LIFT in focus

Genesis 2:18 says, “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” From the beginning God was concerned about community—even between Adam and Eve, the first to ever be created. How we see ourselves, and those whom God places in our lives, must flow from this community perspective. We’re all made in His image.

Our LIFT ministry model fosters community by nurturing relationships with people who are terminally or chronically ill, aging, or disabled. As church members care for one another, the level of compassion is raised, and so is their dignity. When we recognize the very image of God in each individual, we bring glory to His name.

Life Matters is making a renewed and concerted effort to introduce more churches to LIFT. We want to help church leaders find those people in their congregations who have it in their hearts to extend such ministry to the aging and infirm. We hope to see them equipped and set them free for service among this overlooked population.

This is a great pro-life ministry for retirees, empty-nesters, and people with gifts of mercy and organization. Who’s great at LIFT? Folks with a God-given passion for people paired with God-given abilities in caring.

Our desire at Life Matters Worldwide is to challenge churches, both their leaders and members, to unleash the potential that resides in all of us—the potential God endowed when He crafted us in His own image. Imagine if we started to really utilize the gifts God has given each of us to serve one another humbly in love. What a world this could be!

Let’s strive to live so no one in the church ages alone.

LIFT Q & A

How does LIFT help people?

LIFT provides structure for caring. Your congregation will thrive when given opportunities to offer their gifts and abilities to one another in the areas of providing companionship, personal care, transportation, financial advising, and home care through such activities as these:

- Bible reading & prayer
- Lawn care, home maintenance
- Playing a game
- Respite for caregivers
- Playing music
- Grooming, styling hair
- Doctor visits
- Balancing a checkbook
- Light housekeeping
- Meal preparation

Who’s on the LIFT team?

- **Coordinators** identify those wanting help, prayerfully match care recipients with a contact person, organize support volunteers, and maintain records. A two-hour training equips coordinators to be the LIFT expert(s) at their church.
- **Care Recipients** also find opportunities to use their spiritual gifts of faith and encouragement.
- **Contact People** visit or call one or more care recipients once per week to build supportive friendships characterized by mercy and attentive listening, and they ask what needs with which the care recipient would appreciate help.
- **Support Volunteers** can be called upon to help in areas associated with their gifts and skills. This can look like companionship, home care, personal care, money management, or transportation.

To find people, we recommend posting sign-up sheets that allow church members to indicate their desire to serve.

How would we begin implementing LIFT at our church?

LIFT requires very little church staff involvement, and can be adapted to function alongside the current ministries in any church. Once leadership has given approval, a team of caregivers
ENGAGING OUR AGING

On October 27, at Calvary Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we held our second Engaging Our Aging conference. The featured speaker was Dr. John Mulder who is a chief medical consultant for hospice and palliative care. His three talks centered around the realities of the medical system, finding hope in the midst of bad news, and how to help suffering people keep their sights on that hope. You can access audio recordings of those talks through our store at store.lifemattersww.org.

The conference was also an opportunity for Eric to share Life Matters Worldwide’s vision for LIFT, and we heard from missionary nurse Brenda Mastin. She shared the exciting news that 15 churches in Togo have two members each serving as LIFT volunteers. They’ve received training from Brenda and her leadership team, and they will visit people in their churches and communities who have HIV/AIDS, are suffering the effects of stroke, or with other long-term illnesses. They’ll help them with household chores, read Scripture, pray with them, and play soothing music.

This ministry will complement the ministry of the ABWE hospitals in Togo, and enhance their witness. One pastor said he had visited a woman with the intention of sharing the Gospel with her, but first he met some of her obvious physical needs. Such care meant so much to her that she was willing to listen and respond to the Good News!

PHILIPPINES TRIP

Tom Lothamer traveled to the Philippines soon after the Engaging Our Aging conference to work alongside Dr. Mae Corvera and other ministry leaders.