



COWLITZ CHAPLAINCY

Volume 14

Issue Number 2

March 2017

Teddy Bear Hugs

As a father of a 5 year old boy, I read stories to my son at night before he goes to bed. It is one of my favorite bonding times. One of his favorite stories is about a young bear wanting a hug from his parents. In the story it describes different kinds of hugs. So after we finish reading it, my son always wants a “big bear hug” from me before going to bed. And of course, he has to go to bed with his little stuffed Teddy Bears. It got me thinking about the similarities between Teddy Bears and chaplains.

When I am asked to make presentations about chaplains in front of children, or even when an adult comes up to me to inquire what chaplains do, I find myself giving this simple answer, “chaplains are professional Teddy Bears.” I usually go further to explain that, like Teddy Bears, our arms and hearts are always open wide to receive you. Our arms and hearts are never closed. As chaplains, our job is to provide acceptance and compassion. We are called to present the compassion of God in tangible ways.

Like Teddy Bears, we are usually called to be around when you are hurting, scared, or sad, and we often bring you comfort with a touch or welcomed hug which communicates our care. Gary Chapman in his book, *The Five Love Languages*, discloses that for many people one of the most significant ways people feel okay is through the language of touch. It seems to bring a special connection that reminds people they are not alone.

Finally, like Teddy Bears, we are often silent. I like to point out that Teddy Bears are the best listeners; they never interrupt you, or share their agenda, they just listen. Albert Schweitzer, in talking about the power of listening was reported to have made the statement that one of the most important needs a human being has is to be accepted and really listened to by at least one other person. As chaplains, this is one of most important tools in practicing the Ministry of Presence. When we do so we invite others to be in community, to experi-

ence hope, and to experience the healing presence of God.

“Teddy Bear” is my non-theological definition of a chaplain. It is simple, but it is one my 5 year old can understand, because for him, it means lots of hugs. I hope you get some “Teddy Bear” hugs today.

PS Love and thanks goes out to Mary Jean Mason, and the women at Calvary Community Church, who provide us with those lovely Teddy Bears that we carry in our vehicles to give out to children in crisis.

Chaplain Doug

Chaplain Training

In January Chaplains Flip, Doug, and Francisco attended an eight hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) This training is helpful in identifying the type of crisis a person is experiencing; is it a mental health crisis, or drug related, or something else? This training is done in conjunction with law enforcement officers to help them quickly diagnosis the nature of the problem, how to keep everyone safe, and help alleviate the crisis for the person involved.

February 6-9, Chaplains Tom, Doug, Flip, Ray, and Francisco attended the Regional Training Conference for the International Conference of Police Chaplains at Cannon Beach, Oregon.

The main presenters this year were Ellen Kirschman and Joel Fay. Both of these psychologists have written important books about the care of law enforcement officers and their families. There were many lessons to take back for the care of our law enforcement officers.

One “take away” from the conference is the new term Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) over against Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) It is much better to think of an injury that can be healed than a disorder that labels you, and can be viewed as very difficult to over come.

Chaplains Activity

The first two months of this year have been very busy for the Chaplaincy. Our year started out on a very sad note with the death of Chief Randy Gibson of the Kalama Police Department on January 10. Between the night of Chief Gibson's death and the day of his funeral on January 19, all the Chaplains put in over 100 hours caring for the Chief's wife Dawn, the Kalama Officers, and preparing for the memorial service and the celebration of his life. We continue to ask for prayers for Dawn Gibson, the Kalama PD, and the citizens of Kalama.

The Chaplains were called out 38 times to assist agencies in January and February. Our on call time has become more manageable with the hiring of Chaplain Ray Orr to cover the 48 hour shift each Wednesday and Thursday. Thanks Ray!

The Chaplains have also been busy connecting with first responders, stopping by the departments, and riding shifts with their focus agencies. There were 17 ride-alongs in January and February.

We want to congratulate Deputy Craig Shelton who retired from the Sheriff's Office after 26 years of service. Thank you for our service Deputy Shelton! We also want to congratulate Officer Jeff Leak who retired after 25 years of service with the Longview Police Department. But you can still see Jeff at LPD. He took a position as an administrative clerk in the office. Kalama Police Department hired Officer Ken Wong to join their patrol. Kelso Police Department also has a new hire, Mandy Horton, who began her academy training on March 14.

Other activities of note are monthly training for the funeral directors of Steele's Chapel at Memorial Park. Chaplain Tom did a relationship seminar for law enforcement couples on February 11. Chaplains performed six weddings and six funerals.



Cowlitz Chaplaincy

servicing **LAW ENFORCEMENT-FIRE-RESCUE** since 1983

1560 Olympia Way, Longview, WA 98632 Mail: P.O. Box 2578, Longview, WA 98632

Phone 360-425-7222 FAX: 360-423-6249

Website: www.cowlitzchaplaincy.org



Fundraising

This year our annual breakfast/auction has become a .

DINNER/AUCTION

Join us on **May 13** at the Cowlitz County Convention Center. The Social Hour and Silent Auction will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. All the details are posted on our Cowlitz Chaplaincy Facebook page and our website www.cowlitzchaplaincy.org

There will be several ways you can donate at the dinner. First of all, you can become a table sponsor, seating eight, and invite others who want to donate to our ministry. Second, you can help cover the costs of the dinner by donating at the table. Third, we will have many silent auction items graciously provided by various businesses and individuals from our county. Fourth, we will have a live auctions with many great items: fishing trips, river cruises, golfing packages that cover the courses in in our area, and many many more great items. And, the evening will conclude with a dessert dash, so come prepared to donate for the dessert most graced by your table, and a very fast runner!

If you are not yet connected to a table, and would like to attend, please call the office at 360-425-7222. You can also get your family and friends and host a table of eight. It will be a great evening to celebrate and learn more about what the Lord is doing through the Chaplaincy.

Save the Date!

2017 Cowlitz Chaplaincy Golf Classic

September 9, 2017

Three Rivers Golf Course

"Supporting those who support our communities' first responders"