

Open Hearts

Open Minds

Inclusion in Worship Newsletter

Open Hearts Program Reaches Clergy

The Pathways Awareness Open Hearts, Open Minds program presented three workshops featuring Father Henri Nouwen's *Vulnerable Journey* to Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox clergy this spring. The workshops used excerpts from Nouwen's 1996 keynote address at the historic inclusion conference sponsored by Pathways Awareness to explain the theological basis for placing the most vulnerable people at the center of parish life. Inclusion was presented as the gospel message and a fundamental part of pastoral ministry. Clergy appreciated information about using people-first language and training ushers and lay leaders to be welcoming.

Priests and brothers participated in a ninety minute workshop and shared stories of how including parishioners of all abilities transformed their ministries at the Greek Orthodox Clergy Association Retreat.

Second year theology students from Mundelein Seminary attended a workshop as part of their training for future ministry. In *The Vulnerable Journey*, Father Nouwen states that people with disabilities created the Presence he so badly needed in his life.



At the Greek Orthodox Clergy Association Retreat, priests shared how individuals with disabilities transformed their lives and renewed their ministries.

Seminarians shared similar experiences when working with children with hearing loss, making Communion calls to parishioners with significant disabilities and studying with a classmate with a vision loss.

At the Art of Pastoring Conference for new pastors in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, Father Samson Mukundi, St. Gilbert Church, Grayslake, IL, recognized the need for pastors to take the lead on providing accommodations so that all can participate. "As pastors, we need to speak to our ministry leaders and see that they are including all parishioners in their ministries," said Mukundi during the one hour workshop.

Schedule your Pathways Awareness workshop at 1-800-955-2445.

Deadlines for Grants

The deadline for **Pathways Awareness Chicago Area and National Open Hearts and Junior Open Hearts Awards** is **August 1, 2009**. Nominate your congregation for grants of up to \$1,000 for specific access or inclusion projects. Last year 12 year old Jared Lichtman won a \$1,000 National Junior Open Hearts Award for his synagogue, Congregation Beth El in Bethesda MD. Visit www.inclusioninworship.org for nomination forms or call 1-800-955-2445.

The deadline for **Retirement Research Foundation Accessible Faith Grants** is **June 26, 2009**. Grants of up to \$30,000 are available for Chicago area houses of worship. Visit www.rrf.org or call 773-714-8080.

Inclusion Tip



An inclusive faith community consistently publicizes that accommodations will be provided so that worshipers of all abilities know they are welcome to

participate in religious services, ministries, fellowship and religious education programs.

Congregations Plan for Inclusion Awareness Day, Oct. 10 and 11, 2009

Pathways Awareness invites Chicago area congregations to celebrate Inclusion Awareness Day on the weekend of **October 11, 2009**, or an alternate date this fall. Take stock of how well your congregation accommodates and includes worshippers of varying abilities and plan ways to improve access and inclusion. Celebrate your congregations' accomplishments on Inclusion Awareness Day.

Last year on Inclusion Awareness Day Prince of Peace Church in Lake Villa, IL, demonstrated assistive listening devices purchased with their Pathways Awareness Open Hearts Award grant. The inclusion committee created a video of their church's access features and inclusion efforts and showed it after services. Patricia Spencer, Pathways Awareness Inclusion Representative, works with the pastor and inclusion committee to see that the needs of members are met. She coordinates activities for Inclusion Awareness Day and publicizes the parish event in the bulletin in advance of the day.

Visit www.inclusioninworship.org for ideas and planning materials for your congregations' Inclusion Awareness Day celebration.

ABOUT PATHWAYS AWARENESS

Pathways Awareness is dedicated to early detection and early intervention for children with motor delays and the importance of inclusion in all aspects of life. The Open Hearts, Open Minds program provides information and education materials about inclusion in worship. For more information, please call 1-800-955-2445, write to 150 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2100, Chicago, IL or visit www.pathwaysawareness.org and www.inclusioninworship.org.