

Love Grows Here Wellness Center 2011-12

2011-12 Continuing Programming

Community Meal~ The LGH Wellness Center's commitment to community started with a community meal and continues to be the heart of our mission toward wellness brought forth. While we have added many components to the Wellness Center over the years, the community meal remains as the source of our fellowship together. Each week, volunteers donate, prepare, cook, serve, clean up and eat meals together. We have an expectation that EVERYONE eats together in a place where we serve one another. All of our services cease during the meal and we take time to spend time in gratitude and relationship. This year we added the component of pot-luck style dining, moving away from a more institutionalized model. Everyone is allowed to take what they wish, keeping in mind that we are all part of the community that eats together. Our kitchen often serves as a hub of volunteer leadership training, a large part of our mission partnerships and a strong dedication to a well-balanced meal each week.

Second Harvest Heartland~ Second Harvest Heartland continues to be a major component of the Wellness Center that allows us to function and feed our community under extremely low budget constraints. Second Harvest generally supplies the Wellness Center with bread, desserts, milk, vegetables, meat and much more at extremely low cost. In addition the leftover food is donated to the FLC Food Shelf or given out at the end of the evening to anyone who is in need.

Community Design Center of Minnesota~A youth-centered organization that resides on the East Side of St. Paul, the Community Design Center has continued to partner with the LGHWC throughout the program year. On a quarterly basis, the CDC has provided food and cooking classes at the WC that focus on 'feeding the family in need'. Our partnership continues to grow with CDC and we look forward to more.

Metropolitan State Foot care, Health Teaching, Medical Triage & Blood Pressure Screening~ Metropolitan State University (MSU) Nursing Practicum at Love Grows Here Wellness Center. Nursing Services at the Wellness Center are provided during the academic year by Registered Nurses (RNs) who are pursuing a Bachelor of Nursing at MSU. The Wellness Center is a public health nursing clinical site. There are 4 -6 RN students providing cares and a Nursing Instructor (Cecelia DuPlessis Erickson). There is an Adult Nurse Practitioner (Ruth Staus) who is a clinician/ nursing faculty who provides services to community participants as well as a consultant and referral source.

Nursing services provided:

- Blood pressure screening, hypertension teaching, referral as indicated
- Basic foot care, massage, education to promote self-care, and referral to the Nurse Practitioner as indicated for additional foot care and evaluation. New socks provided.
- Health teaching and referral for participants with chronic health problems including medication teaching. Examples of common chronic health problems of community participants are diabetes, mental illness, cardiac, dermatology issues, chemical dependency, and obesity.
- Referrals for assistance with obtaining health insurance, dental care and other services (e.g., glasses, social services).
- Assist with obtaining a primary care site for medical care
- Therapeutic presence with community during cares and meals.

Professional One on One Walk In Counseling & Chat n' Chew (Support Group)

- Walk in Counseling Center of Minneapolis
- Provides three Professional Counselors each week

- One-on-One Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Three to Four support focused classes or groups throughout the year (grief, holidays, etc.)
- Keep professional records on clients at the Wellness Center that can be used to treat clients on a referral or follow-up basis
- First Lutheran Church provides space throughout the week to hold counseling session as needed.

St. Paul Community Education Classes~ As part of the East Side Prosperity Campaign, First Lutheran Church and St. Paul Public Schools Community Education, the LGH Wellness Center brought classes to the East Side. They provided classes for the Wellness community that included:

- Farm-to-Fork Cooking Adventure
- Back to Work Bootcamp
- Rebounding from Job Loss
- Housing Help
- Gentle Yoga
- Much More!

Funded through a grant from Nexus Community Partners, the East Side Prosperity Campaign is able to provide classes for the Wellness Center on a scholarship basis for no cost.

Spring Forest Qi gong~Qigong (pronounced chee-gong) literally means the study of the transforming or manipulating of energy. Qi means energy. Gong means to study to reach mastery, to transform. The concept in Chinese medicine is that all Qi is intended to flow smoothly and continuously; to be in harmony and balance with the universe. Qigong is an ancient discipline combining meditation, focused concentration, breathing techniques and body movements to activate and cultivate our "vital energy" as it flows through the invisible energy channels, the meridians of the body.

During healing sessions, the practitioner will detect and remove energy blockages and send energy to balance the body's energy. This is done without touching. Active exercises and meditations are performed by the individual to open and maintain open energy channels. Participants in the Wellness Center have an opportunity to sign up for one-on-one healings with one of the many Qigong healers we have on hand each week. We also run a qigong practice group each week before dinner where many clients can move through a process of practice healing in a circular setting. Because of our strong mission toward holistic healing and stress management at the Wellness Center, the qigong healers provide additional healings to any one of the volunteer leaders that have served on an evening.

Reiki Healing Touch Therapy~ Our bodies and the field around them consist of energy. Disruptions of energy flow can occur in both the body and the field. Restoring the balance and flow of energy can provide pain relief, relaxation and a sense of well being. All energy work creates a sacred space of healing. Energy workers are not looking to cure but to unify the body, mind and spirit so that the recipient's own healing resources are strengthened.

At Love Grows Here wellness center Reiki and Healing Touch are the forms of energy work offered. Similar to qigong healings, participants in the Wellness Center sign up for a time slot during the evening and are cared for by a professional Reiki healer.

Chair Massage~ We continued our mission toward holistic healing this year by adding a Massage Therapist to the Wellness Center, once a month. Similar to our other healing opportunities, members of the wellness community are able to sign up for a chair massage/healing. This has been extremely helpful for our folks experiencing chronic pain or stress.

Ministering Angels~The mission of Ministering Angels is to provide clothing and household items to individuals and families who cannot otherwise afford it. Ministering Angels offers those who receive our

services an opportunity to receive donated clothing and select household items at no cost. The items donated to Ministering Angels will come from the community, friends, family, and any others who would like to donate items. Items may come from clients who no longer need items that they have and wish to pass them on. First Lutheran Church and the LGH Wellness Center continues to be the functioning site of the Ministering Angels Clothes Closet. Each week, members of the wellness community are able to request and receive the much-needed items that are essential. We continue to receive donations on a regular basis and are always in need of more!

Twin Cities Community Voicemail~Each week, the LGH Wellness Center is blessed to have two representatives from TCCVM helping people in the community receive this wonderful service. Twin Cities Community Voice Mail (TCCVM) helps low-income Minnesotans without phones by providing them with free voice mail service. This critical communication link connects them to the community to help them find jobs, homes, health care and other services necessary for self-sufficiency.

TCCVM is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1994. The board of directors encompasses a cross-section of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, including those with personal experience in homelessness, unemployment and/or domestic abuse, as well as social services and business. They partner with more than 350 social service agencies and government programs in the area, including 70 in Greater Minnesota. TCCVM empowers both clients and agencies through effective collaboration. To date, they have served more than 57,000 clients and we are excited to continue our partnership with them!

Spiritual/Pastoral Care~ The gifts Pastor Chris Berthelsen as well as the extra Pastoral support from Lynda Thompson and Mark Kopka has enriched our community with their commitment to the wellness program as well as the amazing students from Manna House, a First Lutheran Church partnership, who have been committed to living in intentional community. The Wellness Center continues to be a place of comfort and support to those who are living in the margins and our commitment to holistic healing includes the spiritual/pastoral care that is so critical.

Transportation~Making sure people in the community are receiving the best care possible makes transportation an important aspect of the wellness center. Many of the members of our community walk a fair distance however, we do have a small amount of volunteer drivers as well as a van donated by First Lutheran Church. Metropolitan State University has provided volunteer drivers in the past to local neighborhood partnerships. Bus tokens also make it easier for people in the community to receive care who are within a close distance. The Love Grows Here Wellness Center located a block north of the \$.50 bus line from downtown St. Paul.

South-Metro Services City/Community Liaison~ Bret Byfield

I see my functions at wellness being three-fold. First, I am an advertiser and recruiter, and invite and then welcome those who I may have met or served during my work day. Secondly, I seek to offer service triage and problem solving skills to the community during the evening. Lastly, I provide transportation from the downtown area to Wellness, and then back again at the end of the evening. I provide the occasional trip to an E.R., or other such need. Other end of wellness side trips to homes are often included, especially when they have been helped with items from Ministering Angels, but other drivers able to assist with this very valuable and relationship building courtesy would be wonderful to have more drivers for.

The Love Grows Here Wellness Center is a fully functioning, organic example of lay and professional volunteers, Church community, neighbors, and those in physical and spiritual need, coming together to create a community of mutual care, and healthy interdependent relationships, which foster a sense of belonging and wellness, which benefits equally all those who participate, as well as the immediate neighborhood.

Musical Entertainment~This year we were excited to welcome the Slush Puppies, Pastor Chris Berthelsen's Trio, recording artist Rachel Kurtz, professional rap-artist Dave Sherer, and Broadway performer, Sam Butler of the Blind Boys of Alabama. Each of these musicians has a strong commitment to the Wellness Center and specifically building urban community partnerships. Joined by Ms. Kurtz and Mr. Butler, our final evening of Wellness this spring, before we took our summer break, the LGHWC became a celebration of wellness brought forth! We had a bar-b-que with a full band and served over 250 people in one evening.

2011 Summer Additions

Friday Food Giveaways~In an effort to provide even more opportunities for our congregation and neighborhood to receive food through the many wonderful food ministries here at First Lutheran, we are taking three Fridays in the summer to do a free food giveaway. Through our partnership with Second Harvest Heartland Foods, free fresh produce and bread will be available in a farmer's market setting! First Lutheran Church will provide space in the courtyard outside, volunteers, and recyclable bags to take home. At our first attempt in June, along with 10 volunteers and the help of Second Harvest, we were able to fill bags for over 120 people at no cost to us or them! Over 800 pounds of food was given out and the rest was donated to our very own food shelf, camp or composted. July proved to be even more successful as we were able to give away around 1,000 pounds of food and were blessed with a wonderful volunteer turn out! In addition, a representative from Second Harvest Heartland SNAP/Food Assistance program will be joining us each week to help members of the community who are in need.

New Additions 2011-12

Shobi's Table~The Spirit has been on the move in this community! The fall of 2011 will see the beginning of Shobi's Table, a new worshipping community and ministry based out of the Wellness Center. Shobi's Table will be a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) through the St. Paul Area Synod of the ELCA. Mark Kopka, who has been a volunteer with us for the past year, and graduated this past May from Luther Seminary and will be ordained and called to this new ministry later this summer/early fall. This part-time pastoral call is through the St. Paul Area Synod, with ministry being based out of First Lutheran Church.

You may ask, "Who is Shobi?" Shobi is a rather small, however very significant character who shows up in 2 Samuel 17. While David was in wilderness exile with his people, running away from his son Absalom who was trying to kill him, Shobi was one of 3 people mentioned who showed David and his people hospitality, providing them with food, shelter and everything they needed. The "table" in Shobi's Table represents a place where we gather in community to be fed and sustained with physical food. The table is also where Christ welcomes us all to take part in the Eucharist, his body and blood. The table is a place where all are welcome. Radical hospitality will be a significant value of what Shobi's Table will be about.

Shobi's Table will most likely not hold worship services during the Thursday evening wellness program but will provide another opportunity throughout the week to encourage community fellowship. The LGH Wellness Center will provide space for spiritual care connected to Shobi's Table which may look like a bible study, men's group, etc. We are so excited to see how Shobi's Table will be another place where people in our community may be moved by the Holy Spirit.

Food Giveaways~Similar to our summer food ministry program addition, the Wellness Giveaways will happen once a month in conjunction with the Thursday evening wellness program at this time. We will continue to use Second Harvest Heartland Foods as our food distributor and have the option to continue

sharing the month's shipment with other food ministries at FLC or BLC. At this time we have two volunteers from the community who will oversee the ordering after previously confirmed with Allie. It is our hope and mission that we can provide food and meals, especially fresh produce and meat, to the community at no cost.

Intentional Children's Activity Hour~We have seen wonderful growth each year in the area of children, youth and families and look forward to more. It has become increasingly more apparent that there is a need for intentional and structured activities geared toward children and youth in our wellness community. This year the Wellness Center will implement activities and space dedicated to the needs of children and youth on a weekly basis. Through volunteer based leadership, the library will become the children's center from 5-6:00 p.m. where parents will be able leave their children to partake in service learning activities, storytime, yoga, learn leadership skills, get tutoring and much more. We are excited to create a more intentional wellness experience for children and youth!

St. Paul Public Schools Partnership~ In addition to our children/youth hub, St.Paul Public Schools has committed to providing tutoring assistance to our children, youth and adults on a weekly basis.

St. Paul Community Education Representatives~This year our partnership with the St. Paul Community Education will look a bit differently. Two representatives will be on hand on the second and third weeks of each month to provide one-on-one and group services in the areas of Job Placement and Financial/Credit counseling. We are excited to have a commitment to these areas of job and financial assistance as we know there is a high level of need.

Brain Representative~A representative from the Minnesota Brain Injury Association will be on hand at the wellness center for two weeks out of each month this year. Through a state grant, they are able to partner with a program that seeks to enrich the lives of those suffering from brain injury or trauma. Because of the large connection between brain injury, mental illness and people experiencing homelessness, we believe this will be an excellent fit!

New Congregational Mission Partners~
Incarnation Lutheran Church, Shoreview
Light of the World Lutheran Church, Farmington

Allie Tunseth
Coordinator
Love Grows Here Wellness Center
8-17-11