



## Tell All My People I Really Care



Rhonda and Betty Rader—Shawnee Family Retreat 2008

### *My Dream* by Rhonda Rader

*Last night when I went to bed,  
I couldn't understand what was ahead.  
When I was praying it seemed so real,  
Even emotions I could really feel.*

*An angel that was in my room said,  
"Come with me. We will be back soon."  
The angel took me by the hand,  
And took me to another land,  
A place I had never seen before.*

*I saw someone clothed in white,  
The light reflecting was shining and bright.  
The voice was loud and clear,  
"Don't be afraid. You have nothing to fear."*

*"Come walk with me. This time I will share  
What it will be like without your chair."  
The pain was gone, the joy I shared,  
The love of Jesus can never be compared.*

*"I have work on earth for you to do.  
When your journey is finished, I'll come for you.  
A dream I gave for you to share;  
Tell all my people I really care."*

Rhonda Rader was so excited about last year's *Family Retreat* that she wanted to bring her mother, Betty, and personal care assistant, Lisa, this year! Rhonda, age 51, suffers with symptoms resembling cerebral palsy due to an infant fever, which affects her speech and ability to walk and care for herself. After obtaining the necessary funding for all three ladies through a Joni and Friends scholarship and donations from Rhonda's church, Rhonda, Betty, and Lisa came to *Family Retreat* excited about the week ahead. At the end of the week Betty said, "I have never been at *anything* like this before. This has been the best week of my life!"

Rhonda and Betty were able to be a blessing to others, as well. In Betty's small group Betty was able to give other mothers hope and encouragement regarding their "younger" children, having gone through many stages with Rhonda. Betty shared with them a poem about a dream of heaven that Rhonda had been given. Towards the end of the Thursday night talent show Rhonda, Lisa, and Betty also sang "What a Day That Will Be", bringing tears of joy and promise to those in attendance.



# We're Praying You Back Here



*Matt and Jesse*

“We’re praying you back here!” Heidi said to Matt on the last day of the Ohio *Family Retreat*. Matt and his wife Jessica both served as Short Term Missionaries (STMs) for the first time this year before their move to Philadelphia in August. Heidi said, “I don’t know how you matched the STMs. Matt was perfect for Jesse!”

Jason and Heidi Fields had been preparing Jesse to go to another camp that week but found out that he couldn’t go because he didn’t have anyone to buddy with him. A friend told her about Joni and Friends and *Family Retreat* on the Monday before the Retreat started. By Tuesday they had raised the funding needed and Jason was even given time off from work. God wanted them to come!

Jesse is a teen on the autism spectrum and relationships are not easy for him. He is never one to step out of his isolation, especially in just 4 or 5 days, but when Jesse met Matt, the Fields saw a change. Heidi saw her son try to be like Matt while in the pool or on the stage at the talent show. Heidi said, **“On Friday Jesse laid his head on Matt’s shoulder and then fell asleep on his lap. That has never happened before where Jesse would allow anyone to touch him! We are coming back next year!”** And they’re praying that Matt will be able to return, as well.

## Finding A Family

This was a year of firsts for many, including Bruce and Kathie Steinhard, their newly adopted 14-year-old daughter Hannah, and their (Short Term Missionary) STM from Pennsylvania, Sharon Doster. Though their stories have many differences, there are also some similarities. All had to find financing and overcome difficulties to get to *Family Retreat*, and all had expectations about the week ahead. Because Sharon interprets American Sign Language, she was hoping for a family with that need. And Hannah came expecting to see others like herself. God had other plans.

Sharon says, “He really stretched me. I was not familiar with their disabilities, but everything worked out well.” The Steinhards didn’t need Sharon’s sign language skills at all, but by the end of the week Hannah was calling Sharon her second mother. To the great relief and joy of Bruce and Kathie, Hannah was empowered to try new things after meeting those with different disabilities from her own. Kathie says of the week, “I experienced a calmness of anxieties about my child, a reassurance that adopting this special-needs girl was indeed the direction He wanted for my life.” She was grateful for the chance to relax and enjoy fellowship with others while learning about new resources available to families with disabilities. The volunteers “helped to make us feel like any run-of-the-mill family on vacation,” she says. Bruce agrees, saying on the first day, “You have already exceeded my expectations!”

Sharon concludes, “I’m so thankful to have been able to go. My husband says he measures how good something is by how much I cry. I shed a lot of tears at Retreat last week.”



*Bruce Steinhard, Sharon Doster, Hannah and Kathie Steinhard experienced the “Family” of Family Retreat.*

# God Is Working Behind the Scenes

Tom and Linda, the co-leaders of the single adults at the 2008 *Family Retreat*, wanted to do something different for the singles, something 'outside the box.' Tom wanted to go on a pontoon boat ride, but they had NO boat. Tom had checked options, only to come to a dead end, so Linda decided to drive to Portsmouth to check out the marina (4 hours from Linda's home). Only one pontoon boat was docked in the marina so Linda went to check with the person in charge. On the way, she stopped to talk to a lady decorating for her daughter's party. After explaining what they were looking for and that it was for Joni and Friends, the lady became very interested! She and her husband (Lesa and Gary) were the owners of the only pontoon boat in the water and they stated that they would love to take them on the boat! God's timing is perfect: an hour either way and this encounter might never have happened!

There were still a few obstacles. The marina was not wheelchair accessible. Gary said that was no problem; he would build us a ramp. The wheelchairs would not fit through the entrance to the boat. Again, no problem. Gary took off part of the railing on the front of the boat and removed the seats and table so that wheelchairs could fit.

The day arrived, beautiful and sunshiny, and the singles were safely loaded at the boat ramp Gary had made. In just three trips, all the singles got to ride on the peaceful Ohio River for about 30 minutes. Each time a barge came down the river and blew its horn - just another "blessing" from God.

Many got to steer the boat. Gary called Heather his "First Mate" which started her giggling. It had been 20 years since Leon was on a boat and he thoroughly enjoyed the peaceful waters. When Rhonda got to steer the boat it sounded like her shipmates got a bit nervous, but not Gary. He said she steered straight towards the trees just the way she was supposed to! Vera was delighted with every minute and Greg caught a fish! (Of course, we don't really know how big it was, because each time the story gets told the fish gets longer...)

God's hand was in this from the beginning. Gary and Lesa attended Thursday nights Talent Show and Family Celebration and as Lesa walked out, with tears in her eyes, all she could say was, "We'll be back next year!"



*Gary and Lesa Erlenwein,  
pontoon boat owners*



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1185 Wesley Ave. Suite 300  
Xenia, OH 45385  
Phone: 937-352-4095  
Fax: 937-352-4099  
ohio@joniandfriends.org

Visit the JAF Website:  
[www.joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org)

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# Through the Roof Academy

Saturday, November 8, at Grace Brethren Church  
Columbus, Ohio, 9:00am-1:00pm

Welcoming All God's Children: Addressing Behavioral Issues

Topic: Behavior Management in the Classroom

Speaker: Tonya Riedel, Special Needs Preschool Supervisor,  
Olentangy Local School District

Cost: \$15 ~ includes continental breakfast and booklet "Including Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems" by Dr. Jim Pierson

Workshop topics:

- Classroom Management
- Connecting in Worship (focus on inclusion in the main worship setting)
- Addressing the Family: Do's and Don'ts
- Intro to Joni and Friends Programming and Resources

For Reservations contact Joni and Friends Ohio  
at [ohio@joniandfriends.org](mailto:ohio@joniandfriends.org) or call (937) 352-4095.

Registration closes October 31, 2008, so don't delay-register today!



## You asked for it... You got it!

Many asked at our first *Through the Roof* Academy if we could provide any hands-on training for disability ministry. Here are two opportunities in October!

**Saturday, October 4**  
**Columbus Christian Center**  
**Columbus, Ohio**  
**10:00am-2:30pm.**

**What:** A Mother's Luncheon honoring moms of kids with disabilities.

A great training for full inclusion.  
No cost. Bring your own snack/lunch.

**Saturday, October 25**  
**Christian Missionary Alliance**  
**Zanesville, Ohio**  
**9:00am-2:00pm**

**What:** Caring Hearts (disAbility) will showcase a themed party. See respite in action!

Fee: \$20 includes box lunch, JAF materials and panel discussion.

Contact: [ohio@joniandfriends.org](mailto:ohio@joniandfriends.org) or (937) 352-4095 for reservations or more information. Hurry - space is limited!



Joni and Friends is pleased to announce that we have joined the National Combined Federal Campaign. All federal employees participating in the campaign will have the opportunity to support Joni and Friends. The campaign will run from Sept. 1 - Dec. 15, 2008. Please look for our giving number 69988.

**Contribute Online**  
You may now conveniently contribute to the Ohio ministry through our secure online system. Simply go to our website, [www.joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org), click on "Donations" and choose "Ohio." The staff at Joni and Friends Ohio always appreciates your prayers and support of the local ministry.

Special thanks to Howard, Wershbaile & Co. for printing the Joni and Friends Ohio Newsletter. If your company is interested in sponsoring the next newsletter, please contact the Ohio Area Ministry office.

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