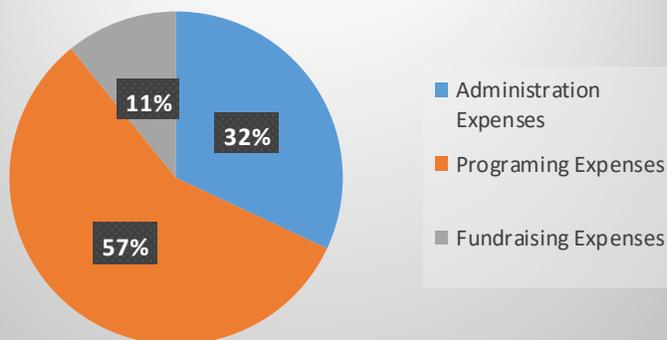


Congregation Donations	\$18,370
Individual Donations	\$10,892
Donations from Other Organizations	\$ 641
Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$ 2,912
Special Events	\$12,961
Interest Income	\$ 183
LWML NID Grant	\$ 5,337

Total Income Feb through July \$51,296

Please note that the Mile for Mileage Challenge income and expense will be reflected in the November report as it occurred during the 3rd quarter.

Expenses through July 2015



Administrative Expenses	\$16,222
Programming Expenses*	\$29,024
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 5,504

Total Expenses Feb through July \$50,750

**Programming Expenses include the salaries of the part-time Region Directors.*



Deaconess Kris Blackwell Executive Director 630-234-1491

P O Box 251 West Chicago IL 60186
www.voiceofcare.org office@voiceofcare.org 630-231-3862

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 Lutheran Church
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