

The Family of God is Large
Reference for Ginter Park Presbyterian Church's Adult Home Ministry

In 1996, several good-hearted members of Ginter Park Presbyterian Church realized that a serious need for ministry existed in the church's own back yard. Within several blocks of the church, a large number of adult homes provide residence for adults with mental and/or physical problems. The church's leaders decided that something could and should be done to help the adult home folks and welcome them to Ginter Park Church.

Many of us church members who were witnesses to these initial contacts and visits by the adult home residents thought that what was happening was probably noble, although we had doubts as to what good the church was really doing..

As the years passed, activities became more numerous, and more of us became marginal participants. At picnics put on by the Northside Churches, we watched the residents from afar, and occasionally had a conversation or some other interaction with them. We began to feel more comfortable with them and noticed that they seemed more comfortable with us.

Many of us had an epiphany at one of the Christmas parties. When we watched the residents dress and perform in the Christmas pageants, we finally saw the face of God in their faces. The veil was removed from our eyes as we saw them as God's creation and our fellow human beings.

We grew in our understanding of who we are as we came to know the adult home people. We saw ourselves in them, as we are helpless, sick, old, in need of others, and in need of God's love. We also saw them as possessing great wisdom and insight, as fellow travelers in this common experience of life.

Perhaps we are presumptuous to say we have helped the adult home residents, just as we are presumptuous to say they have changed us. Our greatest claim may be that we have realized the largeness of God's family. That realization has brought us a certain comfort as well as a quiet determination to love our brothers and sisters even as God has loved us.

We strive for justice and compassion for all of God's children. We try to understand the social structures which do not provide adequate health care for most of the adult home people. We try to open the eyes of others to a world that many do not wish to see or are not aware exists. We seek to know God's will for us and for those who are our brothers and sisters.

Edward Dail

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