

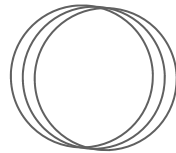
**Interfaith Caregivers**  
Faith in Action  
In Faribault County

# Interfaith Caregivers

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

FALL NEWSLETTER

2010



## Live Well at Home

Interfaith Caregivers is pleased to participate in the Live Well At Home Project funded by the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging.

The program starts with a Rapid Screen Assessment, which is a quick quiz of seven



### Open House!

**When:** September 22,  
2 - 4 pm

**Where:** Interfaith Office  
at the Ag Center

**Why:** Because we (new staff members) want to get to know you better!!!! Please join us!

questions. The quiz identifies older adults who are at high risk for early entry into the nursing home. After the quiz and its assessment, Interfaith can assist the individual by helping them to manage their own risk factors so they can remain in their own home.

This is a wonderful program that provides great insight and information to older adults who want to remain in their own home for as long as is safely possible but who have some concerns and/or issues that need to be addressed.

If you are interested in taking the Rapid Screen quiz, just call the Interfaith office at 526-4684. Get started today on living well in your own home! ■

# With Gratitude

*From the Director*

I can not think of a better way to begin this article than by saying “Thank-you!” to every one who has so warmly welcomed me to Interfaith Caregivers and Minnesota. I am thrilled to be here, and I am looking forward to working with you, and getting to know all of you.

The thing that makes me the most excited about this organization is that we exist to supply a very important need in our communities.

Now you may be thinking that I am going to start talking about those seniors who need a ride, or a friendly visit, or something that helps them live independently at home. Of course, this is a very important need that I care about very much. It is also the mission of Interfaith Caregivers.

But I’m talking about something else...another important need in our communities:

The need we have to share what we have, be it time, or wealth, or sympathy, or whatever, with those who need it.

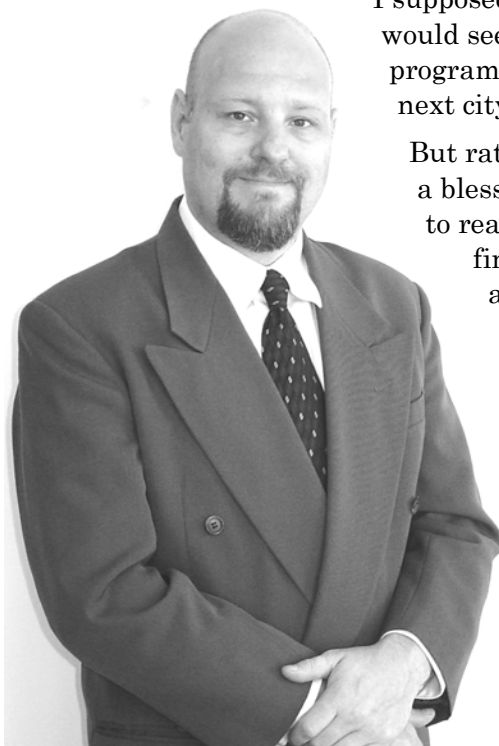
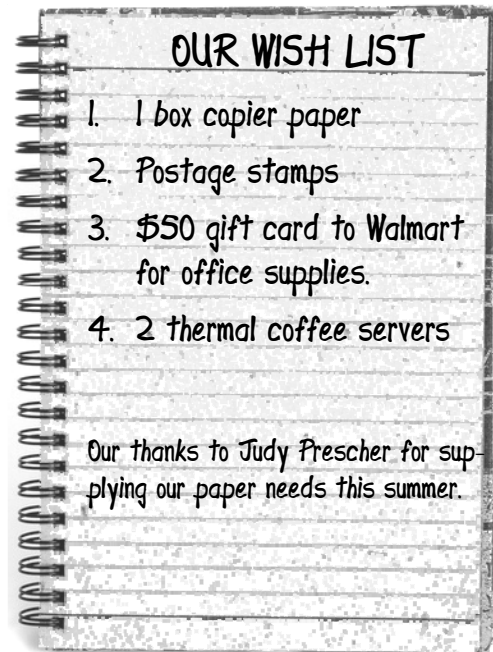
Jesus told a story about a rich man who “fared sumptuously every day,” at whose gate sat a beggar named Lazarus who was covered by sores. It is easy to focus on poor Lazarus’ needs, who would have been satisfied by the rich man’s table scraps.

I supposed that if we looked at it from the rich’s mans perspective, we would see Lazarus as something of a burden. Isn’t there some kind of program he can get into. Maybe the problem can be addressed at the next city council meeting.

But rather than looking at Lazarus as a burden, we should see him as a blessing. He is an opportunity that God has given to the rich man to reach outside of himself, to participate in an act of charity, and to find fulfillment in his life, for we were created to love one-another. That’s what it means to be in the image of God. We reflect God when we love another, for God is love.

I have heard many seniors complain that they are “just a burden.” I bet you’ve heard that one too. It isn’t true. Not at all. The truth is that they are blessings, they are opportunities given to us by God to participate in His creative love and to be the people He intended us to be.

That is what excites me about Interfaith Caregivers. Not only are we helping seniors to live independently, but we are providing the opportunity for people to use their time and resources in a way that is, in itself, a blessing. ■



# How Outstanding!

By Cami Hafner

Mary Majeski, our Care Team Leader in Wells, was awarded the 2010 Outstanding Senior Volunteer Award for Fairbault County. Mary has been an exceptionally dedicated and sincere volunteer for us. Interfaith Caregivers has a simple mission: Neighbors helping our senior neighbors with non-medical care. Our goal is to have a network of trained volunteers to enable those served to maintain independence, dignity and quality of life. Mary has been instrumental in service to



our organization, and to those she serves. Best of all, Mary's dedication to volunteering is infectious. People who know her and what she does for our organization are gently urged by her to become volunteers, and do you know, they do it. They become volunteers too! This is one of the many reasons why Mary heads up our Care Team of Volunteers in Wells.

Unfortunately, on the day of the ceremony to receive this award, Mary was having surgery. Thankfully, fellow Wells volunteer Willma Johnson stepped up and received the honor on behalf of her friend Mary. "I'm glad I could do this for Mary. She is a wonderful person to be a substitute for," said Willma.

A week after her surgery, I presented Mary with her award and "crowned" her as Queen of the Outstanding Senior Volunteer.

"You know, you really deserved this." I told her.

"Oh, well." Mary said in reply. And that is so like Mary! Modest and unassuming, BIG and OUTSTANDING volunteer spirit! Thanks for all you do for Interfaith, Mary! ■

## Chili Supper/Harvest Bake Sale---October 22

It certainly is hard to imagine with these hot days we've been having lately, but it *will* get colder. Wouldn't it be nice to have a nice hot bowl of chili and some warm conversation to go along with it on a cool Autumn day? Then come and join us for our annual Chili Supper on Friday, October 22 from 5:00--7:00pm. We'll be at the Social Hall in St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 214 S. Holland St. in Blue Earth. Why cook when you can come out and have some tasty chili that's been simmering deliciously since morning?

The supper is our autumn fundraiser for Interfaith, and it is a free will donation. The funding is used to help our senior clients through the work of Interfaith Caregivers—You'll be helping your senior neighbors in your community .

**Would you or your church like to help??** We need —

- Baked goods (Apple pie, crisp, dumplings; pumpkin bars, cake, pie; cookies, candies, what's your specialty?)
- Produce (squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, ...what's in your garden?)
- Volunteers needed to help with serving and the sale

Desserts for the dessert table (We serve about 250 people.)

Be nice to yourself and have a night off from cooking, mark October 22 on your calendar. ■



# Helen Tesch

## *2010 Recipient of the Roger J. Wolfe Achievement Award*

We can't say that we're surprised. But last month, Helen Tesch received the Minnesota Valley Action Council's 2010 Roger J. Wolfe achievement award. Selection for this award is based on a person's contribution to the communities in which they live, as well as being an inspiration to others.

Helen's volunteering experience began from her youth and often involved her services in her faith community and school life. She attended Blue Earth Area Public School, graduating in 1964. During high school she was active in debate, National Forensic League, wrote for the school paper, Future Teachers of America, German Club, World Affairs Club and was a member of the National Honor Society. She also participated in the Walther League and taught Vacation Bible School for several years.

During her college years at Valparaiso University in Indiana, Helen chose to fulfill the requirements of the deaconess program. That included her internship at Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, WI. There she worked with students living with severe developmental disabilities and dedicated

herself to tutoring them in their religious development. Her elder brother, Don, notes that she always went the "extra mile" and never backed off from challenging tasks. "She would always find a way," he says.

After graduation with her B.A. in theology, Helen served as deaconess for the Lutheran Deaconess Association in Valparaiso until she married Richard Meyers.

Even as a wife and mom of twin sons, Helen continued to volunteer for teaching Sunday School,

Vacation Bible School, working with the Lutheran Women's Missionary Alliance and reaching out to gather and work with other volunteers to care for those needing a helping hand.

Her brother, Don, recalls the time in 1996 when Helen visited back in MN while their oldest sister was dealing with cancer. When Helen saw how weak Marian had become, she decided to stay in MN with her. She cared for her at home until her death in the summer of 1997. "Helen's sons were in college and Dick fended for himself," says Don. Her sister and husband, Marian and Armand Tesch, had four children and their family was blessed to have Helen there to accompany the family through that difficult time. Helen's caregiving gifts were further honed as she cared for her husband through a lengthy struggle with emphysema. (Dick died in 1999.) At the same time, Helen completed 1600 hours (4 units) of Clinical Pastoral Education at The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati and began her work as the only woman chaplain on the team of The Federation of Lutheran Churches of Cincinnati and Vicinity.

As a deaconess, Helen's ministry extended far beyond her work hours. She often was called to assist patients and families affected by accidents and brought to the trauma center. Frequently these persons were not currently affiliated with a church family. She found herself in the role of pastor for them as they recovered or accompanying family members who lost loved ones suddenly. Another main role for Helen was as chaplain in the neonatal intensive care unit. Little ones there were born prematurely or with serious conditions resulting in stressful situations especially for the new moms. Helen would not only minister to their needs in the hospital, but would keep touch through whatever happened. Her brother, Don, recalls a phone conversation with Helen one evening. "She told me that the night or next day would bring either great joy or great sadness." Two



# Everyone Needs a Hand



*Everyone needs a hand to hold on to.*

*Everyone needs a hand to hold on to.*

*Don't need to be no strong hand,*

*Don't need to be no rich hand,*

*Everyone just needs a hand to hold on to.*

Anybody growing up in the 1980's probably recognizes these as the lyrics from a popular song by John Cougar Mellencamp. These lyrics are so fitting to what we are trying to accomplish here at Interfaith Caregivers. There are senior people in our neighborhoods and towns that need someone willing to reach out and give a hand. Regardless of our own strength or wealth, someone needs our hand. Are you willing to reach out and help? Maybe you are a good listener. Perhaps you enjoy driving. Possibly you are one of those people who like to visit on the phone. We will be training new volunteers in the fall and can help you get started on the path toward reaching out your hand. Call us and let us know! 526-4684. ■

**Join us for volunteer Training on September 21, 1-3:30 pm at the Ag Center!**

moms had given birth prematurely, one to triplets and one to twins. Helen recently told a co-worker that there were times when she sewed little outfits for babies' funeral attire when they did not survive. Don recounts many times when it was Helen who accompanied families to the cemetery for graveside services when they did not have church homes. And she followed up with them during the hard times afterwards.

In her work at Ham Lake, MN Helen also went beyond the bounds of job description and time to reach out. Her care and attention extended to all ages, but especially to the elderly, homebound and bereaved. During her time in there, Helen learned of the work of Interfaith Caregivers in Faribault County through a sister-in-law who was then on staff. In the fall of 2007 she learned of their need for a director. Helen took to heart the goal of providing IFC with a "qualified (leader) to facilitate the work of Faith in Action in a professional and God-pleasing manner. To serve the Lord and His people using the gifts He has provided me with, namely, faith, mercy, organization and administration, and teaching." . She was willing to relocate back to her birthplace in order to fulfill this call and purpose. Once again, she did not hesitate in the face of a challenge and accomplished the move and transition within a few months. During her time back in MN as Director of Interfaith Caregivers, Helen brought creativity, diligence,

joy and dedication to the program and its participants. Her work hours were part time, in accord with the budget of the organization. Helen's dedication extended to many volunteer hours in carrying out the duties and other opportunities she saw to serve the needs of the care receivers and development activities within the community. She also continued her volunteering outreach through work on the call committee for St. Paul and Immanuel Churches. She sought out opportunities to extend her help to fundraising activities of Thrivent and of the Blue Earth Area Mentors. Since June of 2008, Helen has dealt with her own diagnosis of cancer and ongoing treatment, finally retiring in the Spring of 2010 when she realized that she could serve best by handing over the work.

Helen continues as primary caregiver for her husband, Armand, who lives with severe diabetes and is a survivor of an aneurysm and stroke. She has become "Aunt-Mom" to his children, as she and Armand married some years after both lost their spouses. Helen dedicated herself to getting to know the current volunteers and care receivers in the program and to encourage them to extend the network of care and support into the wider community. Her inspiration brought new volunteers and staff members on board and her advocacy inspired many persons in both personal/family and professional caregiving roles in the area. ■

POWERFUL

# Tools for Caregivers



**Are you a caregiver** who is feeling stressed and overwhelmed? At times do you feel angry or depressed and aren't sure how to deal with those feelings? Interfaith Caregivers is pleased to be able to offer a six-week educational program "Powerful Tools for Caregiver" that is designed to help caregivers deal with these issues. You will learn about tools that can help you increase self-care and confidence to handle difficult situations, emotions and decisions. We know that for those of you managing the care of a loved one, it is often challenging to find time to care for your own health and well-being. The goal of the class is to help caregivers better manage the problems associated with caregiving and to help you find solutions.

Interfaith is offering this class on Tuesdays, beginning August 31<sup>st</sup> through Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. We will meet from 9:30 to 12:00 at the Ag Center. The cost of the class is \$25. If the cost is a hardship for you, please let us know. To register, call the Interfaith office at 507-526-4684. ■



## We Prize our Volunteers!

The IFC Board would like to thank all of our volunteers and the IFC staff who contributed items for the silent auction at this year's fair. You provided a wide variety of articles including handmade note cards, pies, quilts, wall hangings, ornaments, wood carvings, gift baskets, etc. The assortment of items is a testament to the creativity of our IFC family.

We also want to thank everyone who worked at the booth this year and/or bid on the the items for the silent auction--or helped organize the articles, set up, or take down the booth. Your support was invaluable to the success of the IFC Silent Auction Fun'draiser. ■

*Arlyce Holland & Sue Eckles*

# A Big **Thank-you** to our Caregiving Partners!!

## INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Wilhemine Asmus  
 Jean Bierly  
 Veanna Eberline  
 Jeannette Eichhorn  
 Ellen Haakensen  
 Ole & Tordis Hadland  
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## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

**Arden Alfson**  
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 Jan & Linda Willette

## CHURCHES

Dell Lutheran Church, Frost  
 Grace United Methodist Church  
 Women, Kiester  
 Shiloh ELCW, Elmore  
 United in Faith Parish

## ORGANIZATIONS

Blue Earth United Fund  
 Garden Court Apartments,  
 Winnebago  
 Region 9 Caregiver Support  
 Program  
 Wells Greater United Fund

All of the above donations  
 were deposited  
 between 4/27/10 and 7/28/10.  
 Gifts received after July 28  
 will appear in  
 the next newsletter



**Interfaith Caregivers—  
Faith in Action**

415 S. Grove St, Suite 5  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

507-526-4684

**FAITH  
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Return Service Requested

Interfaith Caregivers is part of Minnesota Faith in Action®, providing volunteer non-medical services supporting seniors and helping them remain in their homes as long as possible.

The Interfaith Caregivers project is made possible in part through the Minnesota Department of Human Services by an award from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging® Joint Powers Board.

**Our Services:**

Transportation  
Friendly Visits  
Telephone Reassurance  
Respite Care  
Caregiver Consulting  
Support Groups  
Living at Home Wellness checks

**Requests for services** should be made at least 48 hours in advance. Please plan ahead, as our office is closed Friday—Sunday.

**Interfaith  
Caregivers**

**Board of Directors**

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Arlyce Holland, Vice-Chair  
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Gail Otteson, Secretary  
Sue Eckles,  
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Cami Hafner,  
Project ROSE Coordinator  
Merry McGowen,  
Caregiver Consultant  
Dorothy Nassen,  
Office Assistant  
Dan Woodring,  
Director, Caregiver Consultant

**Upcoming Schedule**

**EVENTS**

**Open House**, Sept. 22, 2010. 2-4 pm. Ag Center  
**Volunteer Recertification**, October 7. 9:30-11 am  
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Blue Earth.  
**Chili Supper Fundraiser**, Oct. 22, 2010. 5-7 pm.  
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Blue Earth.

**CLASSES**

**Matter of Balance** (7 wks)  
Mondays, beginning August 9, 2010  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Blue Earth  
9:30—11:30 am.  
**Powerful Tools for Caregivers** (6 wks)  
Tuesdays, beginning August 31, 2010  
Ag Center, Blue Earth.  
9:30—12:00 am. Please pre-register.

**CARE TEAMS**

**United in Faith Care Team** To Be Announced  
**Delavan Care Team** Sept. 16, 2010, 10am at Gail Otteson's  
**Immanuel/St.Paul Care Team** Sept. 22, 2010, 9:30am at St. Paul's  
**Elmore Care Team** Sept. 28, 2010, 9:30am at Arlyce Holland's  
**Winnebago Care Team** Oct. 19, 2010, 10am at First Baptist  
**Wells Care Team** To Be Announced