

The Grace Notes newsletter

July / August 2011

Can a Soccer Referee be a Witness for Christ?

One of my favorite activities during my new retirement endeavors has been the opportunity to officiate high school and youth soccer matches in the suburban area. For me it's a great way to stay fit, be around a game I love, and earn a little lunch money. And oh yes, there is the joy of hearing immediate, loud, and emotional critique of my work. Also, I try to be ready to witness as I know I should, but often fall short.

A couple Saturdays ago I was assigned to a high school tournament at Maine South and I worked two games with one of

my referee friends, Harold. I had last seen Harold in the Fall when he officiated a game I was coaching at Timothy Christian High School. I love coaching at Timothy because being a Christian school they let me talk to their kids all the time about the Word, Jesus and faith. So when I meet friends like Harold on campus I like to tell them, "this is a great place to work, because they love hearing about Jesus Christ." Being a lukewarm Jew, Harold gave me one of those incredulous looks we get sometimes when we get bold in our witness.

But at Maine South Harold opened up with me about some type of melanoma he'd been battling from sun exposure and I told him I had some heat exhaustion from exposure when I was on a work project in New Orleans. Then he remembered that I "do those goodie, churchy-type things" (his words) and I explained, "Harold man, Jesus Christ lives and breathes in me, so what else can I do?"

Sensing that he had recalled my initial identification with Christ and knowing the Holy Spirit is ultimately responsible for this guy's destiny, between games I asked Harold, "I don't

mean to proselytize here, but tell me Harold, from your perspective what happens to person in the afterlife?" Harold thought, he stammered, he spewed a few thoughts and concluded that he just did not know. I responded, "If this life is all there is, this is a pretty depressing and short existence for many, many people."

And, that's where I left it. I sensed that was all Harold could take at that moment, but I've been praying like crazy for the Holy Spirit to draw him closer and closer, step by step to Almighty God. And consid-

ering Harold's separation from his wife of 25 years (last January) he's needing some of that agape acceptance.

- Bud Swanson

[Editor's Note: If you have stories about sharing your faith, please submit them by email to Pastor Jay at gefc1@comcast.net. We would like to share them in the Grace Notes!]



Upcoming Events

- Jul 23 /24 Japanese Cong. Kids' Camp
- Jul 31 Potluck Picnic @ Parsonage
- Jul 31 Combined ABF's begin
- Aug 21 Carlson Missions Visit
- Sep 18 Church Picnic @ John's Park
- Oct 6 Men's Retreat - Aspen

Servant Hearts Needed

For many years, Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church has served four area nursing homes through Sunday visitation to their residents. It is a ministry that continues to bless both the church representatives and the residents.

The visits involve regular church folks who provide an informal service and simple message to the residents – who often cannot attend a conventional church service. The tools and settings vary

according to the resources of the nursing facility and the individual styles of leadership.

Typically, a small team consisting of a leader, speaker and music coordinator will assemble at the facility to gather the residents, present a program of Scripture readings and hymn selections, and deliver brief teaching centered on the Gospel. There is no special talent or training required.

In recent months, the ministry participation has fallen to a limited number of people who must often serve alone or without musical accompaniment. If church representatives are absent due to illness or travel, sometimes services must be canceled. We want to do all that we can to maintain the services since residents rely on them each week to meet their spiritual and social needs.

We are actively seeking new

Join us in presenting a Christian witness to this under-served community...

volunteers to help us serve on one Sunday every other month. If a few dozen new helpers, or as many as can be persuaded, can visit along with the current volunteers just once every eight weeks, this rewarding ministry can bless those we serve to an even greater degree.

If you can share a favorite devotional story, play an instrument, sing hymns or read Scriptural passages, all the

better. If not, it helps just to have someone distribute hymnals or push a wheelchair. Residents appreciate the simple presence of those who are there to serve them. Join us in presenting a Christian witness to this valuable yet under-served community. Please see Mary or Frank Vickery or Pastor Jay if you can help.

- Mary Vickery

PandaMania Reigned!

A big thanks to all those who served during our premier summer outreach event, Family Bible Week's PandaMania program! It was a week with a little bit of everything, including a tornado scare and a missed evening, but in the end we survived and God worked to show his love to the 147 on-average kids that were here each night!

There was a tremendous amount of help and effort by over 100 volunteers to make it all happen. Thank you for serving our kids this way. Continue to pray for the kids and for continued outreach opportunities with their families! Now get some rest.

