



A Listening Presence

THE BEFRIENDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BEFRIENDER MINISTRY NATIONAL OFFICE

MARCH 2006

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Welcome to the online newsletter

You are reading the first online edition of "The BeFriender." BeFriender Ministry will no longer publish a print edition of the newsletter.

The online edition will be published once a month. Readers will be notified by e-mail when each new issue is posted. Program leaders will also be notified on the Program Leader Connection.

The online issue will include the same features as the print edition, including stories of befriending, topical articles, recommended resources, and ideas for program leaders.

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National Office**

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National Office news

From Joanne Hansen, acting director

What's really happening

A few months ago, we announced that BeFriender Ministry would be leaving the University of St. Thomas (UST) and The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (SPSSOD) to affiliate with another organization. Since then, many of you have contacted us to ask what's really happening. We appreciate your care and concern, and I want to share some additional details about why we're making this move.

Finances

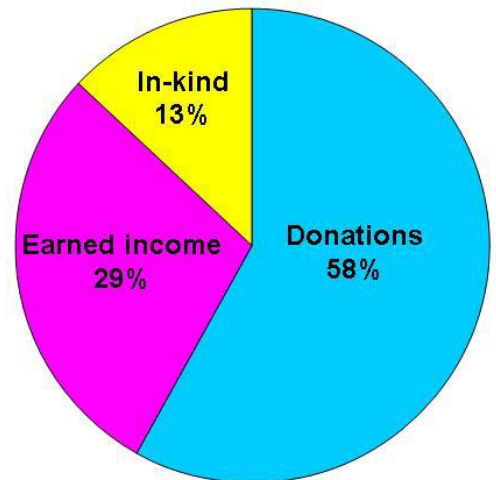
BeFriender Ministry, like almost any nonprofit organization, has ongoing challenges with finances. Last year it became clear that we would need to make changes in the BeFriender Ministry National Office to deal with those challenges.

A training business is, by nature, an expensive one to run. The majority of the expenses are personnel-related. You need good people to provide high-quality training!

UST and SPSSOD have historically provided office space, as well as some office equipment and services, at no cost (shown as "in-kind" on the chart). They do not, however, provide any operating funds, and we are experiencing a trend of being charged back for more of these overhead costs.

In the past few years, almost 60% of our total operating budget has come from donations. Earned income from workshop fees and sales of materials comprises about 30%. The reality is that donations have been down, and, as churches have had their own financial challenges, earned income has dropped, as well.

Another financial issue is that all centers of UST are expected to support themselves solely through earned income. BeFriender Ministry, which is a center of UST, clearly needed to increase the percentage of revenue from earned income to comply with these expectations.



Mission

The need for change provided us with the opportunity to re-think every aspect of the program, including our organizational affiliation. BeFriender Ministry has been part of UST since 1981 and SPSSOD since 1986.

A decade ago, UST had many more centers than it does today. UST's mission has become more and more focused over time on graduate and undergraduate degree programs, and many of the centers have closed. BeFriender Ministry has become an anomaly at SPSSOD as the only non-degree program. Because it is the only non-degree program, there really is not an infrastructure in place to support it.

Workshop space

UST has grown over the years and continues to do so. The practical implication for BeFriender Ministry is that workshop space on campus has been increasingly difficult for us to get. In fact, our last four Saint Paul workshops have been held off-site – incurring an additional expense for the program.

Confusion

BeFriender Ministry is located at SPSSOD, but it is a center of UST. The program reports to the rector of the seminary, but BeFriender Ministry is technically governed by UST's Board of Trustees. And UST and the seminary are two separate legal entities. Confusing? Yes, and confusion can easily lead to misunderstanding or lack of clarity. The result is time spent on internal bureaucracy that could better be spent on serving our customers.

Fundraising

UST's and SPSSOD's development offices do not provide support to BeFriender Ministry in building its donor base, and UST centers cannot hire their own development officers. There is a common perception that some of the money donated to UST or SPSSOD is redirected to BeFriender Ministry, which is not the case. The only donations we receive are those directed specifically to us. Even in seeking grants, we have found that foundations are reluctant to provide grants because they believe we are funded by UST. Again, that is not the case, but perceptions can be difficult to change.

Being proactive

After analyzing all of these factors last year, the national office staff decided that it was in the best interest of BeFriender Ministry to be proactive and initiate a move. We proposed the idea to UST and SPSSOD officials and received their permission to pursue a new affiliation. It's important for us to align with an organization that has mission similar to ours and has the infrastructure in place to support a training program like ours. We plan to announce our new affiliation no later than June 30.

More questions

I hope this has answered at least some of your questions. If you have others, please call me at 1-800-328-6819, ext. 25065 (651-962-5065 in the Twin Cities area) or send me an e-mail message at jdhanzen@stthomas.edu. In many important ways, this is your ministry as much as it is "ours." We want to keep you informed.

Staff update

To begin to address financial issues and because there are inherent costs in making the move to a new organization, we have reduced the number of staff positions in the past three months. Julie Berg's position ended in December, and Barb Schwery's ended in January. During the transition, Barb is available to contract directly with our customers to provide the same type of consulting and training support she has provided as a staff member. To reach Barb, please contact the national office. We will forward your message to Barb.



Workshop schedule

Foundations for BeFriender Ministry

Special 25th anniversary price for the spring workshops: The first person from your church or organization pays the regular price. Others from the same church/organization attending the same workshop each get a \$200 discount. (This discount cannot be combined with other special offers.)

A \$100 deposit for each registration is due immediately upon registration to reserve space in the workshop.

Each day of the "Foundations" workshop runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- **Omaha, NE**
March 31 and April 1, 7 and 8 (Fridays and Saturdays)
Registration deadline: March 10
Regular price: \$599, includes breakfast and lunch (\$649 after the deadline)
- **Saint Paul, MN**
April 24-27 (Monday-Thursday)
Registration deadline: April 10
Regular price: \$599 (\$649 after the deadline)
Lodging is available for \$35 per night per person
- **Saginaw, MI**
April 28-29 and May 5-6 (Fridays and Saturdays)
Registration deadline: April 7
Regular price: \$645, includes breakfast and lunch (\$695 after the deadline)

How to register

There are three ways to register for any of the "Foundations" workshops:

- Register online at befrienderministry.org. Click on "Foundations workshop." Select "Online Registration Form."
- Call the national office at 1-800-328-6819, ext. 25775 (651-962-5775 in the Saint Paul-Minneapolis area).

- Fax a registration form to 651-962-5790.



Ordering materials

Allow 2 weeks for delivery

Effective immediately, we will no longer be able to process expedited orders. Please allow two weeks for delivery.

How to order products

There are three ways to place an order:

- Order online at befrienderministry.org. Click on “Products and Services,” then click on “Order Form” under “Products.”
- Fax an order form to 651-962-5790.
- Call the national office at 1-800-328-6819, ext. 25775 (651-962-5775 in the Saint Paul-Minneapolis area).



Program Leader Connection

The Program Leader Connection is a password-protected, online resource center for BeFriender Ministry program leaders.

How to get access

Go to befrienderministry.org. Click on “Program Leader Connection.” Authorized users can go directly to the Program Leader Connection. To request a user name and password, complete and submit the online “Password Form.”



Thank you to our donors

Your donations are important in any year. They are especially important this year as we build a bridge to our future. Your gifts since July 1 have put us at 20% of the goal for this fiscal year (ending June 30).



Please help us continue to build the bridge by sending your gift today. You can use the form on the last page of this newsletter.

Your gifts

As Christians we are called to ministry – to express our faith in action.

Your financial gifts to the BeFriender Ministry National Office *are* ministry, because they are used for action. Your gifts:

- Widen communities' circles of care.
- Ensure that God's love and presence are felt by those experiencing pain and sadness.
- Provide opportunities for BeFrienders and those befriended to grow in faith.
- Promote one-to-one caring relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.



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BeFriender Ministry is a national, ecumenical organization that provides leadership training and program support for a listening ministry of lay pastoral care. The BeFriender Ministry National Office is a center of the University of St. Thomas and is located at The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity on the university's Saint Paul campus.

"The BeFriender" is published online once a month.

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Building a Bridge to Tomorrow

Yes, I want to help build the bridge with my gift!

MY NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS

I am a: BeFriender Program leader Friend

MY GIFT TO BEFRIENDER MINISTRY

My gift is in the amount of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 _____

- A check is enclosed (payable to BeFriender Ministry)
 Charge my credit card (complete the information below)
 A matching gift form from my employer is enclosed

If all or part of your gift is in honor or memory of someone, please complete the information below:

\$_____ is in honor of _____ on the occasion of _____

\$_____ is in memory of _____

We will send a note acknowledging your gift to the honoree or to the family for the memorial. Please include the name and address on the back of this form.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

VISA MasterCard

Name on card (please print) _____

Credit card number _____

Expiration date _____ Security code _____

Signature _____

Mail to:

BeFriender Ministry

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