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Golden Family of Churches Health Ministries

Recently, we received a modest e-mail from Karen Setzer of Golden, Colorado who shared this note: "I would love to share more about what we are doing in Golden, Colorado with Parish Nursing and Health Ministries. We have 10 churches (all of different Christian faiths) working together for the health of the Golden community. We have helped send four parish nurses for training, one to the Westberg, and do MANY things together that are too big for one church to tackle alone.... I'm sending a copy of our brochure for GFCHM."

We called Karen to follow-up on her e-mail, and learned that the ten largest churches in town were ALL working together on health ministries. About 10 years ago, after a visit to the Westberg Symposium, Karen, parish nurse at Faith Lutheran Church, returned to Golden with a mission. Together with other like-minded folks in the community, they created a Church Health task force for the community. This group now has regular attendees (clergy, healthcare professionals and others) from each of the participant congregations, who gather monthly to network and learn more about health resources in the community. They also have a parish nurse support group which meets separately for the five parish nurses which serve several of the participating congregations. All congregations in Golden are invited to attend, and minutes of the meetings are sent to all congregations.

The Golden Family of Churches Health Ministries collaborative offers hospitality, routine dental care and medical checkups for temporarily homeless families, vouchers for free childhood immunizations in cooperation with the local county health department clinics, blood drives, flu shots, health fairs, screenings, healthcare counseling, support groups for persons living with chronic illness, chronic pain, recovering from grief, or recovering from sexual abuse, as well as health seminars, ZYGOS (a Christian alternative to Yoga), and speakers on various health-related topics. They have offered classes on CPR, Divorce Recovery, Healthy Living, Exercise, Pneumakinetics, Weight Management, Beginner Social Dance, Self-Defense, AED Certification, Caregivers of Older Adults, and Coronary Health Improvement. In addition, they have sent medical supplies to help a hospital in Liberia and a clinic in Juarez, Mexico. They also have durable medical equipment available to borrow from the churches.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

In addition, GFCHM participates in a wide variety of events to raise awareness of their work, such as the AIDS candlelight vigil, the Relay for Life, the People's Walk for Housing Justice, Personal Needs Drive, Buffalo Bill Days Parade (see above), and the Good News Celebration Breakfast, at which they were an award recipient.

Congratulations to Karen Setzer and others at the Golden Family of Churches Health Ministries for spreading the good news of Health Ministry far and wide--even taking it to the streets!

For more information about the Golden Family of Churches Health Ministries, contact Karen Setzer, RN, Parish Nurse/Health Ministries Coordinator, Faith Lutheran Church, Golden, Colorado. Her e-mail is Karen@faithgolden.org and her work phone number is 303-279-5379.

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