

...the water I give takes away thirst altogether...

the Well

June
2005

Whew!!! - A Fast-Paced Spring!

The past 5-6 months have flown by with many exciting developments at the Well Community. Whereas we anticipated getting a newsletter out in April, with all of the progress and happenings, we are just now slowing down enough to share with you! Here is some of what has been going on in our Community:

- **2004 Finances** - We began the year with a great start! In 2004, we raised over \$109,000, much more than we expected. We entered 2005 with a strong balance, but also increased our 2005 budget to \$136,400, with the addition of staff and services. Therefore, we still need your support!
- **Capacity Building** - In January, we were accepted into the Foundation for Community Empowerment's Building Capacity/Building Communities program. The program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and seeks to increase the ability of Dallas-area faith based organizations to serve those who live in lower-income neighborhoods and to increase our ability to compete more effectively for financial resources. In March, we received \$14,450 from the Foundation to finance the Well's current capacity needs, specifically, board and fund development.
- **Our Expanded Team** - In February, the staff of the Well more than doubled, with Joshua Pulis and Maureen Lane coming on board. Josh joined the staff as Director of Programming (see inside for more about Josh and his position). In addition, Maureen Lane started serving as the Well's part-time and volunteer Financial Administrator. However, she has shown herself valuable far beyond the numbers and books. "Moe", as she likes to be called, has endeared herself to the Community Members, through her loving and maternal spirit.



James, Ann, Rita, Will & Marie

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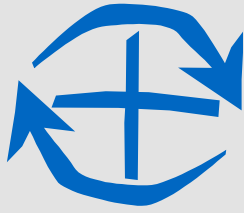


Community Life Center

For the past 3-4 months, we have been actively seeking a facility for our Community Life Center, a place to engage with our Community Members on a weekday basis and a home for **more comprehensive services**. Due to the geographical concentration of our current Members, our search area has been limited. In addition, we have been faced with a limited budget, the thriving real estate market of north Oak Cliff (and the accompanying high prices!), and the stigma surrounding mental illness. Therefore, please continue to pray with us to find the right place for this important work.

We continue to have grace at **Cliff Temple Baptist Church** for our Saturday programming and administrative offices. However, we desperately need space to connect with our Members during the week.

Jesus said to her, "People soon become thirsty again after drinking water. But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a well of water within them, giving them life." – John 4:13-14



Leadership Team

Joel Pulis, Community Pastor

Board of Directors:

Tim Ahlen, Pastor, Forest Meadow Baptist Church, Dallas; Scott Coleman, Director, Missions & Urban Division, Dallas Baptist Association; Ben Loring, Pastor, Mercy Place, Dallas; James Pulis, Director of Base Two, Trinity Church, Cedar Hill; Timothy Wood, Coordinator of Volunteers, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Not Dead Last!

Texas ranks 48th in per capita funding for mental health services, and Dallas is 35th [out of 40 regions or counties] in Texas.

Source: NAMI Dallas News; Vol 5, Issue 3

I am so blessed each Saturday and feel so at home, that I think I may go down to the courthouse and change my last name to "the Well"

Timothy Lira
Community Member

I can really tell the difference between the residents that attend your church and those that do not.

Boarding House
Operator

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- **LIFEgroup** - In late February, Josh began a prototype group combining aspects of support, therapy, and discipleship. Each week between 10-15 Members gather for activities, Bible study & discussion, and lunch & games.

Once we have a suitable home for our Community Center, we anticipate multiple LIFEgroups meeting throughout the week.

- **Echoes of Joy Orphanage** - Early in the spring, we met Masters Ndimande, a pastor who was seeking donations for an orphanage in Gaborone, Botswana. Our Members helped pack over 100 boxes of clothes. Our efforts were celebrated by a front-page story in The Ellis County Press!
- **Saturday Night Life** - Throughout the spring, we have had great attendance on Saturday evenings, with over 80 Community Members and volunteers in average attendance. That's compared to 52 during the same period last year.



the ministry of friendship

"Healing Presence"

Near the beginning of the Well, we discovered the works of John Swinton, a UK theologian and psychiatric nurse, which proved to be foundational in our ministry. The following excerpts come from an article entitled, "Healing Presence".

As we reflect on the life experiences of people with schizophrenia, it is clear that they undergo rejection, stigmatization, isolation, and relational disconnection with self and others...

Christ becomes our model as we consider how the practice of friendship can ease the suffering of people with profound mental health problems who live in our communities and desire to find a spiritual home... Friendships, of course, are critical for developing and maintaining spiritual and psychological health. From our friends we gain a positive sense of identity and an awareness of value, meaning, and purpose; in our friendship with God, we discover our ultimate significance... Indeed, when a human friendship is practiced out of a relationship with the Triune God, it becomes a concrete expression and manifestation of God's love for the world.

In this ministry of befriending people with mental health problems, there will be moments of sadness, joy, frustration, and uncertainty. But if the church does not offer such friendships, who will? To do so is to remain faithful to the One who touched the man with leprosy and said, "I am willing." To do so is to offer them true healing—relief from suffering and a chance to maintain their connection with God and others despite the turbulent storms they must endure.

"Healing Presence" appeared in the "Suffering" issue of "Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics." © 2005 The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University. Used by permission.



A LONG-TIME "WORKING" RELATIONSHIP
Josh (left) leads the singing, while Joel tries to hold back the laughter and prepares to "preach".

Director of Programming!

Joshua Pulis brings to the Well a good mix: a heart for ministry balanced with the experience of a professional social worker. Before coming to the Well, Josh worked for the Texas Department of Human Services, working specifically as a caseworker for Child Protective Services. He is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), with degrees from The University of Texas at Arlington (MSW) and Baylor University (BA), and is currently working towards his counseling license. Before coming on board as a paid staff member, Josh had faithfully served as a volunteer at the Well for more than a year, and held the trust and love of the Community Members. Besides programming responsibilities, Josh also leads music at the Well's weekly worship service, Saturday Night Life. As a "people-person", Josh derives his energy and passion from interacting directly and intimately with the "folks", and is looking forward to the expansion of the Well's ministry to include greater weekday activities with the people.

Cuts threaten the vulnerable

On June 2, in the Dallas Morning News, there was a very informative article regarding the state of mental health services in our city. The crisis described therein threatens our Community Members each and every day. Therefore, in case you missed the article, you can find it online at www.DallasNews.com.

The state of Texas has a long-standing record of under-funding the need when it comes to mental health services... and the fact that the population continues to increase in this area but the funding doesn't mean you have to make tough decisions about who gets services and how much they get.

Dr. James Baker
CEO of Dallas MetroCare
(Source: DMN, 6/2/05, 15A)



Charles & Connie, longtime Community Members

Needed Items

Feeding over 80 people per week, we use a large amount of paper goods. Also, we help our Members with toiletry items.

- Foam plates (dinner & dessert) and bowls
- Napkins
- 12 oz. Styrofoam cups
- Decaf coffee
- Toiletry items
(e.g., soap, shampoo, shaving cream)
- Household items

**Engaging people with
mental illness in a
life-giving community
of peace, love, & hope.**



Our first LIFEgroup resting after a service project.

Prayer Needs

Your prayers are requested and appreciated! As we pursue this work, the needs (material, emotional, & spiritual) are constantly beyond our resources. Therefore, please lift us up!!!

Financial Support

the Well is committed to providing life-giving community and services to those in need. Our ability to provide this work is based on **donations from individuals like you**. Therefore, would you prayerfully consider making a one-time contribution or becoming a monthly supporter? (for additional giving options, see our website). All contributions are tax deductible.

In Dallas County, no other faith-based organization focuses exclusively on low-income people living with mental illness.



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