Happy Spring! We made it through yet another Winter. This one not too bad, actually. Spring brings with it a renewal of ...me. New life in the garden, farmyard, attitude, body, mind and spirit. I don’t know about you, but I get all giddy and feel like a new person every Spring. Needless to say, Spring is my favorite Season.

As I was doing some research for this article, I came across an “Easter Cookie” recipe. This is a meringue type cookie that is whipped and luscious looking on the outside, but hollow on the inside. This is to simulate Christ’s tomb on Easter Morning—empty.

I was thinking about the “fluffy, enticing outside, hollow inside” and thought what a wonderful way to look at my life. I try very hard to let the world see me as a good person. But, truly all anybody sees is the “fluffy outside” we wear daily. When the true, inner me is fulfilled (filled?) with good things—love, compassion, patience, tolerance, generosity—then my life feels full. When I let avarice, scorn, indifference, restlessness, and prejudice enter my core, I feel like my life is empty.

As Easter approaches with the new Easter outfits, wonderfully colored eggs, and a plethora of assorted candies, it would be beneficial to all to remember the Easter Cookies and what they stand for.

Some of the guests here are meringue cookies, not of their own choosing—they feel isolated, shamed and despairing—empty. Others who come may be feeling more solid, so they help. From answering questions as diverse as prison policies and family care to educating them on locations throughout the city to lending a loving ear.

They are there for each other. When you watch the interaction between these guests, you can see the emptiness, and the angel wings settling on their shoulders. As we get to know our guests, we can see a rebirth in the making. Many are so relieved to not have to worry about money while they are here and then to have the camaraderie also, is a very special bonus.

Let us continue to help fill those cookies...ours and our guests. When we share with each other patience, love, compassion, hope, we help fill the hollowness in each other’s lives.

Family Connection wants to be in the middle of your “rebirth”. The rebirth of enthusiasm for this ministry, of generosity for our fellow man and understanding of others’ situations.

I can only hope anyone who gets close enough to me to scratch the surface finds a wonderful, luscious center! Well, maybe at least something there!

The recipe for the cookies is on page 7.

Have a wonderful and “fulfilling” Easter!

Dorothy Richards
Executive Director

“They” say:

it takes a minute to find a special person,
an hour to appreciate them,
a day to love them,
but then an entire life to forget them.
Some to the women and children, who come to us are tall, some are short, some are outgoing, some are shy. All have one thing in common. They are hurting from the absence of an incarcerated family member.

On the other side of the bars are the incarcerated men. Some tell me things like, “I came from a good family. I messed up. It isn’t the fault of my family that I am here.” Others come from very dysfunctional families. All have one thing in common. They are hurting from the absence of their families.

It is a blessing indeed to be able to relieve some of the hurt through our ministry at Family Connection as we keep families together while they are apart. All of you are part of this ministry!

We want to give special thanks at this time for the officers who served on the board in 2001. Phyllis Fromelt, our past president, has devoted many hours of her time to Family Connection since it first began. She has chosen to move to the advisory board at this time. A heartfelt thanks to you, Phyllis! Steve Lee has served very ably as vice president. He has very valuable insights to share with the board. We look forward to his continued involvement. Ronda Stensland has not only been a very capable secretary, but has also been instrumental in fund-raising.

I served as treasurer this past year and will serve as president in 2002. Bonnie Gregerson is our new vice-president. Bonnie, who is fairly new to the board, brings with her enthusiasm and a background of working in health services at the penitentiary. Dave Holly, a radio personality on KELO-AM, who is also fairly new to the board, is assuming the duties of secretary. He’s already brought some fresh ideas to the board. Connie Matsuda, a more seasoned board member, is the new treasurer. Connie is a former math teacher with an analytical mind and a warm heart. We think we have a good leadership team for 2002. We are also pleased to have Maureen Schultz as a new board member.

As Steve Lee mentioned in the last newsletter, 2001 was not the best year we’ve had financially. Thanks to the support at the end of the year from some wonderful “angels”, we ended the year of 2001 with a deficit of only $578.09.

Our Resource and Development committee spent many hours planning for a Mardi Gras celebration to be held on February 9th as a fund-raiser. Due to lack of ticket sales, it had to be canceled. We appreciate all their effort and hope another major fund-raiser can be planned for the future. If you have any ideas, please call Dorothy at 367-0777 to share them.

We are in the process of interviewing for the position of Children’s Connection director. Please keep us in your prayers as we fill this very important position.

When Spring comes, we have plans to remodel the upstairs bathroom at the house. The years have not been kind to the bathroom floor. We want to keep the bathtub upstairs instead of having it appear below in the kitchen some day. Fix-up projects already handled this Fall and Winter included insulating the attic and replacing the front storm door. We are very thankful for our “handy” board members and their friends who have done this work for us.

As we go through Lent, keep in mind that Lent is not just a time of giving up something as a sacrifice but also a time for sharing our time, talents and financial resources with others. Bless you for all you do for the Family Connection guests!

Mary Montoya
President
Board of Directors
Greetings from the Hospitality House! We have been busier than ever since the weather has cooperated with our guests so they are able to travel. We’ve had a full house over the holiday season and every weekend this year. We’ve also been lucky enough to have some new faces here at Family Connection.

Many times when someone comes here for the first time they are not sure what to expect since the Family Connection is a unique organization. In January we hosted a young woman who had spent her last dime on a bus ticket to visit her husband. She showed up at our door with a small bag and a muffin, which is all the food she could afford on the long bus ride to Sioux Falls. Through the contributions of our donors she was able to spend the weekend in a clean, safe house with a refrigerator full of food and a house full of friendly faces of women who were going through some of the same struggles that she was. I have found in my experiences here that one of the most important things for these women has been the interaction between the different guests. Through these interactions they know that they are not alone and that many others are dealing with some of the unique problems that come from having someone they love incarcerated.

When this young woman left on Monday morning she left us a thank you note on her bed that summed up what we try to do here at the Hospitality House better than I ever could. “I just wanted to take a minute to say ‘thank you’. Coming to this house was a big turn around point for me. I wish I could repay you, but it’s a hard thing to pay back kindness and hope so all I can say is thanks. I’ve made some friends this weekend and more importantly, I had the chance to strengthen the bond between me and the person I love most in this world! Without this house and the loving, caring people in it I never would’ve had that chance.”

Jennifer Koepsell
Hospitality Director

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Potato Garlic Asparagus Soup

10-12 potatoes
2 heads garlic
2 cans asparagus
1 pint half & half
1/4 cup butter (1/2 stick)
milk
salt/pepper to taste

Peel and quarter potatoes. Peel garlic, halve cloves. Put in dutch oven with water & cook until potatoes are tender. Drain and remove 1/2 of potatoes, mash remaining potatoes and garlic in pot. Add remaining potatoes and half & half, butter and asparagus. Add milk until consistency is only slightly creamy. Simmer over low heat until heated through, stirring constantly. Salt & pepper to taste.

Laurie A.
We say good-bye to Kristi Miller as Children’s Connection Director. She regretfully had to leave us due to family commitments. We will miss her smile and enthusiasm.

We have hired a new person to fill Kristie’s shoes. Following is an introductory article from Dave:

Spring is just around the corner! The waning of another South Dakota Winter beckons the refreshing renewal of the Easter miracle. As I join the mission of Family Connection and specifically Children’s Connection, I too, feel the resurrection of hope, energy and the value of serving others.

Please, let me introduce myself. My name is Dave Johnson and beginning in March I will be serving as the Children’s Connection Coordinator. Since 1984 I have worked in varying capacities with children, adolescents and adults whose lives have somehow been impacted by incarceration. Counseling youths at the former Youth Forestry Camp, helping mothers at the Career Learning Center in Rapid City and most recently as the Director of the Glory House all have afforded me the opportunity to have a positive impact on people’s lives.

I bring to this mission a familiarity with the judicial system as well as the passion and ability to help those who have struggled with the effects of incarceration. Encouraging children by listening and offering them the opportunity to channel their energies in a positive direction can be both beneficial for the child and a relief for the parents. I am looking forward to “getting my feet wet” quickly as I learn and hopefully build upon the foundation Kristie Miller has created. I am hopeful that my service will be fruitful to the families we serve and envision the Children’s Connection having an even greater impact.

On a personal note, I’ve been married since 1984 to a wonderful lady who works at the VA Hospital. We are blessed to have two great daughters, Tara and Ellie. Tara, age 9 and Ellie, almost 7, love to fish, camp, hike, sports and school. Needless to say, they all keep me running hard! Thank you for this opportunity. I eagerly anticipate meeting all of you as I begin my work with the Children’s Connection.

Dave Johnson
Director
Children’s Connection

Angelic Opportunities

Birthday Parties
Children’s Connection is developing a Monthly Birthday Party. We need angels to facilitate this on an ongoing basis.

Display Tables
We need angels to sit at the display table at conferences. We have two coming up shortly- April 13 and June 7-8. Shifts are flexible.

Rummage Sale & Raffle
We need angels to come in the week of June 3-7 to help sort & price sale items.

Human Race
The Human Race is a walk/run marathon to be held on Saturday morning, July 20. We need walkers/runners to solicit pledges and participate for Family Connection.

Please call 357-0777 for more information or to take advantage of these angelic opportunities!

The Angel Program

This is an annual program providing items to the Hospitality House on a monthly basis.

A sample of the schedule would be:

| Month 1 | Cleaning products  
disinfectant cleaner, rags, window cleaner, furniture polish, toilet bowl cleaner, sink & tub cleaner |
| Month 2 | Office supplies  
7” envelopes, stamps, colored copy paper, address labels |
| Month 3 | Household needs  
trash bags, rubber gloves, air freshener, liquid soap |
| Month 4 | Snacks  
homemade goodies |
| Month 5 | Office supplies  
stamps, 7” envelopes, address labels |
| Month 6 | Paper products  
kleenex, paper cups, plates |
| Month 7 | Kitchen  
bread & milk, juice, fruit & vegetables |
| Month 8 | Family Support  
$30 will house one family for one night |
| Month 9 | Household needs  
dish soap, laundry soap, fabric softener, stain remover |
| Month 10 | Office supplies  
stamps, 7” envelopes, notepads |
| Month 11 | Christmas goodies  
Use your imagination! |

You may go by this schedule, or create your own!

This is a 12-month commitment to Family Connection ministry. If interested please call Dorothy at 357-0777.
From the Heart of a Guest...

September 4, 2001 was the last time I saw my boyfriend outside of the prison system. It also marks the day when I last experienced a true hug, a smile after work, dinner for two, or a simple kiss goodnight.

I have continually asked myself what could I possibly learn from this life experience? What good can come from a situation which creates such pain, not only for the inmate, but for the family on the outside, the child without its father, the wife without her husband, or the mother without her son? It is now six months later, and I have no sound answers to stop the pain. What I have found however, is how to heal slowly until the time comes when we can embrace our loved ones and know they are finally coming home.

Most importantly I have learned by coming to the Hospitality House that I am not alone. I know when I arrive every Friday night that Jennifer will be there waiting to greet me with a smile (Yes, you are awesome), Dorothy will always make room for me each week and will never make me feel that I am a burden, I know Kandi is always ready to give me the best hugs, and Laurie will be there each month, ready to talk, to help me understand, a person who can relate to my own frustrations, and who is always ready for a good laugh.

There are so many wonderful people out there who are experiencing the same anguish, the same pain, and difficulties as I am. I have learned that when I come to the Hospitality House there is always someone there to listen, to lend a helping hand, to support you and I know Jennifer will always be there to listen to me vent.

Secondly I have learned that tomorrow is one day closer to having my boyfriend home again. When I succeed today, then I know tomorrow will come and each day will eventually turn into weeks, and weeks will become months and sooner or later the word “visitation” will be permanently discarded from my vocabulary. I will not have to see my boyfriend behind closed bars; I won’t feel the eyes of a guard continually watching me, I won’t have to restrain my hands from touching his face or kissing his cheek. I will never again take for granted all the simple things in a relationship that can be abruptly taken away.

Last, but not least, I will have to admit that patience is the key to understanding and coping with the situation. I know because of the Hospitality House’s constant support and amazing volunteers, that I will walk out of this a better person, who in the end has learned that without the care of other individuals I wouldn’t be where I am today. I will walk out of this situation hand in hand with a beautiful person whom I love with all my heart knowing that freedom is just another work, until you lose it.

Heather F.

Friends...

If I Could Catch a Rainbow
I would do it just for you
And share with you its beauty
In the days you’re feeling blue

If I could build a mountain
You could call it your own
A place to find serenity
A place to be alone

If I could take your troubles
I would toss them in the sea
But all these things
I’m finding are impossible for me

I cannot build a mountain
Or catch a rainbow fair
But let me be what I know best
A friend that’s always there

-Anon
Blessed are the givers...and grateful are the receivers

**Individuals**
- Jamie L. Damon
- Richard Braithwaite
- Dean & Debbie Mertz
- Tom & Libby King
- Dr. Scott & Laurita McKercher
- Carl Tonjes
- Arnold & Helen Severson
- Charles & Delilah Petersen
- Melvern Halverson
- Steven & Connie Salmela
- Hildegarde Krumm
- Eugene & Dolores Tjarks
- Dr. Richard & Mary Jo Jaqua
- Michael & Deborah Olson
- Bishop Andrea & Gary Nesdahl
- Dr. David & Ann Marie Rosving
- Jeray & Christine Moench
- Mark Sanderson & Susan Randall
- Stanley & Ruby Hippe
- Ralph & Kathleen Tingley
- Harold & Carol Warner
- John Harris
- Keith & Gloria Thompson
- John & Phyllis Fromelt
- Mary Montoya
- Dr. Thomas & Kay Kassube
- Janey & Connie Matsuda
- Ron & Martha Rosving
- Dr. Dominic & Diane Hurley
- Marilyn Drake
- Dr. David & Nancy Thomas

**Organizations**
- Rejoice Circle, Our Savior Lutheran
- Tabor Lutheran Church Women
- Norwegian Lutheran Church Women
- Renner Lutheran ELCW
- Emmanuel Lutheran WELCA
- Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Flandreau
- Hudson Lutheran Church Women
- Calvary Lutheran Women
- St. John WELCA
- First Presbyterian Church
- First Reformed Church of Maurice
- Crestwood Women's Fellowship
- St. Paul ELCA Women, Bowdle
- Grace Lutheran Church, Sisseton
- Willow Creek WELCA, Dell Rapids
- United Way-Sears
- SF Golden K Kiwanis
- Sioux Valley Southwestern
- First Baptist Church
- Local 7500 Retirees
- Renner Lutheran Church

**Grants**
- Entwistle Family Foundation
- Elmen Family Foundation
- Royal River Casino

**Memorials**
- Anna Halverson
- Given by Arden & Norma Meinjohans
- Arlene Christiansen Bergheim
- Richard Jerome
- Ardath Larson
- Doris Nelson
- Myrtle Tweedt
- Arnold World Turner
- Given by Leroy & Orpha Iseminger

**In-Kind by Individuals**
- R.E. Hohwieler
- Eva Anderson
- Mary Giebink
- Marilyn Tripp
- Carol Yarrow
- Ronda Stensland
- Opal Rogness
- Diana Hohwieler
- Karen Arnold
- Elaine Burma
- Helen McGuire
- Lynne Byrne

**In-Kind by Organization**
- Royal River Casino
- First Baptist Church
- Graham Tire Co.
- Church Women of Immanuel Lutheran, Kimball, SSSSSD
- United Methodist Church, Montrose
- Alliance Women, CMA Church, DeSmet
- Goodness Circle, Our Savior's Lutheran
- St. Michael's Parish
- Holy Spirit Church
- Lennox 1st English Youth
- Sermon on the Mount Shalom Girls
- Glenn & Phyllis Jorgenson

These Businesses/Individuals generously donated to the cancelled Mardi Gras:
- Royal River Casino
- Zandbroz Variety
- Alpine Inn
- Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis
- Chanhassen Dinner Theatre
- Great Outdoor Store
- Kitchen Cordial
- Avera McKennan Wellness Center
- Augie & Fran Borchardt
- Mehlander's
- Lone Star Steakhouse
- Cracker Barrel
- Famous Dave's
- Yoshis
- Papa John's
- Get N Go
- Applebees
- Godfather's Pizza
- Scheels
- Cherry Creek Grill
- Crab House
- Granite City
- Professional Massage Associates
- SF Canaries
- Linda Hagedorn
- Carol Yarrow
- Orion Food Systems
- Schoeneman's
- Younker's
- KTTW FOX TV
- Phyllis Fromelt
- Maureen Schultz
- Ronda Stensland

A Special Thanks goes to Prairie Fire Internet Technologies, LLC for donating one year of internet use for our office.

“Do not forget to entertain strangers for by so doing, many have entertained angels unawares”
Hebrews 13:2
Preheat oven to 300° (this is important, don’t wait until you’re half done with the recipe!)

Place pecans in zipper baggies and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces.

- After Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers—John 19:1-3

Let the children smell the vinegar then put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl.

- When Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink—John 19:28-30

Add egg whites to vinegar. Tell children eggs represent life.

- Jesus gave His life to give us life—John 10:10-11

Sprinkle salt into the children’s hands, let them taste it. Brush rest into bowl.

- This represents the salty tears shed by Jesus’ followers, and the bitterness of our own sin—Luke 13:27

So far, the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar.

- The sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us—Psalms 34:8 and John 3:16

Beat with a mixer on high speed for 13 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed.

- The color white represents the purity in God’s eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus—Isaiah 1:18 & John 3:1-3

Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet.

- Each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus’ body was laid—Matthew 27:57-60

Put cookie sheet into oven. Close the door and turn the oven OFF.

Have the children tape the oven door.

- Jesus’ tomb was sealed—Matthew 27:65-66

GO TO BED! Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight.

- Jesus’ followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed—John 16:20 and 22

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. See the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow!

- On the first Easter, Jesus’ followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty—Matthew 28:1-9

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**In Loving Memory... Remembering Jesus**

To be made the evening before Easter Sunday.

1 cup whole pecans  pinch salt  wooden spoon
1 tsp vinegar  1 cup sugar  tape
3 egg whites  zipper baggie  Bible

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**My Tax Deductible Gift:**

Name: ________________________________

Address: ____________________________

Street  City  State  Zip

Gift Enclosed: $ ____________

I will pledge: $ ____________

Please return this pledge card or place your donation in the envelope provided.

Thank you!

Please check the appropriate boxes for more information:

- I would like information about the Angel Program
- I would like a speaker for our group or service club
- I am interested in touring the house
- I am interested in sharing my talents with Family Connection

If there is an error in your mailing label or if you know of someone who would like our newsletter, please let us know!

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CONNECTING POINTS
Connecting Points
Helping families stay together while they are apart.

Check Us Out on the Internet! Our e-mail Address is:
http://inst.augie.edu/church/FamilyConnection/familyconnect@hotmail.com

Augustana Lutheran Church
235 N. Prairie
Friday, June 7th
6pm-9pm
Saturday, June 8th
9am-3pm

Donations may be brought to the church on Thursday, June 6th and Friday, June 7th from 10:00am-4:00pm

Volunteers are needed to help sort, price items, and clean up. Thank you!