



## In the Name of Jesus ...

After years of considering the idea of attending a *Family Retreat*, Karen and her husband rather reluctantly made the decision to bring their severely disabled daughter, Rachel, to last year's Retreat. Karen explained, Rachel "has a trach—requiring suctioning, feeding tube ..., needs oxygen and ... she has no speech." Rachel also required a hospital bed and a lift. Even with these provided in their lodge room at the Retreat, the family had to bring 17 small oxygen tanks and one big one, plus her Hoyer lift.

Then God supplied what only He could supply in the person of Ginny, a volunteer Short Term Missionary and a nurse, to be paired with Rachel. Karen marveled at how hard Ginny worked to understand Rachel's eyes and facial movements that she used to communicate with, and how Ginny was familiar with Rachel's special needs.



*Karen, Rachel, and Ginny on stage at the talent show.*

The rest of the story is best told in Karen's own words: *"As it turned out, my husband and I were able to spend some much needed time with each other, and Rachel was delighted to participate in activities without her parents always being around. She felt more independent. She is not able to attend any day programs because of her trach so she is in much need of socialization since she is homebound. She was able to be in the talent show and sang one of Joni's songs with her eyes and facial movements. It really touched everyone and really helped Rachel's self-esteem to know she was actually able to do something for someone else, especially in the name of Jesus. It meant so much to my husband and myself knowing that all those people were able to understand what she was trying to portray. Everyone at Retreat was so friendly and always smiling. It was so great being with such positive people and feeling like we fit in. We left feeling energized and excited about coming back next year."*



*Marcel, Doug, and Matt enjoy the paddleboats at Family Retreat.*

Like Karen, we are also excited about our upcoming *Family Retreats*. If you would like to learn more, please contact our office at 937-352-4095.



*Collin rides with Christian Motorcyclist member at Family Retreat!*

Join the Online Prayer Team!

Join our prayer team to share prayer requests and pray for our Ohio Area Ministry friends. Contact us by using the enclosed reply card. Take advantage of this opportunity to walk side-by-side with our extended family!

## A Very *Special* Delivery

Was it just a coincidence? Could God care so much for “Maa,” a seven-year-old girl on crutches in Ghana, that He brought together the child’s sponsor through Compassion International and a visiting Ghanaian Joni and Friends worker at last summer’s *Family Retreat*? This amazing connection happened when first-time volunteer Gina Anzuini, from Tallmadge, OH, met Ms. Felicia Opoku, who was sent to our *Family Retreat* from Ghana so she could see just how to plan one for her country. Felicia volunteered to visit Maa, and Gina excitedly recruited Felicia to carry back a small gift to her sponsored child. The results were probably more than either of the women expected. Felicia visited Maa, delivered the gift, and was able to fit her for a wheelchair through the Joni and Friends *Wheels for the World* program. Not a coincidence—definitely a miracle!



Felicia visiting Maa in Ghana, Africa.



## Frederick’s Story ...

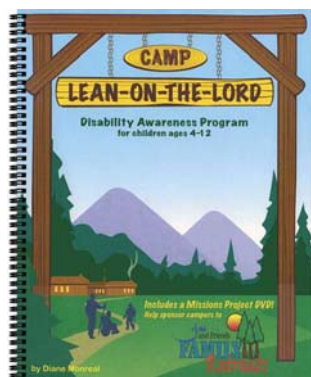
Having spent months in hospice with no known relatives to visit and very limited financial resources, Frederick took to his bed and began willing himself to die. Kelly, his hospice spiritual advisor, read Joni’s *HOPE ... the Best of Things* and was prompted to call Joni and Friends Ohio. Could someone visit Frederick?

And so began the story of a *Special Delivery* where Christ’s love and hope were first demonstrated by a haircut given to a desperate man. When Melanie, a trained volunteer from Shawnee *Family Retreat*, first visited Frederick in October of 2008, she noticed his long hair and interrupted his repetitive “I want to die, I want to die ...” with a simple question: “Do you want to get your hair cut?” He said, “YEAH!” Melanie had trained as a beautician but could not pursue that career for health reasons, and Kelly had been praying for someone to cut Frederick’s hair.

Melanie relates how that day in the facility’s barbershop, Frederick “sort of just came alive.” Melanie discovered he liked motorcycles and a rapport developed during Melanie’s and her husband John’s subsequent visits. A day came when Melanie read the Bible with Frederick and he acknowledged that he had accepted the Lord as his Savior at a previous time. Melanie’s *Special Delivery* visits to Frederick so demonstrated the love of Christ that Frederick was able to recall once again that life is a gift and that our Lord is the source of Hope.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. ~ Romans 15:13 NIV*

**Know someone needing a *Special Delivery*? Or would you or your church like to join our *Special Delivery* team? Use the reply card to let us know. We hope to hear from you!!**



## *New Children’s Resource for Churches and Schools!*

At *Camp Lean-on-the-Lord*, children will enjoy five fun-filled days of hands-on activities, Bible stories, camp songs, and crafts. They will learn to be compassionate friends to “campers” with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, ADHD, and spina bifida. The kit also includes a “Fishers of Men” Missions Project DVD. Children will get the opportunity to sponsor campers affected by disability who attend Joni and Friends Ohio Family Retreats.

*Disability Awareness Program and Missions Project for children ages 4-12. Kit includes teacher’s manual, DVD, song CD, publicity posters, and brochures.*

## Upcoming Events

*You Won’t Want to Miss These!!!*

### Through the Roof Academy with Dr. Jim Pierson

**When:** May 2, 9:00–3:00

Doors open 8:30 am

**Where:** Christ’s Church at Mason Mason, OH

Dr. Pierson is a nationally known authority on disability ministry and has partnered with Joni and Friends in the development of many disability ministry resources.

### Shawnee Family Retreat June 22–26, 2009 (STMs arrive June 21)

Registration is open and there are still spots available; however, space is limited, so contact us TODAY!

**For information about either of these events, contact the Joni and Friends Ohio office at (937) 352-4095 or Email: [ohio@joniandfriends.org](mailto:ohio@joniandfriends.org)**

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