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From the Director's Desk

Several weeks ago, my husband Fred and I were asked to play in a golf tournament fundraiser for a local Christian organization. I don't really play golf, but—desiring to help a worthy cause—I figured I would do it. As the date approached, I began to have second thoughts. *"What have I done? I'm going to make a fool of myself!"* My fears were not calmed by events of the day when it finally arrived...

First, I walked into the kitchen that morning dressed in the only thing I own that resembles "golf attire." My youngest son, Tim (who has Down syndrome) peered at me over the top of his glasses and—eyes landing on my striped sweater—wryly quipped, *"Really? An Easter egg? For a golf tournament?"* Ouch. Upon arriving at the golf course, Fred suggested we go to the driving range and warm up by hitting a bucket of balls. That was a great idea...except for the part where the head of my golf club broke off and actually flew farther than the ball. Then I had to call out to all the golfers at the range, *"Excuse me everyone! Time out!"* Kind husband that I have, he cheerfully jogged out to retrieve the head of my club for me while I stood nearby dangling the shaft of the club in my hand. Later that afternoon, halfway through the tournament, I received a text message from my oldest son Fred saying *"Since when do you play golf?"*

At the end of the day, however, the mission was accomplished. The fundraising had been done, and I have to admit that—in spite of moments of mild humiliation—I had a good time. And I'd do it again. Reflecting upon the day, I realized that mercy ministry is a lot like playing in a golf fundraiser. As my friend David Apple from Tenth Presbyterian says, *"It's all about showing up. And letting God do the work."* You don't have to be a professional. You don't even have to be good. You just have to show up. And then God does the work. What's keeping you from "showing up" in the lives of people touched by disability? Take a risk. Show up. God just might surprise you.
In Jesus' Name, Steph

Historic Day at Tenth Presbyterian

On August 21st, Tenth Church welcomed three covenant children into full membership. While each child had made a profession of faith, Tenth's typical communicant's class was not a "good fit" for their different learning styles. Instead, the Children with Special Needs Ministry-sponsored "Hide It in Your Heart Class" provided tailored communicant instruction and an adapted setting for them to meet with the elders. The modified curriculum mirrored Tenth's typical communicant's class, with lessons organized around the "Solas of the Reformation" and incorporated Scripture and catechism memory work. The year-long class culminated in the public reception of new members this summer. And it was a day to remember!

As Rev. Carroll Wynne said, *"Today we have special reason to celebrate because these new members, whose lives have been touched by disabilities, promise to open a new awareness in our church... We celebrate these whose lives have been transformed by grace through Jesus Christ—young people who were baptized into the faith and are now completing their testimony to God's goodness in them and as well as to us at Tenth."* And the congregation *did* celebrate—responding with spontaneous applause! As one elder wrote the next day, *"I never applaud but I did after those children were welcomed in as members. It was one of the most wonderful acts of love in the body of Christ I have ever seen in a worship service."*



Barbara Newman, a Great Resource!



Barbara J. Newman is coming to **two** MNA events in March 2012!

Usually, our recommended resources are books, or DVDs, or organizations. This time, our recommended resource is a person: Barbara J. Newman. In fact, we're so impressed by Barb Newman that we've invited her to come speak at not one but **two** MNA-related events in March 2012. Barbara has years of experience working for The CLC Network in helping to include children with disabilities into Christian schools and into congregational life. Barb is especially gifted at working with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). It is this expertise that we will be "tapping into" at two upcoming MNA Special Needs Ministries events.

The first will be an all-day pre-conference

workshop on Autism Spectrum Disorders prior to the 2012 Mercy Ministries Conference. The pre-conference event will be held on Thursday, March 15th, followed by the full conference beginning on the evening of March 15th and running through March 17th. For further information, please go to:

www.pcacep.org/mercy

The second opportunity to hear Barb will be at the "Love Finds A Way" Special Needs Ministry Conference in Jackson, MS on Saturday, March 31st. This conference is co-sponsored by Joni and Friends Jackson and MNA Special Needs Ministries. For further information, please go to:

www.lovefindsaway.org

Save the Dates! Save the Dates!



Please mark your calendar now with these important dates!

Before we get into "Save the Date" events: Is your church interested in receiving a FREE *Gospel and Disability Educational Gift Pack* in January 2012? If so, please don't miss the opportunity to go to our website and register NOW!

www.pcamna.org/specialneeds

Now, please mark your calendar and share this information with others!

- March 15th, MNA Special Needs Ministries pre-conference event on Autism Spectrum Disorders, New City Fellowship, Chattanooga, TN
- March 15-17th, 2012 Mercy Ministries Conference, Special Needs Ministries Track, New City Fellowship, Chattanooga, TN
- March 31st, "Love Finds a Way"

Special Needs Ministries Conference, Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS (Keynote: Emily Colson, author of *Dancing with Max*)

In addition to these events, please be in prayer for our "Train-the-Trainers" (T3) events throughout 2012:

- February 2-5th, Birmingham, AL
- May 17-20th, Ephrata, PA
- August 23-26th, Wheaton, IL
- November 1-4th, Jackson, MS

We'll be telling you more about the T3 events and introducing you to our new team of congregational trainers in 2012. We are expanding our staff to serve you better! "Stay tuned" for details!

Your Prayers Matter...

"Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me."

Psalm 27:7

- Please pray for wisdom as we finalize all of the preparations involved in our T3 events throughout 2012.
- Praise God for continued growing interest in this ministry arena. Please pray for new, committed ministry partners for both Joel Wallace's and Steph Hubach's ongoing support.
- Praise God for the PCA churches that have already ordered *Gospel and Disability Educational Gift Packs!* Pray for all 500 to go!
- Pray that we would first **learn to see** people with disabilities in our midst and in our communities. We can't minister to/with people we don't even notice!