

The Voice

Voice of Care — In Christ among People with Disabilities

November 2015

MISSION STATEMENT

to equip the Church to nurture people with disabilities and their caregivers
in their walk with Christ

From the Executive Director:

Taking Time to Thank God



In my personal devotions I have been looking at the passages in Scripture which contain the word *thanksgiving* or the phrase *giving thanks to God*. The Old Testament writers used these terms in response to something that God had miraculously done. In the New Testament, these words were how the Apostle Paul described his feelings about the people who partnered with him in ministry. Voice of Care provides me with the opportunity to employ both of these means of Thanksgiving.

I thank God for the miraculous things He has done with the ministry of Voice of Care and the wonderful people He has joined together in the mission to equip the Church to nurture people with disabilities and their caregivers in their walk with Christ.

- God has drawn together an amazing group of pastors to serve this ministry. Each man brings his own unique talent and experiences, but all have a passion for enabling people with disabilities to experience God's love among God's people.
- God has supplied all of the ministry's material needs this year, in varied and wonderful ways. The Northern Illinois District Lutheran Women's Missionary League blessed Voice of Care with a \$22,000 grant that covered most of the operating expenses. The Mile for Mileage Challenge raised enough funds to reimburse all anticipated 2016 mileage costs! New congregations continue to come on board as financial partners and Voice of Care has been blessed with many new friends who are supporting this ministry with their time, talents and resources.
- God has delivered new opportunities to equip His people to serve among people with disabilities. Voice of Care has trained church workers and lay volunteers to lead inclusive Bible Studies and offer respite care events. Voice of Care has taught Walcamp staff and volunteers to create fulfilling special needs camp experiences. Voice of Care has connected people with disabilities to the love of Jesus by sending faithful devotion leaders into facilities in their own communities.
- God has provided ministry partner relationships with like-minded organizations, such as Lutherans for Life, Joni and Friends and Respite Endowment Organization. Voice of Care is exploring ways to serve across other Lutheran synods while pursuing the process of becoming a truly national organization.

Please lift your voice in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation!

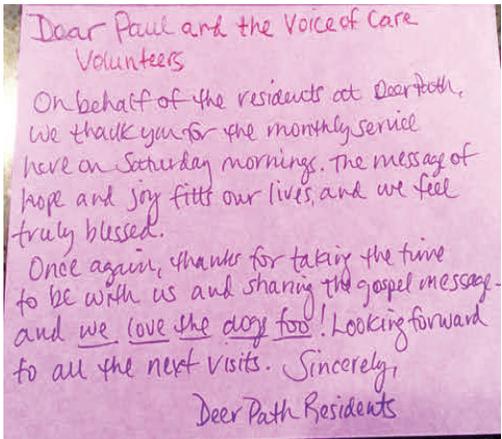
Together in Christ,

Deaconess Kris Blackwell

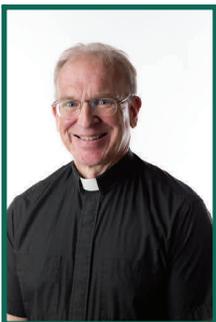
Executive Director

News by the Numbers:

125 Christmas Care Kits are planned for residents at Deer Path of Huntley.



Above: Jesus Time volunteers, residents and a thank you from Deer Path of Huntley



Rev. Paul Klopke
North Region
Director

Report from the field:

A Peek Inside Voice of Care led ministry at Deer Path

December will mark one year of Voice of Care ministry to the residents at Deer Path of Huntley. This far northwest Chicago suburban assisted living community for adults with disabilities has, according to Voice of Care North Region Director Rev. Paul Klopke, exhibited “a sorrow and need far greater than we ever imagined.” The number of those served by Voice of Care at Deer Path has grown from 10 to 50 in 2015.

Voice of Care plans to make December extra special for Deer Path residents with gifts of individual Christmas Care Kits. Pastor Paul explains, “The residents have so little and we know that they are appreciative of everything.” These gifts for the 125 people living at Deer Path will be assembled and distributed on December 12 by the core group of residents and volunteers who attend the regular Jesus Time chapel services. The following week’s Jesus Time, on December 19, will be a Christmas Caroling Celebration.

Can you help Voice of Care provide the contents of Christmas Care Kits or fund their purchase? If so, contact Voice of Care at office@voiceofcare.org or 630.231.3862.

Each Christmas Care Kit will include:

- pocket size Gideon's Bible New Testament with Psalms
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- facial tissues
- hand sanitizer
- \$5 gift Walmart gift card (*residents are taken to a nearby Walmart to shop*)
- picture of Voice of Care trained volunteers and Lutheran Church Charities K-9 comfort dogs that participate in the Deer Path ministry

The Voice of Care sponsored ministry at Deer Path of Huntley is impacting lives. Volunteer Kathy W. shared this story:

*Zina** seems to have been sad and lonely before coming to Deer Path, where she met *Rob*. * *Zina* and *Rob* became friends, eventually girlfriend and boyfriend, finding joy in companionship and looking out for each other. *Rob* has a cancerous brain tumor and is now hospitalized – a situation which has caused *Zina* to feel very anxious. Through Jesus Time *Zina* has come to know and love the Lord. She understands the Jesus watches over her and over *Rob* “every day in every way.” *Zina* believes that God has sent Pastor Paul, the volunteers and Comfort Dogs to talk to and care about her.

**names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals*

It’s not only the residents who benefit from Voice of Care’s ministry at Deer Path:

Volunteer Brad S. declared, “It is a blessing for Comfort Dog Susie and I to spend time with our friends at Deer Path. The folks there are so happy to see our dogs and feel their warmth and love. We enjoy the visits and seeing God’s love at work.”

Kathy K. wrote about her visit to Deer Path as a volunteer, “I have gone to many events with my Comfort Dog-in-Training, Jeremiah, but this one really touched my heart. All of the residents were so welcoming and friendly. I saw the joy and excitement that Jeremiah brought to them. I felt that it really made a difference to them that we were there.”

Report from the field:

On the Road—Voice of Care Attends Lutherans For Life Conference

Voice of Care was present at the 2015 Lutherans for Life Conference in northern Kentucky. The theme, “Created. Redeemed. Called.” was the focal point of events in the Cincinnati airport area and the Creation Museum in Petersburg. Voice of Care West & South Region Director, Rev. Phil Gruenbaum, observed, “The commitment to advocate for the sanctity of life, and full life for all of God’s children is as much Voice of Care’s commission as it is that of Lutherans for Life, so as I like to say, we’re ‘cousins’ in ministry.” The conference reflected that commitment and was underscored in the weekend’s keynote presentation by Creation Museum founder, Dr. Ken Ham. The museum exhibits along with conference sessions on God’s Creation, His Salvation Plan, and the Handiwork of His Designs, provided the foundation for encouragement to stand firm as Christians in a present-day culture that is often intolerant of Bible truths, beliefs and practices. As Voice of Care’s representative, Pastor Phil was able to connect with Lutherans from across the U.S. about the need to equip churches to reach out in Christ’s

love and serve people with disabilities. He received invitations to follow up with numerous congregations about Voice of Care planning, resources and training and will take the opportunity to share information and encouragement with those he met. Voice of Care is pleased to partner in ministry on various levels with Lutherans for Life and was pleased to be included in the event.

Report from the field:

REST Training - Two Different Churches, One Training Tool

One direction in which God has pointed Voice of Care is that of discipling short term respite care volunteers. Voice of Care’s professional church staff members are certified as trainers in the REST (Respite Education and Support Tools). Recently REST training was led by Voice of Care’s team at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Chicago Heights and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Belvidere.

Saint Paul’s congregation found themselves with a large, mostly empty facility after their school closed. Members with a heart and a vision for ministry set out to provide regular events for people with special needs. Led by Dennis Pieper and Rev. Mike Croon, they began to use the former school building in this way. Originally targeting adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, those involved soon realized the need to serve another group of people with special needs – those experiencing older age-onset disabilities. Not only is the newly REST-trained St. Paul team serving people through special needs programming, but they are providing family caregivers a much needed time of respite. With a heavy focus on care and concern, Rev. Paul Klopke and Rev. Phil Gruenbaum provided St. Paul church workers and lay volunteers with the knowledge and tools necessary for their service-minded endeavor.

At Immanuel, the project was driven by Parish Nurse Lani Walter who, along with the congregation’s Care Team, saw a need within the church for in-home respite care. Immanuel’s membership includes multiple families in which family caregivers take care of loved ones on a full-time basis. The Care Team’s vision was to be able to provide caregivers with occasional breaks from these duties, via temporary staffing by trained volunteers. “This is the exact scenario that the REST training was created to address,” explained Pastor Phil, who along with Voice of Care Executive Director Deaconess Kris Blackwell, shepherded nine participants through the REST program.

Voice of Care is pleased to be able to offer the REST (Respite Education and Support Tools) training to congregations and groups that desire to operating respite events and/or short-term respite care services. For information on Voice of Care REST training, contact office@voiceofcare.org or 630.231.3862.



Above: Dinosaur from the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, site of the 2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference



*Rev. Phil Gruenbaum
West & South
Region Director*



News by the Numbers:

25 people trained in the REST program to date by Voice of Care staff - 10 at Calvary Lutheran Church (Wood Dale), 9 at Immanuel Lutheran Church (Belvidere) and 6 at St. Paul Lutheran Church (Chicago Heights).

About sowing seeds of ministry in economically depressed areas of Chicago, Pastor Dean reports, "We're hoeing ground that is tough going...yet full of exciting opportunities to share Christ."

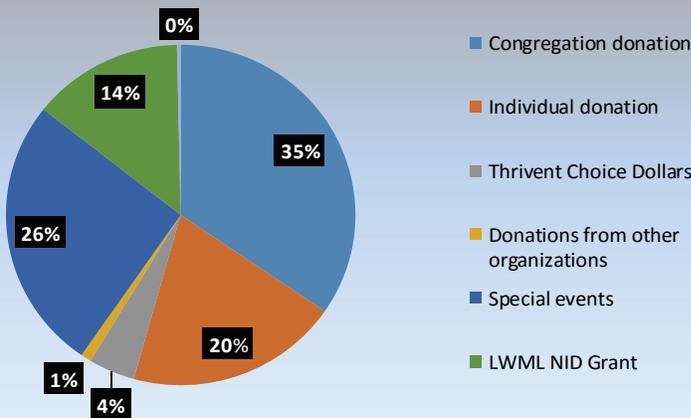
*Rev. Dean Pittelko
East Region Director*



Mt. Greenwood Special Needs Ministry Thriving

Rev. Louis Vician and his wife run two Bible studies at Mt. Greenwood Lutheran Church in Chicago for residents of three group homes and other developmentally disabled persons from the community. They rely on Voice of Care resources for help in choosing our materials and planning sessions. The participants enjoy coming to learn about Jesus through songs, crafts and stories from the Story Bible (supplied by Voice of Care). Over the last year, the session have doubled and recently the group home program director asked the Vicians to expand!

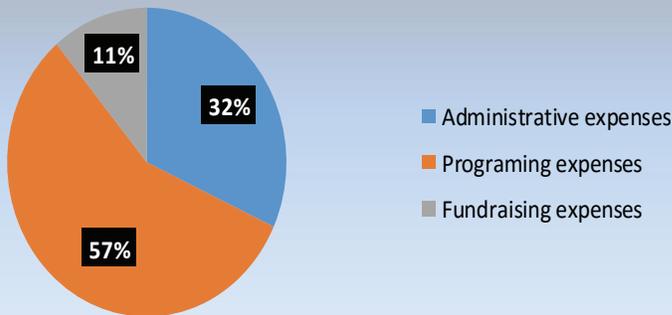
Income as of October 31, 2015



Congregation donation	\$ 29,764
Individual donation	\$ 17,028
Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$ 3,714
Donations from other organizations	\$ 841
Special events	\$ 22,409
LWML NID Grant	\$ 12,074
Interest income	\$ 300

**Total YTD Income
February through October: \$ 86,129**

Expenses as of October 31, 2015



Administrative expenses	\$ 25,377
Programming expenses*	\$ 45,353
Fundraising expenses	\$ 8,886

**Total YTD Expenses
February through October: \$ 79,616**

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



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*Voice of Care is a Recognized Service Organization of the
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*

