

Calendar

DECEMBER

- 8 SOS Christmas Party, Naperville Lights Trolley Tour, 6 p.m.
 - 14 STARS Christmas Program, 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary
- 23/30 No STARS Sunday classes. Merry Christmas!

JANUARY

- 4 Friday Night Fun & Parent Support Group resume, 6-8 p.m.
- 5 SOS 11-2 p.m.
- 6 Sunday classes only at 9:30 a.m.
- 16 Praise in Action resumes, 6:45 p.m.

FEBRUARY

- 2 SupportingSTARS.net Training (Volunteers), 8:30-12:30 p.m.
- 9 SOS 11-2 p.m.

Christmas Program All are welcome to celebrate Christmas with the STARS on Friday, December 14 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Our Praise in Action group has been preparing all fall to present the story of Jesus' birth in song, drama and instrument. A cookie and punch reception will follow in the Narthex. Reservations aren't necessary; please feel free to invite family, friends and neighbors!

Holiday Schedule Sunday morning classes will be cancelled for December 23 and 30, and will be one hour only on January 6. Normal schedule will resume January 13. Praise in Action will not meet from December 19 through January 9. It will resume on January 16. Friday Night Fun will not meet in December (all are welcome to our Christmas program!), but will resume on January 18.

Speakers at Parent Support Group

Friday, January 4—Dr. Russ Kincaid from Shepherds Ministries
Russ is executive VP at Shepherd's Ministries in Union Grove, WI. He will speak on Appropriate Independence.

February 1—Stephanie Hubach, Special Needs Ministries Director, PCA
Stephanie is the mother of a son with Down Syndrome and the author of the book, *Same Lake, Different Boat*. She will be speaking on the "Relentlessness of Disability."

Support Groups Children of Hope is a support group whose main purpose is provide prayer and encouragement to moms of special needs kids. They have been meeting about once a week for about 3 years. If you would like to join or be added to the mailing list, please contact Karen Tuurie, (630) 520-0113.

Liita Forsyth, mother of STAR Nathan, has started a blog for the work-at-home-mom, especially for the mom with a child with a disability. To connect with other self-employed moms or just to learn how other moms cope, go to: <http://wintertreedesign.com/blog/>

Save the Dates! Disability Ministry Sunday is **Sunday, April 13**. Watch for more details to come. A little further down the calendar, plan on Memorial Day Weekend, **May 23-26** for our 2nd annual Family Retreat. It was such a hit last year that it is officially an annual event. More information will come in the spring.

STARS "Seeking To Always Reflect the Savior"



Praise

- Another wonderful Adult STARS Retreat in November. The STARS all enjoyed learning the ABC's of Salvation.
- The Tally's testimony of God's faithfulness at the Thanksgiving Eve service.
- The myriad of volunteers who came to the surface over the past few months - how amazing it is to see God match up the right people in the right places at just the right time.
- Baby Jesus coming to earth over 2000 years ago to redeem mankind. What a wonderful God we serve!

Prayer

- Healing and recovery for Joey Kenney after his leg surgery on November 21. Joey would love visitors! Just give his parents a call at (630) 876-8490.
- Tony Belgio's foot problems—that it would heal so that he could walk without a wheelchair.
- Discernment and creativity as more STARS and families join our programs.

Birthdays

December

Ed Doutlick	Dec. 6
John Canada	Dec. 7
Sheri Carter	Dec. 11
Julie Lund	Dec. 11
Nathan Forsyth	Dec. 26
Becca Tally	Dec. 29
Sarah Curiale	Dec. 29
Ian Kenneally	Dec. 31

January

Dan White	Jan. 2
Chris Hensley	Jan. 7
Cindy Chong	Jan. 10
Sami Dajani	Jan. 10
B.J. Kettinger	Jan. 11
Luke Castaldo	Jan. 11
Sarah Garcia	Jan. 14
Jack Evanosky	Jan. 15
Theresa Beltramelli	Jan. 21

February

Dan Delort	Feb. 1
Christy Kosirog	Feb. 4
Tony Belgio	Feb. 7
Erik Koepke	Feb. 9
Peter Lyon	Feb. 21
David Brinker	Feb. 22
Joseph Quattrochi	Feb. 23
Sandy Klosak	Feb. 25
Michael Powell	Feb. 26
John Day	Feb. 26
Marilyn Francik	Feb. 28

BRIDGES



STARS Newsletter

College Church in Wheaton
December 2007 - February 2008

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MINISTRY UPDATES

Shepherd's Arms is going strong and volunteers have been a huge blessing to the families they serve. The STARS have been a blessing to volunteers as well.

Wheaton College student **Christie Wilson** writes, "Hope is amazing. We spent the evening together watching movies and chasing ping pong balls and Shrek toys. She inspired me to consider joy and God's blessing because she is so joyful, so alive and full of energy. As we curled up together for the movie, all I could think was what a special jewel Hope is...how precious in God's sight and mine as well. She is so precious, so lovely."

Here is what Wheaton College student **Hannah Page** has to say, "Things are great with Dylan... I have learned that he loves trucks and tractors; we play lots of games with them, like "What's in the back of the truck today?" Then sometimes when he gets tired, all he wants to do is snuggle and that's great, too! He is truly a joy to spend time with."

Amy Lutz, our Student Coordinator, writes, "I think everything is going well... I'm really enjoying working with Stephanie for the Beltramelli's; I've gotten to know her a lot better through babysitting together. Also, I was talking to the Daniels about how it was going with Danielle (a volunteer) and Anisa (their STAR), and they said that they had Danielle over for dinner and they told her to let them know if she ever needed anything. When she needed a ride to the airport she felt comfortable enough asking them, and they were able to help her out. Isn't it neat how volunteers are blessed just as much as they bless the families?"

Krista Marcheschi,
Shepherd's Arms Coordinator

Prayers of the STARS

Recently the STARS memorized this verse as part of their Sunday morning adult Bible class, which was fitting because prayer is one of many STARS favorite pastimes. If you have any doubt, just come and visit during "Prayer and Praise" time in our STARS classrooms. What makes the prayers of the STARS different than the prayers of most of us? Seeing how the STARS prayed for her daughter, Nancy Tally, mother of STAR Becca, puts it this way.

"As grown reasonable adults we are all too aware of what man can or can not do medically. We often lack the trust in God or just the imagination to step out in faith and ask for what is needed. We fear being disappointed for looking foolish for asking for so unrealistic a result."

Not so with the STARS. When Becca Tally experienced a seizure at Disability Ministry Sunday last April, she was taken to CDH via ambulance. STAR Cheryl Newing dropped to her knees and asked God to totally heal

Becca and bring her back that morning since this was such a special Sunday for them all. Most of the volunteers said their hearts sunk when they heard this prayer, knowing that it generally takes six to



eight hours to leave the hospital. To be back at church within a couple of hours would be quite a stretch. However, by 11 a.m. the hospital cleared Becca and she and her parents walked into the STARS room at 11:45 a.m. When

Nancy asked Cheryl if she was surprised to see Becca back, Cheryl calmly replied, "Oh no! I knew she would be here. We asked God to bring her."

The Tallys shared further blessings from the prayers of the STARS when Becca experienced a stroke this summer. STARS Tony Belgio, Joey Kenney, Courtney Liltz and John Day visited Becca and prayed for her. Whenever STAR Tim Davis visited he would lay his hand on Becca's shoulder and pray for her healing. John Jostock prayed every night for Becca. When Becca came back to STARS in a wheelchair, John came up to her and said, "No, she cannot stay this way. We pray." Today Becca has made a wonderful recovery and no longer needs that wheelchair.

As we think about the prayers of the STARS, let us also remember the prayers of Jesus. Hebrews 7:24-25 says, "Because Jesus lives forever... he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them." Those are prayers we can really count on. Jesus knows our deepest needs, always prays God's best for us and will never forget to pray for us. I count on that and bet the STARS do to.

-dawn

Is there anyone in trouble? He should pray.

JAMES 5:13

Welcome

TO THIS NEW FAMILY...



The Whitt-Heckler Family

Hannah Whitt-Heckler joined the STARS at the beginning of this year. She is in the fifth grade at Bower Elementary School in Warrenville. Hannah loves the Chicago Cubs and her favorite movies are Veggie Tales and High School Musical. Her favorite color is pink.

Her mom, Kandis Heckler, tells us that they learned of the STARS program through the Joni and Friends website. She says that College Church welcomed their family "with open arms."

Hannah has four brothers—two, Zechariah and Zephaniah, who just graduated from Trinity International University in May. Nehemiah is in the 7th grade at St. John's Lutheran School, and Jeremiah is in the 4th grade at Pleasant Hill School.

One remarkable thing about this family is that Hannah is adopted. Kandis says, "After having three sons I asked the Lord for a daughter... and the Lord told me that there was a sure way I could have a daughter. After extensive prayer I decided to pursue adoption... at an agency that specialized in special needs children. Since I wanted a newborn I would have to wait quite a long time. A year passed... and the agency called and said they had just received a call from the hospital and a little girl was born with unidentifiable special needs who needed a home. They told me I could bring her home from the hospital immediately. I knew the Lord had just sent me a very special girl from Heaven. On July 31, 2001 Hannah and Jeremiah [pictured above] were adopted in the family just like we are all adopted into the family of God."

Kandis heads her own film company, Agape Productions. Agape has just wrapped up production on "Unto the Least of These," which will be coming to television soon. She is working on a new project, "Women of the Corinthian Cafe." Check out the website: www.agapeproductionsinc.com

Be sure to seek out and greet this new family.



Lauren's Corner

An interview with Bob and Ric Baptista

Lauren—How long has Ric been coming to the STARS program?

Bob—Ric came in 1990 because of the Seeker Program. We, his Mom and Dad, had been looking for a Disability ministry and there was nothing except the College Church program. So, when we moved back to Wheaton he came to College Church.

Lauren—When did he join College Church?

Bob—He joined College Church in the early 1990's. I had heard it was a very good church and Ric loved the Seekers, so he joined the Church!

Lauren—How did he become an usher?

Bob—Olena Mae Welsh suggested that he might be able to serve as an usher. She talked to the usher chairman and worked it out so he became an usher many years ago and he still serves in that way!!

Lauren—What all does he do in that job?

Bob—First of all he wears a name tag that says "Ric Baptista, Usher." It's sort of a metal, magnetic thing. He stands at the door, welcomes people and gives them a program when they come in. At the proper time he takes up the offering for two sections. He has two offering plates. He gives them to the people. They send it back down the row and then he gives it to the next row and they do the same thing. He likes this job very much. It's very enjoyable for him. Most of the time I help him at the other end of

the section. We collect offering together then we walk out and I give Rick the plates and he takes them to the head usher out in the Narthex!!!

Lauren—Does he like doing it?

Bob—He likes the job very much because he meets nice people when they come in. They say hello to him and get to know him and he gets to know them. Meeting so many people is what he likes. They all know who he is and he likes that very, very much. It is fun and he likes it!!

Lauren—Does he work? If so, what does he do?

Bob—Yes, Ric works at two paying jobs. One is at the Spectrum Workshop for an hour. He picks up all of the wastebaskets in the workshop. That's a whole lot of wastebaskets. He empties them and puts them back so the people can fill them up the next day.

Then, he works at a Subway Restaurant in Downers Grove. He has worked many, many years there. He cleans the tables and picks up the trash. He fills the Coke machines when they get empty and he keeps the place clean and looking nice. The manager likes what he does and he's been doing it a long time.

Lauren—Does he have any hobbies?

Bob—Ric is very, very interested in the fire department and firehouse activities.



Pieces to God's Puzzle

By Karen Sutherland

Tell me something about you.

Brandon—I was born in a small town (less than 300 people) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I'm relatively new to Wheaton, have transferred in at the beginning of the past school year. I started going to College Church immediately because I knew the youth pastor, Jonathan Cummings, from my old church. I started as an intern with him last year.

My dad worked in a group home while I was growing up, and sometimes he'd take me and some of my siblings to work with him to play with those living in the group home. He'd also take two guys to church with him on Sunday morning to Children's Church, which he taught. We have two adults with disabilities who live with our family. Let me tell you about them:

Sandy has lived with us for 3 years now. She moved in when I was a freshman in college and the first time I walked into the house when she was there, she came up to me, shook my hand, and kissed me on the cheek. Since then she has become an important member of our family. Her favorite time of the year is Christmas, and she gets very excited whenever she see anything that has to do with Christmas or hears Jingle Bells. She really loves to sing along in church and everyone in the church family loves her.

Jerry moved in a couple of years ago. He's full of interesting stories about his childhood and the rest of his family but sometimes he gets confused. He's diabetic, so he has to watch what he eats and get shots every day, but I've never heard him complain. He's always on the lookout for a girlfriend for me, but he hasn't found one yet. We used to tease him about his girlfriend, Suzy. They would sit next to each other on the bus, but then Suzy started sitting next to another guy.

Every time I come home, it's like I never left. Sandy comes up and kisses me on the cheek and I can walk into Jerry's room and he'll be watching Bonanza or Godzilla or something.

How did you hear about and become interested in the STARS ministry?

Brandon—I got involved in STARS through HYACKs. The Disability Ministry Team was having a training one morning, so I came in and asked Nancy Biedry if it was too late to sign up. The next week I was helping a group lead singing with the Adult STARS on Sunday morning.

What motivated you to volunteer?

Brandon—Although I originally got involved with worship on Sunday mornings and did a little with drama for the teen STARS, I wasn't very involved. I was a little too intimidated to go to Friday Night Fun because I felt a little like an outsider since I hadn't really gotten to know any of the STARS. I loved the Christmas program and watching what the STARS were doing, but I still didn't feel very connected.

All this changed one fateful afternoon when I got an e-mail about the first annual Adult STARS retreat. They were desperate for a few more volunteers, so I ended up going. That retreat was one of the most fun weekends I have ever had. Since then I've gone out of my way to just hang out with the STARS because they are such a joy to be around. I'm still an intern in HYACKs and when I was told about the opportunity for a student-heavy teen STARS program, I jumped at the chance.

What do you like so far about working with our STARS? What's most challenging?

Brandon—The STARS are so genuine. It feels good to be able to express how much you care about someone and have that reciprocated.

No matter how long I've been away from them, whenever I come back it's like I never left.



There are always some difficulties when working with the STARS. Sometimes they can be stubborn (can't we all?) if they're doing something unfamiliar, but most of the time, all you need is the right approach and a lot of love to work through the rough areas.

The High School Disability Ministry Team has desired to build relationships with the Teen STARS for several years. The first piece to God's plan for this work was a class was created this fall. Each Sunday, 5-7 DMT members join 5-7 Teen STARS and walk over to the worship service together. After about 20 minutes of worshipping together, they continue their class in the High School room, acting out stories, making up songs and playing games. If you were to witness the laughter and smiles, you wouldn't be able to tell a STAR apart from a high schooler.

Another piece to this puzzle was when we discovered that Brandon Newlin, a student at Wheaton College and an intern in the high school ministry, had a passion for STARS. The DMT has always been short on males. Brandon jumped on board and opened the door for six more guys to join the DMT—guys who have found they also love the STARS.

The final pieces to God's puzzle are the friendships that are being bonded across cognitive and social barriers. This is not a ministry for the DMT. It is an hour they look forward to, where they can enjoy their new friends and learn alongside them. What a picture of God's family!

Shine, STARS, Shine!

Some of the ways our STARS serve others...



Our Resident Librarian

—Each week, Katie Klein faithfully comes to the College Church Library to give of her time in whatever the job requires. One of her favorite jobs is putting stickers on books.

So many STARS have a servant's heart. Here a just a few!



Birthdays every week

—Every Tuesday, Lauren Chase commits several hours to creating birthday cards for every STAR. She has learned to use the computer to type in birthday messages, and has been known to have quite a sense of humor!



Cleaning the Bus—Two days a week throughout the fall, Chris Hensley showed up to make our STARS van squeaky clean. Some days he washed the windows, some days he vacuumed and picked up trash, and on the warm days, he got to use the hose and brush!



2007 Disability Ministry Team
Over 20 high schoolers!