



Resource
Center ^{on}
Aging

ACT III

Vol. 1 No. 1

Mission: To provide collaborative faith-based services that meet the health and wellness needs of the whole person.

Fall 2006

Coming in November...

Photo Exhibit

First is a **photographic exhibit, "Hand in Hand"**, focusing on the hands of older adults as they meet the challenges and joys of life through interaction with those they love. The exhibit, on loan from the Council on Aging of Greater Nashville, will be displayed on the second floor of the Harpeth Hills complex. These powerful images were taken and prepared by Rita J. Maggart and Cathy Holmes. The display can be seen from Nov. 5-12.

Grandparent Seminar

Second, the **Grandparent Seminar** is **Nov. 11** from 9:00-11:30 a.m. in the Community Room, with **keynote speaker Rita J. Maggart**. Her creative efforts include drawing, painting, floral design and the writing and illustration of inspirational books, *In the Growing Places* and the series, *Mama Says...* She will address the heritage we receive from special people in our lives.

Karen Douse, Director of Library and Information Services at Harpeth Hall School, will discuss **"Internet Safety for Children"** at the seminar. Today's children are digital natives, while parents and grandparents are digital immigrants.

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Harpeth Hills Launches Resource Center on Aging

When the elders at Harpeth Hills saw a need to address issues on aging, they knew the person they wanted to bring on board to help lay a solid foundation for their program. The elders at Harpeth Hills wanted to build a program focusing on the gifts and needs of the aging members of the congregation and asked James Vandiver to return to the ministry staff to lead the project. Vandiver agreed to help launch the Resource Center on Aging at Harpeth Hills Church of Christ with the understanding that he would design a center that takes a holistic approach to addressing the gifts and needs of the aging.

Vandiver knew the need was real. Not only had he and his wife, Faye, faced tough decisions in regards to aging parents, but Vandiver also knew the statistics regarding the aging of America. About one in every eight people, or 12.4 percent of the population, is an older American (age 65 and older). By the year 2030, the number of older Americans will more than double to 71.5 million. A person reaching the age of 65 has an average life expectancy of an additional 18.2 years. About 416,000 grandparents have the primary responsibility of raising their grandchildren. The number of Americans over 85 years of age is projected to be 9.6 million by 2030. Facing numbers like these, congregations must answer the call to address issues related to aging. "Families dealing with aging issues often don't have adequate resources to deal with the situations they face and often don't know how to access the resources that are available," Vandiver states.

Vandiver comes to the Resource Center on Aging well prepared to address these issues and grow the center into a vital resource for the congregation and the community. He graduated in 1958 from Lipscomb University with a major in speech and a minor in political science. He worked towards his master's degree at Vanderbilt. He served in full-time local ministry in the Middle Tennessee area for 40 years, including serving as the pulpit minister at Harpeth Hills Church of Christ. "I left local ministry and for seven years was involved with healthcare," Vandiver adds. "For four of those years, I served as Director of Community Relations for LifeTrust America, a senior services company involved in assisted living communities throughout the southeast."

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Launches (continued from page 1)

While at LifeTrust, Vandiver was responsible for creating and advancing community partnerships among healthcare, religious, social and civic organizations on both local and national levels. Vandiver also served as the president of Tennessee Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. He was appointed by the Speaker of Tennessee's House of Representatives to serve on Tennessee's Long-Term Care Advisory Council. He also served on the Patient Safety Advisory Board for the state.

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Vandiver doesn't rely only on his own experiences to grow this center, however. He has assembled both a resource group comprised of members within the Harpeth Hills congregation and an advisory group comprised of ten professionals from various fields related to addressing the needs of older Americans. Vandiver also relies upon the original vision for the center set in motion by the elders of Harpeth Hills.

With the combined education and experiences of all of the people involved, the Resource Center on

Aging began operating with the vision to value people in every stage of life. The mission of the center is to provide collaborative faith-based services that meet the health and wellness needs of the whole person. The center will be developed into a valuable source of information, education and caring by those it serves. The center will also facilitate research on aging issues and offer family counseling sessions as well as host educational workshops and referral activities. Social events will be planned throughout the year and intergenerational activities will be planned for the congregation and the community.

Vandiver adds, however, that the center does not strive to compete with existing agencies that also address the issues of aging. "This is a collaborative effort. We want to join with other community entities that can work in partnership with us such as universities, hospitals, hospice care agencies and service-oriented companies. We all bring a valuable piece to the table." The center will not be designed to serve only older Americans. Since aging is a lifelong process, all age groups can benefit from the resources that will be available.

Dr. Jane Thibault once wrote, "Rarely do we talk of the need to continue growing throughout the lifespan. Because we spend so much time worrying about the decline of the body, we can overlook the need and opportunity to grow in other areas, particularly in wisdom and grace." Harpeth Hills Resource Center on Aging provides a place to not only address the physical needs of older Americans, but also to make sure emotional and spiritual issues are being addressed as well. James Vandiver remains committed to helping the center live up to its mission of meeting the needs of the whole person.

The Still Point: A Memoir

by John Shouse

It was one of those father-son road trips, just my twin boys and I, visiting my parents in Missouri. My son Evan, who has autism, was sleeping with his brother in the guest room. Sometime just before 5:00 AM, I was awakened by Evan's terrified scream. He had either been having a bad dream, or had awakened not knowing where he was and panicked. Probably both. He ran out into the hall, down to the living room, still screaming in terror. He made the loop through the house and headed back down the hall, taking a right turn into my father's bedroom.

My father was also awakened by the commotion, and was just getting to his bedroom door when Evan passed him, jumped over the footboard and into the bed. Dad climbed quickly back into bed behind Evan, pulled him close and began to stroke his head, whispering to him that everything was all right. I stood there in the doorway, transfixed by what I was seeing in the predawn light filtering through the curtains.

Dad was 83 then. His spirit was the same as it had always been, and because of that he seemed much younger than his years. However, for the first time I noticed that he looked frail and his arms appeared so much thinner than I expected. It sounds funny, but I couldn't remember seeing him without a necktie and long-sleeved shirt, which he wore every single day, even while mowing the yard! But here he was cradling my son with those loving arms, as Evan continued to tremble and breathe in and out with short, choppy, frightened

breaths. Dad kissed the top of Evan's head, and told him that everything was Okay.

I sat down in the chair beside the bed and watched. I reached out to help comfort Evan, and soon he took in a very deep breath, held it for a second and then let it out along with all of his fear and trembling. In the next few seconds he drifted back to sleep. Dad smiled too, and without a word closed his eyes and went to sleep as well. I could not help but wonder what the future might hold for these two souls.

As I watched them sleeping there, snuggled together in the same

Breathe in deeply, and delight in the life that courses through you as you breathe out.

bed I had slept in as a child, my eyes filled with tears. They were tears of love, to be sure, but also tears of fear and uncertainty. I sat there in the shadows transfixed by this scene. Here were the two people who had taught me more about unconditional love than anything or anyone else in the world could have—one through a lifetime of example and encouragement, and the other through his simple trusting nature, borne of his absolute innocence.

Dad lived through two world wars and the great depression. His mother died when he was two. He grew up with his sister and his father in a house with no indoor plumbing, heated only by a potbelly stove. He was a cancer survivor. He'd known hardship and hard times in ways that I never will, and will perhaps never fully understand. He had little formal education, but through hard work and becoming a life-long learner, he elevated himself to a good job, which he performed with dignity and responsibility for well over

forty years.

I have absolutely no recollection, whatsoever, of dad ever complaining or feeling sorry for himself, or of his bemoaning things over which he had no control. I only remember him going about doing whatever needed to be done, and doing it with a smile and a kind word or a joke for everyone he'd meet.

If it's true that we eventually become our parents, then I am indeed fortunate. I had no way of knowing at that moment how much longer he'd be with us in this world.

For Evan as well, I have no way of knowing what his future will be like. Will he work through the challenges of his au-

tism and learn to communicate effectively? Will he be able to articulate his needs, his hopes and dreams? Will he be able to function in school, or find and hold a job? Will he fall in love and share his life with someone? Will he have children of his own? Will he remember the times I hold him tight and tell him how much I love him? Will he remember his grandparents when they're gone?

I sat there watching Dad and Evan until it was time to get up and start the day. It was as real and powerful a "moment" as I've ever had in my life. Much like

watching my own children being born, this moment is one that I will cherish and carry with me forever.

There, I think, lies at least one answer to the question of what the future will hold. Which of us knows or will EVER know what tomorrow brings? All we can do is live in the moment, and learn to cherish the ordinary ones, for they are, truly, the most profound moments we experience.

My dad passed away the next summer. I think of him every time I hold Evan in my own arms, and I look back and smile.

Do the loving thing as often as you can, and choose your path wisely, with intention, and with no regret. Practice peace and awareness, and be thankful for the love around you.

Contribute.

Breathe in deeply, and delight in the life that courses through you as you breathe out.

The moments are full, and life is good. I pray the same for you.

Love, John

John Shouse is the parent of child with autism. John and his wife Janet live in Franklin with their daughter, Emma, and twin boys, Evan and Brendan. John serves on the Board of Directors of the Autism Society of America and the Autism Society of Middle TN. John is an active advocate for inclusive education for children with disabilities. He is a frequent speaker at autism conferences and workshops on family issues including the challenges and joys of being a parent or grandparent of a child with autism.

Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor
towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

Half Time: Another Word for Midlife

by Marie Byers

Halftime; Changing your Game Plan from Success to Significance
by Bob Buford, Zondervan Publishing House, 1994

Using football's halftime as a metaphor for one's middle years, or midlife, Bob Buford in his book *Halftime; Changing your Game Plan from Success to Significance*, suggests that this period can become the stage from which to review the first half of one's life and the period during which to plan the second or final half. The first half of one's life is filled with getting an education, establishing a family, engaging in a chosen career, seeking to acquire wealth or, at the minimum, financial security. The second half should encompass much more—moving from a “self” emphasis to living in a way that is meaningful to others.

In another sports analogy, the author suggests that life's journey is similar to a runner's progression around a baseball diamond. Beginning from first base, the runner operates on faith; rounding second base, the runner manifests a benevolent attitude toward others; upon reaching third base, the runner participates in good works; and, finally, in the approach to home base, the runner realizes his true mission, fulfilling God's plan for his life.

Almost everyone who approaches the fourth and fifth decades of life experiences some apprehension about the future and the legacy to be left behind. To begin the self-evaluation process, Buford suggests asking, “If my life were absolutely perfect, what would its elements be?” Once this question is answered, Buford suggests additional questions to help one establish a course of action to ensure that the second half of life will be meaningful and contribute to the welfare of others.

Drawing upon quotations from successful businessmen, philosophers, politicians, educators, and from scripture, Buford has outlined one method by which to evaluate the past and present of our lives and to chart a future course designed to enrich the second half.

NOTE: This book now available in the Harpeth Hills library.

(continued from page 1) Coming in November

Children need a positive and safe experience on the Internet while in grandparents' homes as well as their own. **Dr. Kenneth Dye**, a licensed family therapist, will discuss how grandparents set appropriate boundaries. The grandparent/grandchild relationship is growing more complex due to changes in the family structure.

“Music of Life”

Third, **Ruth McGinnis**, violinist, author, recording artist and speaker will present an evening of music and inspiration **Nov. 11 at 7:00 p.m.** Against the backdrop of Ruth's beautiful music and dramatic storytelling, “The Music of Life” will inspire you to celebrate the unique beauty and meaning of your own life story. She has performed and recorded with Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Vince Gill and many others. Amy has written of her, “She has been more of an inspiration to me than she could ever know.” Ruth recently performed with Amy Grant for the Gala opening of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. A Julliard School of Music graduate, she performs many musical styles. This \$10 ticketed event held in the Harpeth Hills Youth Center will appeal to all ages.

Calendar

- 10/24—Alzheimer's Memory Walk
11/2—Medicare Part D Seminar @
7:00 p.m.
11/3—Pathfinder Dinner
11/11—Grandparent Seminar
11/11—Ruth McGinnis concert
11/5-11/12—Hand in Hand
Photography Exhibit

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