Hello again everybody! It is now in the heart of Summer and we are very busy indeed! On July 19, we have our annual Human Race fundraiser. I am sure we will see many of you out there walking or running for Family Connection! If you absolutely cannot walk or run, you may find a pledge card easily available around town. If not, you may call us at 357-0777 and we will get one out to you immediately!

Last year Family Connection came in second in the overall fundraising for this event, and Ann Marie Rossing came in second in the individual fundraisers. So, this year let’s see if we can top that! At the very least, let’s top what we brought in last year!

In December of 2002 we had one of our first fundraising mailings. The response was phenomenal! You all came through like the angels we know you are! Unfortunately, this is now July, six months later and the gifts only go so far. Maybe we could all look under our angel wings and see if there is a little something extra tucking in someplace to spare for this wonderful ministry?

I do want to thank everyone for the precious gifts we receive every day...gifts like an air conditioner; quilts, escape ladder, and of course, treats! The guests really appreciate the effort you put into making them feel safe and welcome in this “Home away from home”. Thank you all so very much!

Come drive by our Hospitality House and see what a wonderful job our “Little Japanese Gardener”, Yoshi has done! The flowers and landscaping is a wonder to behold! We owe many thanks to the Springfield Prison Greenhouse and SETI for the beautiful plants.

On Friday, May 23rd a group of youth from North Lake Preston came bearing plants, garden tools and spirit! They planted flowers, weeded, tilled and sowed grass seed all day. A family that had previously stayed here was invited back to tell these youth their story. We fed just about 30 people that day! A volunteer angel cooked, fed and cleaned up for us. It was a truly heartwarming day to see all these children of God working together for a common goal. Thanks to you all! You did a stupendous job!

A veil of sadness covers Family Connection. A very enthusiastic volunteer, Nan Nygren, lost her battle with cancer on Sunday, June 8th. She truly personified the “Hospitality House” with her heart of gold, her ready smile and infectious laughter. We will miss her. I am sure she and my brother are having a good laugh together as they polish their haloes!

Dorothy Richards
Executive Director

July 19, 2003
Falls Park
History Points

Ann Marie Rossing tells of the beginning of Family Connection. This history will continue throughout its tenth year-2003.

In the New Year, 1995, I began an application for our tax-exempt status. With the help of my friend Tacey Braithwaite, who is an attorney, I was able to accomplish finishing up the 1023 application in January. In order to raise funds, this was a needed step and something I had never done, but in March of 1995, we were accepted with a 501(c)3 status.

In February, there were two meetings and a flurry of activity, getting our post office box #100. I was amazed by that random number assigned to us, so perfect and easy to remember. We had $236 in contributions, and I began writing grant applications. St. Marks Lutheran Church with the help of Cathy Brechtlesbauer offered Family Connection its Lenten Offerings that year. We began to explore property options and operating procedures.

Our next steps were to begin looking for ways to begin raising funds in earnest. Pastor LeRoy and I had begun a fairly heavy schedule of speaking. Pastor Iseminger’ help to begin to make the project known state wide came through his work with Prison Congregations of America and the newsletter that St. Dysmus sent out. He highlighted the hospitality house project which brought in requests for speakers and donations. One of the first places at this point that I spoke was in Hudson SD for the WELCA. The care and warmth of that group toward the project encouraged us greatly.

I spoke for the East side Rotary in March and at that time I met Mike Flynn, of Flynn Outdoors, who promised that when we found a house, he would design and erect a sign for the ministry.

The group working on this project seemed to expand. We lost some interested individuals and others became more involved. In the April meeting, we realized that there was a variety of thoughts about how the direction for the ministry should go. Some wanted to expand the mission into other areas like opening a hospitality room and housing male inmates who are newly released and others. It was decided that we needed to keep our mission and focus clear and limited in order to do a good job. The group agreed that our focus would be on the families of those with an incarcerated loved one and providing a place for them to stay.

Phyllis Fromelst became the secretary for our group and Linda Mellegard handled our finances. I remember sitting in the youth room at Our Savior’s with Phyllis writing thank you notes to the kind people and churches that were helping Family Connection become a reality. Phyllis’s daughter Katherine played quietly with stickers and artwork while her mom and I worked. There were countless hours of volunteer time put into the numerous administrative tasks that needed to be done. A few people who remained committed and gave of their time without recognition or remuneration did these jobs for the first three years of actual operation of the house.

I wrote a grant to the Sioux Falls Area Foundation during the month of May in the hopes that we would find the funding to get a place to begin our work.

During the summer, our focus was on fundraising and finding a piece of property. We found out in May that Family Connection was the recipient of a New Ministries Grant from the national headquarters of the WELCA. I believe that the Women of the ELCA helped open the first door for this ministry to happen.

I thought I knew the best location for the house! It made sense to me that we should focus our looking near the penitentiary so that the families would be close to the prison. Linda Mellegard, Phyllis and I spent many days looking at properties, houses and opportunities in the area. Ted Thoms actively helped us to look. We looked at old churches, the old Humane Society site, places in the trailer park, empty lots and many homes in the area. Nothing was right.

Finally, while driving around in the area, we spotted a duplex that might work. I called the realtor Karen Meyer and when I explained our purpose for the house, she said, “I have just the right place for you, I think God has His hand on this.” She was right, there on the corner of 7th and Minnesota, across from the bus depot sat a beautiful place that was to become the home of Family Connection. The beautiful Victorian house with a cupola and wrap around porch would become a dignified welcoming place for the families who would come. The owner, Roy Tepley, would not sell the house unless we agreed to purchase the house next door as well. He was willing to sell it to us on a contract for deed for $110,000. Paying with this method, we would not need a down payment, and we would not deplete our funds. Shortly after we began to explore this house, I was again asked to speak at the West Niederos church. I was delighted to tell them that we found a place and because of what happened when I spoke there the first time, we now could afford to buy a place. Negotiations happened quickly and I signed a Contract for Deed for 303 North Minnesota and 414 West 7th Avenue. I still smile as I think that I signed my name on that deed not really knowing whether or how we would pay it off. God had a plan and I did not worry. (In hindsight probably very naive of me, but that is what drove me, I didn’t see all the pitfalls that could happen because I did not have enough experience. So I forged ahead in blind faith!!)

About this same time, Pastor Roger Fredrikson asked me to invite Betty Unruh to join him on his television show, “A Fresh Cup of Coffee with Roger”. I was able to share how Family Connection came about and what our mission was and Betty spoke about her life situation as the mother of two children with a spouse in prison. This exposure helped us gain more recognition in area churches and the greater community.

After a couple of months of negotiations and clearance from the city to provide this service with the help of Jay Hammrich who can’t on page 5
Greetings from Family Connection! We are right in the middle of a very busy June. Already this year we have had over 200 adults and over 100 children. We have served over 300 meals!! Reservations for the rest of the Summer are already coming in so we will be a busy house!

While we are always hosting new families we were lucky enough this year to have three familiar faces come at the same time this June. Three of our annual moms staying at the Hospitality House at the same time. We have a mom from New York, a mom from California and a mom from Massachusetts.

Each year these ladies make a yearly trip to visit their sons in the penitentiary and this year their trips happened to coincide. I have always wanted them to meet since they are in similar situations and I knew they would all get along so well. We had a wonderful time visiting, reminiscing about previous stays, sharing recipes, swapping photos and enjoying Barbara’s, our mom from Massachusetts, home cooking. I look forward to their visits every year and am overwhelmed to be able to sit around the dinner table and share a meal with these people that mean so much to me. They all left with each other’s addresses and with the hopes of planning a time to visit next year that will accommodate all of their schedules so they can see each other every year they visit. It is such a blessing to see friendships formed over a common bond, I’ve seen these friendships happen before and seen how people help each other out during a particularly hard time and keep in touch throughout the year. It is important, especially in this situation, to be able to talk with people that understand what you are going through and to be able to find common ground when you feel so isolated because of your unique situation. It makes the whole visiting situation much easier.

Jennifer Koepsell
Hospitality Director

Connecting Points

~ Wish List ~

**Kitchen Items**
- Fresh vegetables & fruits
- Individually wrapped snacks
- Juice & cold drinks
- Coffee (decaf & reg)
- Hamburger
- Sharp knives
- Napkins
- Dish cloths

**Housewares**
- Laundry Detergent
- First Aid Kits
- Cleaning products
- Soft soap refill
- Dryer sheets
- After shower spray
- Kleenex
- Glade plug-ins and refills

**Children’s Connection**
- Polaroid camera & film
- School glue
- Children’s scissors

**Office Needs**
- Postage Stamps
- Colored copy paper
- Toners for Canon NP2120 copier
- Ink for HP 812C printer
- Computer address labels
- Calculator
- 9x12 envelopes

**Gift Certificates**
- House one family ($30)
- Grocery stores
- Walmart
- Office Max
- Phone cards
- Taxi Cabs
- Gas Station

**Special Needs**
- Tape measure
- Dandelion digger

**Furnishings**
- Dehumidifier
- Potty chairs

Your gifts help to provide a dignified, comfortable place for our guests. Thank you for your generosity. If you would rather we buy the item, please mail a check to Family Connection, designated for “Wish List” item of your choice.
We know that the incarceration of a family member affects the whole family. At this time, there are over 2 million children with an imprisoned parent in the United States and another 8 million children estimated to have experienced incarceration of a parent at a previous time. About one in forty children under the age of 18 have at least one parent in prison. Sometimes, both parents are in prison.

For children, the effects of parental incarceration vary, based on the age of the child, the circumstances of the arrest and incarceration, the relationship with the parent, the support of others around them, and other factors. There is a continuum of risk ranging from families that are in grave danger to those that have adequate support systems and are coping well. In between, many children and families are under tremendous pressure and are barely hanging on. As we think about providing protection to these at-risk families, we need to remember to respect their individual situations and strengths. I see so many wonderful qualities in the children that have participated in our programs; and I can truly say that working with them has heightened my respect for the tenacity as well as the tenderness of the human spirit.

It is not uncommon for children with incarcerated parents to move many times. Sometimes, the family moves to be closer to the imprisoned loved one. Often, they move for economic reasons. Many children that we work with are uncertain about where they will be living next, where they will go to school next year. As a result, children may be at-risk academically and are more likely to engage in risky behavior at an earlier age. These risk factors speak strongly to the need for support systems to be in place to help families cope. Often, the opposite happens. Because of the stigma of imprisonment, families may be abandoned by their communities when they need them most. We may look at a situation and feel so overwhelmed that we don’t know where to begin to help.

The Children’s Connection groups for school-age children were a response to a need that the Board of Directors identified. We were encouraged by the following results from an evaluation completed by teachers of the students who participated in our weekly groups this past school year:

- 45% had improved grades
- 59% were relating better to their teachers
- 62% were relating better to their peers
- 46% had fewer absences from school
- 52% were less frustrated

Please remember that any small act of kindness – even a smile and a hello- can mean a great deal to a child who is struggling. We are constantly asked to open our hearts and minds to these needs. Our lives are enriched by the giving of ourselves and our resources to this very vulnerable but worthy group of people. I hope that many of you will have an opportunity to experience this blessing.

Mary DeJong
Director, Children’s Connection

Almond Spritz Cookies

3 1/2 cup flour
1/4 tsp salt
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup ground almonds
1 1/2 cup butter or margarine
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp almond extract

Preheat oven to 350º.
In a blender, grind almonds to a powder. Combine flour, salt, sugar in medium bowl.
In large bowl, combine butter, egg, vanilla and almond extract. Beat in dry ingredients until dough is too heavy for the mixer, then stir the rest in. Pack dough into cookie press. Press out desired shapes on ungreased cookie sheet. Space 1” apart. Bake at 10-12 minutes until pale gold color.

Kim BE
Wisconsin
Connecting Points

From a Guest’s Heart

Our friend, Barbara Waff from Massachusetts is visiting with us again. She brought with her a card from her home church along with a financial donation. Those angels are everywhere!

Following is the note inside the card:

Dear Family Connection:

Pansies are for thoughts. We think of you often and you are in our prayers. Barbara Waff is a member of our Ladies-Women’s Society of Christian Service. Because Family Connection is so dear to her heart we would like you to accept this check. Thank you for the wonderful work you do.

God Bless you,

W.S.C.S. Ladies

We thank Barbara for the wonderful work she does in Massachusetts on behalf of Family Connection.

Well, hello! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Wendy Monson and I am the Family Connection summer intern. I just completed four years at South Dakota State University in Brookings. I walked through graduation in May and now all I have to do is complete my internship, which is my purpose here.

Background: I’m 22 years old, I grew up mostly in Illinois and Iowa until my family moved to Watertown, South Dakota where I endured high school. I decided at first to go to college to become an elementary teacher but I scrapped that idea my sophomore year and I switched my major to Human Development and Family Studies. My rationale for the switch was that I wanted to be a social worker or some sort of human service person. With that angle, I took so many Sociology classes that I ended up with enough credits for a minor in Sociology.

How and why did I choose Family Connection? Well, I went through the Human Services section in the Yellow Pages and I called many places and Dorothy seemed to be the most enthusiastic person I talked to. I chose to come to Family Connection because I would rather be some place where I feel needed.

And boy, do I feel needed here! Dorothy took me underneath her angel wing and I am learning a lot. It is such a blessing to be involved in such a neat place. There is so much love and so many people who are grateful for this place and its services; the positive energy here is astounding.

My general purpose here at Family Connection is fund raising. I am in charge of the Human Race fundraiser for the house and I also am in charge of finding and writing a grant for the lot next door. Dorothy also keeps me busy with many different activities such as luncheons with various groups and talks to promote the house.

Feel free to stop by to meet me. I am more than happy to take a break and chat. If I am not at the house during the week, then I am most likely at my other job at Hy-Vee on East 10th Street. I look forward to all the exciting things happening this summer.

Wendy Monson
Family Connection Intern

Meet Carol Y. Larson, our new House Assistant. Carol, originally from Highmore, SD moved to Sioux Falls in the Spring of 1986. Carol enjoys genealogy and her cat, Sarah. She works from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday; stop in and enjoy her ready smile and wonderful sense of humor!

Meet Carol Y. Larson, our new House Assistant. Carol, originally from Highmore, SD moved to Sioux Falls in the Spring of 1986. Carol enjoys genealogy and her cat, Sarah. She works from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday; stop in and enjoy her ready smile and wonderful sense of humor!

Christian group who saw a need and wanted to help these families.” That was a moment I shall never forget.

We were featured on all the television stations that day as we now had a place to begin our work.

After we purchased the house at 303 North Minnesota, I spoke with Carol Masek who related that the house we purchased was built in the late 1800s for the purpose of housing women who come to the state of South Dakota to get a quickie divorce. The economy of Sioux Falls was flourishing as a result of this business. Today that house is being used to keep families together. It was an affirmation that we were in the right place and that God redeems.

Wendy Monson
Family Connection Intern
Connecting Points

Gifts/Grants

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

Individuals
Anderson, Dorothy
Baker, Rita A.
Bietz, Harold W.
Braithwaite, Richard
Darger, Patricia & Erickson, Lloyd
Finck, Mary
Foote, Yvonne A.
Garvey, Andrew J.
Gilbert, Dave & Marilou
Gutch, C.F. & Elizabeth
Halverson, Kenneth or Mary Alice
Iseminger, Leroy & Orpha
Kemp, Earl & Kathy
Larson, Dorothy
Lemon, Ruth
Miller, Gloria
Norman, Lavina
Sanderson, M ark & Susan Randall
Sato,Yoshiko
Schafer, Dr. & M rs. C.T.
Stensland, Dr. Vernon & Ronda
Sullivan, M arion
Tiede, Darwin L.
Tingley, Kathleen & Ralph
Wosje, David

Organizations
Beaver Valley Lutheran Church - Hope Circle
Bethany W ELCA
Church of St Mary
Dakota Heartland Conf
Faith Women of the ELCA
First Baptist Church
First Presbyterian Church
Grace Lutheran Church - Sisseton
Grace Lutheran Church - Pennies
Our Saviors Lutheran Church - Patience Circle
Redeemers Evangelical Lutheran Church
St. John Women of the ELCA
Tabor Lutheran Church Women
Trinity Lutheran Church Women
St. Vincent de Paul
Chapter A Q, PEO Sisterhood
M inneha Sertoma Club
Sioux Valley Optimist Club
JC Penny

Grants
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Reese, Sheldon F. Foundation
Sioux Falls Woman’s Alliance Fund
Sioux Falls Area Community Fund
First National Bank
Sioux Valley Energy Customer Trust-Colman
SF Area Com. Foundation-SF Women’s Alliance
SF Area Community Foundation

In-Kind by Individuals
Apple, Laurie
Bender, Shawn
Boyd, Diana
Burgraff, Mary
Callahan, Roberta & Halley
Christenson, Adele & John
Garrison, Karen
Garvey, Andrew J.
Hanson, Rich
Hawler, Rolly & Diana
Iseminger, Leroy & Orpha
Kroneman, Larry
M axwell, Bob
Quire, Helen
Oberg, Stuart
Rosenboom, Tara & Tyson & Hall
Saye, Andrew & Sandra
Sneve, Kay
Stensland, Bud & Lorraine
Tingley, Ralph & Kathleen
Tjarks, Gene & Dolores
Vogt, Michele
Whalen, Diana
Zylstra, Sharon

In-Kind by Organization
Rich A twood-Preferred Printing
Augustana College Students
Baete-Forseth
Beaver Valley Lutheran Quilters-Valley Springs
Children’s Care Hospital & School
Cliff Avenue Greenhouse
Epiphany Catholic Church Youth Group
Grace Lutheran Hannah Circle
Grace Lutheran Church-M enno
Johnstone Supply
Landscape Garden Center
M idcontinent Communications
Messiah Lutheran Quilters-Rural Flandreau
Our Saviors Lutheran Church-Rachel Circle
Riv er’s Edge Girl Scouts
Royal River Casino-Flandreau
SF Council of Auxiliaries-Labor Temple
Soroptimist Club
Southeast Tech Institution
Springfield Prison Greenhouse
St Vincent De Paul Conference
Trinity Lutheran Church-Mitchell
VFW Auxiliary

Memorials/Honorariums
In Memorium of N an Nygren
Given by St. Paul ELCA Quilters of Bowdle
In honor of Helen Johnson
Given by Nancy Johnson
In M emorium of M arylin Papendick
Given by Shirley J. Koeppel
In honor of Col l Iseminger
Given by Leroy Iseminger
In honor of N ealy Williams
Given by Leroy Iseminger
In honor of M egan Sneesby
Given by Leroy Iseminger
In honor of Charlotte Casper
Given by Leroy Iseminger
In honor of Chase Casper
Given by Leroy Iseminger

Please remember us in your Wills and Trusts

Saturday, July 19th
Registration 7:15am
Walk Begins 8:30am
Run Begins 8:15am
Falls Park at Horse Barn

Walk or Run for Family Connection

Call 357-0777
for more information or to register! We will mail you a registration form or you may pick one up at 303 N. Minnesota.

If you cannot run or walk, please consider pledging for someone who is.

JOIN US!
for a morning of fun, sweat and cheers!
I originally met Carol as a result of some research trying to enlist the help of the Junior League of Sioux Falls early in the projects dreaming phase. Carol and Church Women United were exploring the idea for a hospitality house a few years before we began. The plans did not work out, but Carol and Judy Regan helped us with this project.

As we looked at the home we purchased, we recognized that the house next door was a blessing since we could either rent it out as income or we could provide it as housing for a director who would live on site. To the North, there is a vacant lot that the board felt would one day be hopefully be purchased and the house could be enlarged, a playground built and off street parking extended.

Shortly after the purchase, we decided to host an open house. Ray Johnson donated a beautiful Christmas tree from the Beaver Creek Lutheran church. Phyllis decorated the tree with paper angels that had different needs for the house noted on them. Our guests at the open house were invited to take an angel and fill the need noted on the card. We had a wonderful turnout that day. Some of the guests were Warden Joe Class, Carol Twedt, Tam Baker and others. This was the first time I met Steve Lee, one of the Associate Wardens. Steve later joined the board of Directors and has been an active member and liaison with the South Dakota State Penitentiary over the years. Having the recommendation of Herm Solem, someone with a knowledge of the penitentiary on the board has been an important asset to the ministry.

The highlight of the Open House was that the Sioux Falls Area Foundation, Sue Brown and Marsha Englert came that afternoon and brought us a check for $10,000 to help us fund this project. The reality of this project became more solid that day. I was awed by the tremendous trust given to us and we were determined not to undermine that trust in any way.

Around the Christmas season, I got a call from Richard Baaken of Garretson who contacted Pastor Leroy because his family wished to donate some meat for out guests. At that time, we had no appliances or furniture, let alone a freezer. I thanked him and he agreed to hold onto the meat till we were ready. A few days later, he called to say that his family pooled their resources and was purchasing a freezer for the house. I shall never forget the awe I felt art the generosity of the people we had been able to meet. I know that there was a hand guiding this project that would not let us falter if things got difficult. The smallest details were worked out!

We began having board meetings at the house at that point. Del and Bernice Duncan decorated each room by painting and applying border to the rooms, making them warm and inviting. We were the recipients of a donation of furniture for the house. Our living room, dining room, and bedrooms were gifted with new furniture from South Dakota Furniture Mart. I marveled at how the furnishings blended so nicely with the color of the carpet, wall coverings and existing window dressings. Anyone who would come would feel a sense of dignity to be there. We did not want the families to feel like they were coming to some flop house, but a place of safety and dignity. Sue Rodman helped us to decorate the rooms and made them feel welcoming. Angels were appearing all over the place in the decor!

The next efforts after getting the house furnished was to develop a set of operating policies and find a director for the house. Repairs were made to the house and the property prepared for guests by Kelly Hammrich, Jay Hammrich, Bishop Norm Eitlheim, Wayne Peterson, Pastor Leroy and Larry Hallstrom to name a few. Larry repaired the furnace and placed an air conditioning unit so that our guests would be comfortable. There were many wonderful things that happened to prepare the house for our guests and some difficulties as we made the needed changes, but with grace and kindness, the differences that resulted were resolved with help from the many angels involved.

In April of 1996, Anne Burkard, a graduate of the North American Baptist Seminary agreed to take the position as our first Hospitality House Director. And, on Mother’s Day weekend, May of 1996 the doors of the Family Connection Hospitality House opened its doors. And the rest is history!
Check Us Out on the Internet!
www.augie.edu/related/FamilyConnection

**Note new web page address!**

Saturday, July 19th
Registration 7:15am
Walk Begins 8:30am
Run Begins 8:15am
Falls Park at Horse Barn

Call 357-0777 for more information or to register your party! We will mail you a registration form or you may pick one up at the Hospitality House at 303 N. Minnesota.

If you cannot run or walk, please consider pledging for someone who is participating for us

_The Human Race will be held Saturday, July 19th at Falls Park. See you there!_