

Junction Journal

A quarterly newsletter from
Stafford Junction
February 2010

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Snow and weather related problems have definitely been a factor for us during this first quarter. Both Brain Builders and HUGS are tied to the Stafford County school schedule. We just were not able to have as many opportunities to work with our children and our families. We are all delighted to get back to a more normal schedule.

The Martin Luther King Day event this quarter was held on a snow-free Saturday, January 23. It was a delight to see the 14 Mary Washington students working and playing one-on-one with the first and second graders from our Brain Builders program. Chris did an outstanding job of arranging and managing this event.

We have a need for additional volunteers for both our Brain Builder and our HUGS programs. If you know of someone who might be interested, please encourage them to give us a call. At this moment, we especially need additional volunteers to drive our bus. No CDL license is required – just a valid driver's license. If you are interested, please contact Chris to get more information and to arrange for training.

We are also actively seeking additional contributions. The demand for our services increases when the economy is down. But during the past three months, our contributions from individuals did not come up to the amount we had budgeted based on past experience. The snow and general weather disruptions may have contributed to that. If you have been intending to send us a check, we encourage you to do so. Checks should now be made out to Stafford Junction, Inc.

We are feeling blessed with the teasing glimpse of spring that we are now experiencing.

How You Can Connect as a Volunteer

ESL Bus Driver: NO CDL license required, but must be 25-65 years of age and available Tuesday and/or Thursday morning. Drives the SJ bus to pick up residents of Olde Forge and transport them to (10 am) and from (noon) ESL classes. Commitment: flexible.

After-School Tutor: Provides homework assistance and encouragement to elementary and middle school students. We really need volunteers to fill the gap during May when college students are no longer available. Commitment: 1-3 hours per week on Tuesday and/or Thursday 3:30-5:15 during the school year.

HUGS Food Coordinator: Provides lunch for adults and children. Commitment: Wednesday and/or Friday through May 14

Summer Youth Worker: Helps plan and lead summer activities for children and youth. Summer activities run from the second week of July through the second week of August. Commitment: flexible, varies with summer activity schedule.

Summer Food Coordinator: Coordinates food for the summer activities. Specifically, finds volunteers (individuals, groups or churches) to provide lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning the second week of July for 5 weeks (10 sessions). Commitment: flexible, varies with summer activity schedule.

Financial Connections:

December 2009 – February 2010

Janice Ashley
Steve Aycock
Anne Brooks
Sonita Brown
Jeanne Cornell
Dr. Harry Crisp
Fredericksburg Baptist Church
Fredericksburg Savings Charitable Foundation
Betty Glancy
Herbert Hewitt
John & Edith Houghton
Hulls Memorial
Gail Hylton
Ann & Charlie Jett
Kiwaniis Foundation
Living Word Fellowship
Angel & Wendy Martinez
National Philanthropic Trt – Patricio Enterprises
Loan Nguyen
Mike Oberschmidt, Jr.
Nunzio & Nancy Pontillo
Presbytery on the James
Real Life Community Church
Robert & Cynthia Roser
Douglas & Joan Ryan
Salem Baptist Church
Clayton & Jamie Smith
Stafford Crossing Community Church
Universal Leaf Foundation
Virginia Baptist Mission Board



Check presentation from the Presbytery on the James



When Lives Connect

By Theresie Houghton

...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:5

It's hard to quantify or even describe those precious moments when we connect with others--when music or crises or other shared experiences transcend language and culture—when our spirits and our humanity touch. But such moments do happen regularly in our work, giving me a greater appreciation for life, for love, and for God who is the source of both.

One holy moment happened on Saturday, February 21. Early that morning, we boarded the bus--eight women from different birthplaces---New York, Rwanda, Burundi, and Fredericksburg. Our road-trip destination was Petersburg where the HUGS program would receive a grant from the Committee on Self-Development of Peoples through the Presbytery on the James. As the bus moved along I95, songs spilled out in English, Swahili, and Kirundi. "Jesus loves me" "Yesu arankunda" We sang and clapped and laughed. We talked in broken English about families and work.

Upon our arrival at the church, we were greeted warmly and were treated to delicious breads, cookies, fruits, and drinks while we waited until time for the presentation. After the formal presentation, several members of the Presbytery came out to greet us. I felt like a proud mother, beaming as the women from HUGS stood confidently, extending their hands and introducing themselves in English.

One pastor from Richmond seemed particularly thrilled to meet our HUGS participants and, at some point, I invited the women to sing for him. As they sang, the pastor's face erupted in a broad smile and his body swayed with the melody. Em, our translator, then shared the song's message—that God works miracles that are so big it is impossible to comprehend. Spontaneously, the pastor suddenly erupted with a sung response, "He Looked Beyond My Faults and Saw My Need." After the first few lines, Michelle added her voice to his. Soon, everyone was smiling in this moment of shared praise and thanksgiving.

Through songs of faith, a room of strangers had become a community united by a common language of love. *It was good!*

Volunteer Viewpoint: Are We Connecting?

As we walk with others, assisting and encouraging them to live into their God-given potential, we often see our own views changing. Questions arise deep within us—questions about love, about justice, about values, about methodology. We encourage staff and volunteers to wrestle with these questions, seeking to answer the most important question, “What is the most loving response to this situation?” Emeritha has served as a Swahili translator with our HUGS program for the past year.

By Emeritha Uwimana

How do you describe or translate things that are completely new to a person's life? How do you get individuals to be interested in a new life style, if they are not adventurous and if they are nervous to hear themselves speak a foreign language?

These are few of the challenging questions that faced me for the six Fridays I interpreted for seven African women in a cooking/nutrition class.

I am an African woman myself and I have been in this country long enough to forget how it feels not to speak or understand English. The difference between me and these women is, when I was doing ESL and other training; I always tried to talk, even if I made mistakes.

Encouraging the women to converse in English during the training was my goal, but it always made them feel uncomfortable. They wanted me to always speak for them, even for simple things like “Thank you.”

Can the feeling of having all time in the world to learn or execute a task, be one of the major limitations to learning in a timely manner? I always argue with the women about them taking more time washing their hands or getting up to move on to the next location/room. “African time,” that is what the women called it, and we laughed about it.

The women still have a long way to go, to learn English and the basics of life in the United States. I would like to volunteer some

time and take the women to a grocery store (like a Super Wal-Mart) and show them where to find items for different uses.

Besides the questions I raised, the six Fridays were insightful; I got to refresh my nutrition education and learn to make a pizza crust.

Partner Connections



Cooking Class for HUGS moms taught by the Virginia Cooperative Extension



Girl Scouts meet at Shiloh Old Site



4-H Step Team at Drew Middle School



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Or Current Resident



Martin Luther King Day –
University of Mary Washington
students spend time with the
1 & 2 Grade Brain Builders



Sheriff's Shopping Spree



HUGS partnership with Agape
Preparatory Academy

Building Life Skills with Operation Frontline

By Kimberly Elkins

This winter, I had the privilege of partnering with Stafford Junction for the first time. We teamed up to bring Operation Frontline cooking classes to families living in the Olde Forge community. It was an incredibly rewarding experience. I could tell immediately that this organization has a true passion for serving and meeting the needs of people.

Despite the frequent snow delays, we were able to deliver a complete Operation Frontline program to ten families. Operation Frontline is a part of Share Our Strength, the national non-profit organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger. Each class included a nutrition workshop, a hands-on cooking experience led by a volunteer chef, a homemade meal, and a bag of take-home groceries to practice the recipes learned in class.

Participants learned new skills in the kitchen, food safety tips, how to add more fruits, vegetables and whole grains to their diet, ways to save money in the grocery store, and how to plan healthy family meals on a tight budget.

For me, the highlight of the program was the day we held class at Wegman's Food Market in Fredericksburg. We took a tour of the store, demonstrated how to use unit pricing, compared nutrition facts labels, and talked about how to spot the best deals. Each person was given a \$10 gift card and challenged to purchase ingredients for a healthy family meal. Everyone was successful. It was a joy to see Burundian women clapping for each other as they completed their purchase. For several of the women, it was a new experience.

This program was made possible by a grant from Operation Frontline through Virginia Cooperative Extension. Virginia Cooperative Extension partners with local agencies to bring these kinds of opportunities to new audiences each year. We are excited about the successful partnership with Stafford Junction, and look forward to more projects in the future!