

Mercy Bridges



www.mercybridges.org

Mercy Bridges

...a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, Inc.

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MISSION

Mercy Bridges, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy, provides basic literacy services and English as a second language for adults. Sisters, Associates, and friends of Mercy teach those who may not qualify for, have access to, or success with other literacy programs. Mercy Bridges collaborates with other Mercy ministries and community literacy agencies.

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Director of Mercy Bridges
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Spring Appreciation Reception

On April 15th, approximately one hundred friends of Mercy Bridges attended a Spring Appreciation Reception at the Mercy High Gallery. In the past three and a half years, Mercy Bridges has prospered due to the many who have supported this adult literacy ministry. It is important that we not only express our appreciation but demonstrate how the collective investment of time, talent or treasure has impacted the development of Mercy Bridges. Thus, this appreciation reception included a summary of this development and featured remarks by three of our

tutors and their students. Senator Joseph Robach and Dr. Daryl Dickson,

their time and talent, and to the benefactors who have provided financial support or Gifts in Kind. Without these gifts of time, talent and treasure there would not be a Mercy Bridges adult literacy ministry. Thank you!



Friends gather for Appreciation Reception

Coordinator of Mayor Duffy's Literacy Initiative, also addressed the attendees. We are grateful to the tutors and volunteers who have contributed



Second Annual Appeal Draws Near

This November 1st we will launch our second annual appeal. This support is needed in building sustainability for the mission of Mercy Bridges. We are mindful that we all receive numerous request for donations for a variety of causes. As we launch this appeal to those who have expressed interest in and

support of this ministry, we hope consideration will be given to sustaining this needed adult literacy service of Mercy Bridges. If you are interested in contributing to our mission and have not previously been contacted, please call our office (288-2710 x526), or email (weaveredwardine@gmail.com) and we will be

pleased to place you on our appeal mailing list. Thank you in advance for your consideration. As Mercy Bridges continues to grow and make a difference for those it serves, we are most grateful to those who have contributed to making our 1st appeal a success and we look forward to your support this year.

From the Director...



S. Edwardine Weaver,
Director

Changing of the Guard

In the Old Testament, the Book of Ecclesiastes states, "There is an appointed *time* for everything under the heavens." At this time, four years after its beginnings, we find that the ministry of Mercy Bridges is very active, effective and growing. We are grateful to the

many agencies, volunteer tutors, clerical aides and benefactors who have given time, treasure and talent to enabling the development of this needed adult literacy ministry of the Sisters of Mercy.

It is also *time* for a change in the Director of Mercy Bridges. Mercy Bridges has enriched my life and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served in the development of this ministry. After fifty-four years of active ministry in a variety of roles, it is time to "slow down" a bit. I am reminded that we do not accomplish anything in this world alone. Whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weaving of individual threads that create something. It has been a privilege for me to serve

Mercy Bridges with so many individual "threads" whose commitment and generous support have brought us to the present place in time. It has been an honor for me to have nurtured this recently founded ministry of the Sisters of Mercy. Our Mercy Bridges Advisory Board has activated a Search Committee. It is hoped that a new director will be named in the near future. A transition plan will be initiated to support a smooth and effective "changing of the guard". Please know of my appreciation for your present and continued commitment to making a difference in the lives of others through the ministry of Mercy Bridges.

Gratefully,
Sr. Edwardine

We thank you...

- Mercy High School for the use of the Gallery for our Spring Appreciation Reception
- Michelle Bruzee, Lawan Buffum, Margaret Wegman, Diversified Envelope Ltd., Rochester Red Wings, Ravioli Shop and the Wintonaire Restaurant for their donations in support of the Spring Appreciation Reception
- Rita and Dick Kane for initiating a matching Mobil Grant
- The Gannett Foundation for a \$2000 Grant
- For contributions to Mercy Bridges through the United Way Campaign
- Our Advisory Board members for their gifts of time and commitment to Mercy Bridges
- The Aquinas Institute for providing classroom space on Saturday mornings
- Nancy Nealon, Director of Clinical & Community Services at ABVI-Goodwill, for joining us a collaborator
- All those who since our last newsletter have supported Mercy Bridges spiritually, materially or financially

Mary McGaffick & Htee Shee

My experience as a Mercy Bridges tutor has been rewarding and fulfilling. My learner, Htee Shee, who is from Burma, is a dedicated and determined student. She has many goals, but primarily wants to help other refugees from Burma, and feels that getting a degree as a nurse's aide, would be most beneficial.

At our first meeting, after introductions, Htee Shee and I found a common interest. I brought a gardening magazine with me, and at that time the Burmese population had been given plots of ground for gardening. We immediately connected and developed our lesson plan on something Htee Shee could relate to. Htee Shee is a valued member of the Karen refugee community. She helps to translate and interpret for the Karen refugees at medical appointments, and other places where needed. Htee Shee helps others to find their way to appointments by showing them, and taking them on the correct bus routes. She teaches them what number bus to take to the appointment and what number bus to take to get home.

We structure many of our lessons on needs that Htee Shee has to help her serve her community. How to fill out



Htee Shee and Mary McGaffick

forms, terminology, time schedules, agencies that provide specific services, and calendars are incorporated in our lessons.

Htee Shee works diligently on learning sounds, proper pronunciation, spelling and writing English. She is a great writer, and has written many things for me. She taught me about the Karen New Year, and described a traditional Karen wedding that she and her family attended.

As a Mercy Bridges tutor, I have learned that there are kind, wonderful, and giving people all over the world. It has been my pleasure to be given this opportunity to work with Htee Shee. She has taught me much more than I will ever be able to teach her. Thank you to Mercy Bridges for providing the program that has enriched my life.

My name is Htee Shee. I have been in Rochester two years and ten months.

I am learning English from the Mercy Bridges Program. My tutor is a very good English teacher. I am learning how to read, write letters, sentences and paragraphs. I am also learning sounds (letters) and how to use verbs and nouns in sentences. Then I am learning punctuation, capital letters and periods. I am learning to use computers, typing in the library, and reading books about dolphins. I speak, write and read much better than before. Now some times in my community, I can help interpret English to Karen and Burmese refugees from schools, hospitals and offices.

All my learning for me is useful and so I want to continue to study and thank you a lot to the Mercy Bridges Program.

Htee Shee

Observing Progress

In the past 12 months approximately 4900 volunteer instructional hours have been invested in Mercy Bridges learners. In addition to improving basic literacy skills, the following is a sampling of areas in which the ability of some learners' progress has been observed. The ability to:

- read to their children
- follow instructions on medicine bottles
- use a telephone book
- use the library
- interpret and pay bills
- retain or gain employment
- enter a GED program
- obtain citizenship
- communicate more effectively

We continue to focus instructional efforts on the development of learner self-esteem as well as skills that enhance success in daily life. These areas of growth cannot always be measured on an achievement test, but represent a major factor in enabling learner success. We are grateful to our tutors and all those who support the mission of Mercy Bridges!

A Tutor Writes...

In January, 2010, Sunhee Jung entered the Mercy Bridges program with a joyful attitude and dedication to learning English by studying the attributes of the language; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Her goals were very clear: to be more comfortable speaking and understanding her daughters' education, and to write about her recent interest in the beauty of nature.

Sunhee immediately identified pronunciation challenges of certain vowels, consonants and the final "ed" endings so she could focus on her goal of speaking as a native English speaker. In addition to her responsibilities of being a wife and a mother of three teenage daughters she set very high standards for herself!

While focusing on specific skills, we created a small Literary Circle of

two, which we both enjoy! Together we have read and discussed *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Laila Lalami. Sunhee read and then we discussed *The Choice* and *The Notebook*, both by Nicholas Sparks, and *In My Father's House* by Corrie ten Boom.

During the reading of *The Notebook*, she was moved by the way the author described the beauty of nature! She wondered, "Could she ever write like that?" During the discussion of the scene she recalled a similar experience while in Korea. After reflecting on it, brainstorming, and listing ideas and feelings, she accepted the challenge and began to write about her personal awe-filled Korean Yellow Sea experience.

I am so pleased to share this glimmer of her: "Sunset in Byunsan Bay... dark orange, bright orange were all together, we were

overwhelmed, we turned our backs to the sun, a Moses miracle. I will never forget the spectacular sight. It gave me both pleasure and surprise. I wonder how God paints nature so beautifully?"

I am so honored and blessed to be learning with Sunhee Jung under the sunsets and over the bridges of our lives!

Cheryl McElhatten



Cheryl McElhatten & Sunhee Jung

Our Learners Speak:

I improved in writing and reading. I can read the newspaper and I learned new words.

I write better! I read better! I've learned adjectives, adverbs, compound/complex sentences. I have learned that I can do anything I put my mind to. I am learning responsibility.

We came to America to get better life and without the English is very hard. Thank you Mercy Bridges for your concern with immigrants.

I am happy how much I learned. English is not an easy language to learn.

I think that I get a very good teacher. I will have big accomplishment in the English learning.

I feel nice with my tutor. I am using new words when I write.

Mercy Bridges is a beautiful organization that helps the no speaking English person to learn English. Bridges give us the opportunity to open a door for the future.

I am improving my English, learning to speak - I feel better about speaking.

I am learning many new words and reading more stories. I am more confident. I understand more. I speak a lot more English.

Tutors Acknowledged



At the May 10th Tutor Forum, the sixth group to complete one full year of tutoring received a certificate and a small gift of appreciation. The work of our tutors is invaluable and essential to our mission. The following tutors were recognized for their dedication and commitment to Mercy Bridges:

- Kate Alonzo
- Mary Joan Bodensteiner
- Virginia Clark
- Shauni McDonnell
- Mary McGaffick
- Marcia Miller
- Elizabeth Rich
- Ruth Rowse

Volunteer Feature...

Carol, a Faithful Friend

Mercy Bridges relies on the work of volunteers to further its mission. Carol Cummings, a retired teacher, serves as our Resource Room Librarian. In 2006, she volunteered to "assist for a few weeks." Four years later she continues to be committed to our mission. She assists tutors and students in the selection of materials and

develops resources to facilitate the effective operation of the Resource Room. In addition, Carol assists the office with clerical tasks that need attention and gives hundreds of hours of her time, her talent



Carol Cummings,
Librarian

and her resources to facilitate the work of Mercy Bridges. She reflects the true spirit of Mercy in her service to Mercy Bridges and we are indeed grateful. We salute and thank Carol for all that she has been and continues to be for the ministry of Mercy Bridges.

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INTERESTING DATA

Those interviewed to enter the Mercy Bridges program as learners represent 37 countries and 38 languages — approximately 1/3 immigrants, 1/3 refugees, and 1/3 native to the U.S. Levels of previous education range from none to post graduate degrees.

Wish List...your consideration is appreciated.

Copier/Printer paper
Ink/Toner Cartridges

- Canon black toner cartridge 104
- Epson #69 color & black
- HP #95 & 98

Laptop computer
Postage stamps

Gift cards:

- Barnes and Noble
- Office Max
- Pharmacies
- Staples
- Tops
- Wegmans

Volunteers:

- Clerical
- Library
- Tutoring

Monetary donations



Remember to indicate
Mercy Bridges
#2485
as recipient of your
United Way donation!

Arrange for a Mercy Bridges speaker to address your congregation, organization, etc.

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