



# The GATE



Central  
California  
Mennonite  
Residential  
Services

May 2011

## ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT A SUCCESS



The arrival of spring was celebrated with an evening of beautiful music. The annual Spring Harmonies concert, a fundraising event which is also a showcase of local talent, was presented on March 21 at Ashley Auditorium, Fresno Pacific University. Although the audience was smaller than in previous concerts, it seemed particularly appreciative of the quality of performers.

on the cello; and Ginny Oustad, clarinetist, are members of "Moment Musical." Members of this group, many of whom are members of the Fresno Philharmonic, form smaller ensembles to offer their gifts to groups throughout the community.



The concert progressed smoothly under the guidance of Emcee Ben Jacobs, a Mennonite Voluntary Service staff member. The first performer, Joungmin Sur, a pianist who serves as accompanist for choral groups at Fresno State, Fresno Pacific, and the Fresno Community Chorus, played an original piece, "I Saw the Wind," which she composed and which fascinated the audience.

A brief report of CCMRS was presented in a unique question-answer format by executive director Jen Foster and resident Aaron McLain.

A new feature was the display of art work by students of United Cerebral Palsy. The display was organized by Diana Salinas, art instructor at UCP.

Funds raised by this event were just over \$3,000.

CCMRS expressed its appreciation to the participants for volunteering their gifts and time to help celebrate spring and to join in fundraising efforts for the organization.



Zachary Durlam, the new choral director at Fresno Pacific and a gifted tenor vocalist, used a variety of pieces in his performance, including Handel, Richard Strauss, Puccini, and others. His wife Eryn, also a gifted musician, accompanied him on the piano.

A trio of exceptionally fine local musicians concluded the concert with selections from Beethoven. Alan Rea, pianist; Judy Robinson,



*Snapshots of Community Life (from top):* Mike and Michael (volunteer) at the Clovis Rodeo. Heather at the Appreciation Breakfast. Karen and her mother enjoying themselves at the Appreciation Breakfast. Michael (staff child) planting a lemon tree on Earth Day. Kevin at the Clovis Rodeo. Susan helping with the Aktion Club. Isaac and Erika (staff children) looking at the contents of their Easter baskets after a community-wide egg hunt.

## Director's Corner



For this column, I've decided to share an interview with Aaron McLain that we delivered at the Spring Harmonies concert in March. In his own words, Aaron expresses a deep truth: what CCMRS asks of our community members is not easy, but it is worth it. And God does love each one of us – in fact it is by His design we are each different and we each need one another. - Jenifer Foster

JEN: Thanks Aaron, for helping me tonight. Tell us all a little bit about yourself.

AARON: I'm a cross country skier and have been to the Special Olympics World games two times. I work at Home Depot in the Garden Department. I've been there for four years. I've lived at Hampton Way for almost four years. I lead a weekly bible study for residents at CCMRS.

JEN: How has living in our Supported Living Community impacted your life?

AARON: People see me as a leader now. I get to serve the community by helping

# My Conversation with Aaron

plan activities as a part of Fun Club. At bible study I get to lead people in knowing God better – right now we're studying the "Purpose Driven Life."

Before I moved to CCMRS I was living with my parents and didn't have the chance to lead people. The other residents look to me for leadership and ask my opinion. That's helpful to the whole community because I can give them good advice.

JEN: What's the biggest challenge you face living in community?

AARON: Probably just everybody getting along because everyone is different and has different challenges.

JEN: How do you deal with that?

AARON: I try to be a peacemaker and help people make better choices. I remind people to treat others the way they like to be treated.

JEN: Sounds like Harmony to me! What are some of the benefits of living at CCMRS for you?

AARON: Doing activities brings the whole group together so we get to see the guys from Huntington House and spend time with the people who live in the other apartment complex. We have a lot of fun and get to go places we wouldn't go by ourselves.

Eating dinner together helps us connect with people in our smaller group and take turns serving each other by cooking and cleaning together.

JEN: Since you've said you give good advice, what would you tell someone who was thinking about living at CCMRS?

AARON: Well, I'd make them feel welcome, like everyone welcomed me. Then I'd tell them not to be nervous. It's not easy to live together, but it's worth it. We've all got disabilities – they might be different but God loves us no matter what. Being together is better than being alone.



Thanks to **Lowes** and **Fresno Ag** for donating soil and bricks for our community Garden. Also, thanks to an anonymous donor who gave money for a composter.

### AKTION CLUB JOINS WORLD-WIDE DAY OF SERVICE

This April, the Aktion Club joined millions of others for the **Kiwanis One-Day Project**. On this day, Kiwanis clubs from around the world and their Service Leadership Programs volunteered in their community. The Aktion Club served along -side Kiwanians, Circle K, Key Club, and K Kids at the San Joaquin River Parkway clearing trails and picnic areas.

*Right: Lewis, the President of Charis Community Aktion Club.*



Help us save paper by receiving "The Gate" via e-mail. Contact the office to learn more.

Please consider a tax-deductible contribution. CCMRS depends upon the generosity of those who support its mission. *Thank you.*



### WISH LIST

- Desk Chair
- Garden Tools
- Upright Freezer
- Dishwasher
- Clothes Washer / Drier

And we can always use cash cards to **Costco** and **WinCo!**

## COMMUNITY ENJOYS BREAKFAST IN THE PARK

The small park behind the Hampton Gate Apartments, known as Friendship Park, was the setting for the annual Appreciation Picnic Breakfast. On Saturday morning, May 14, a gathering of staff, residents, families, and volunteers enjoyed a breakfast of spinach quiche, grapes, and cinnamon rolls. The picnic provided the occasion for the board and administration to say "Thank you" to all who support and serve the organization in a variety of ways.

Prior to the meal, groups were taken on tours of the resident's apartments in both Hampton Gate and Hampton Way. Residents seemed excited and pleased to show their homes to visitors.

After the meal, executive director Jen Foster offered a few words of gratitude for the persons and families who contribute resources, serve as staff, and volunteer their time to fulfill the mission of the organization. The resident's Fun Club expressed their "thank you" to staff by presenting them with certificates of appreciation as well. A certificate of appreciation was also given to Craig Kroeker who landscapes Hampton Gate and the Huntington House.

This was the first time that the Appreciation Picnic was held at Friendship Park. Previously, it was held at Woodward Park. Many expressed preference for this smaller setting which seemed to encourage more interaction and conversation among those who attended.

## RESIDENTS CONTRIBUTE TO CHURCH LIFE

Joe serves as an usher by carrying the offering plate. Linda lights candles during Advent. Mike plays guitar along with his church's band. Rachel reads scripture in her two native languages: English and German. Many residents attend the Friendship Class, a Sunday School group taught by staff-member Teresa Marquez. CCMRS residents participate in a variety of meaningful ways at different churches in and around Fresno.



Mike with his guitar

One of the newest church opportunities for CCMRS residents is the Beyond Sunday Church, which meets in both Fresno and Madera. The group meets on Sunday evenings and includes a potluck dinner. More than ten residents, or almost half those living in the apartments, might attend a given service.

Beyond Sunday Church began a few years ago, partially through the work of Hunter Raburn, a staff member at CCMRS. Hunter says that he and others wanted "find an expression of the New Testament Church" by forging a group of people deeply connected to each other's lives. Their mission is to "make disciples who make disciples." Neighborhood groups form the core of the church as it tries to go "beyond Sunday."

CCMRS residents started attending Beyond Sunday largely because of the work of Aaron McLain. In our May 2010 newsletter, we reported how Aaron started a bible study that meets weekly in Hampton Way. Aaron visited Beyond Sunday Church and then started inviting other residents to attend with him. Now, he and Heather Coyle share the task of getting residents to sign up in advance for transportation if they want to attend church.

Through Beyond Sunday, residents have helped with maintenance on a church property in Madera. They also volunteered at a Christmas event which distributed food to about 175 needy families.

CCMRS has once again booked a spot at the Fresno Grizzlies "Faith and Family Night," scheduled for **Friday July 22nd, 2011**. The evening will include food, fellowship, a Christian Rock concert, and (of course) baseball.

The event is open to all friends of CCMRS. Contact the office to place a reservation for this fun evening. Ticket price is \$32 each and includes a concert, the game, & dinner.





## Central California Mennonite Residential Services

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If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, it means someone has given you the gift of getting to know CCMRS. You may contact the main office at 559-227-2940 with any questions you may have.

*Experiencing God's love in community...*



Residents and staff of Huntington House with Mr. Vega (forth from right).

### Windows on Huntington Boulevard: Project Complete!

Last year, we announced a special campaign to raise money to replace all 30 of the original windows at Huntington House. Donors were given the opportunity to sponsor a window for \$350. After raising **\$8,935** toward the project, the Board of Directors decided to pay for the rest of the windows with undesignated donations (about \$2,000).

The new, high-efficiency windows, were sold at cost by Anlin Windows and installed by Ricardo Vega of Cen-Tech Construction.



Find us on **Facebook** and see more pictures and updates from CCMRS. So far 28 people have "liked" our page!

### CCMRS

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