**THE RESPITE MINISTRY**

**(Scholarship Letter to Churches)**

1. There are roughly over 7,000 people diagnosed with dementia each year in the city of Montgomery. Until the development of this program, there was no program to serve the mental, physical and spiritual needs of both a caregiver and participant. By offering music, art, children interaction, pet therapy, dance therapy, yoga and games of love and laughter, this ministry hopes to be the spark to bring the whole region together in support of the entire memory loss community. Our program is open to any one suffering from Parkinson’s, Lewy Bodie’s Disease, Alzheimer’s, vascular dementia and even memory loss due to depression or older age. Our participants range in age from 54-92 with close to twenty coming a day.

The program began with 2 participants and has served over 400 people in the past 4 years. We offer programing from 10am- 2pm, Monday-Thursdays. The caregiver may drop their loved one off and be able to go to doctor’s appointments, run errands, visit with friends, and simply take a respite from the 24/7 tasks of caregiving. Sometimes the most significant way we can help those with dementia is to provide support for the ones who care for them. A break may enable the caregiver to keep the person at home longer rather than looking for long term skilled care facilities for help. We also offer a caregivers support group for the community once a month from 10a,-12pm. This is a refuge for those to share their stories of grief, anger, and experiences that others may learn from. Currently, there are close to 35 caregivers from the region in attendance of the monthly meeting.

2. The Respite Ministry is seeking a $3,000 grant to provide one full scholarship to one needy participant 3 days a week for one year or to be divided among 3 separate participants to come one day a week. As stated in paragraph one, this pays for a hot meal, art supplies, music and field trips to the museum.

3. As the number of older adults in our congregations and community increases, the faith community will be called to new practices and new ministries, particularly with the growing number of persons living and affected by dementia. Our program challenges the idea that those with memory loss are passed serving the community, part of our sense of self-worth is bound up in the knowledge that we remain contributing members of the community and open to building new relationships. This ministry offers people an outlet to still partake in fellowship and experience God’s love even when they cannot remember their own self-identity.

4. Anyone with memory loss due to Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s dementia, vascular dementia or brain injuries will be served that is 50 years of age and older.

5. Presently, we have 40 active families meaning we provide support for 40 participants and 40 caregivers. We billed 47K in daily fees for the year 2015 and wrote off 17K in scholarships.

6. Currently, the staff has two paid employees, Daphne Johnston assisted by Laura Selby. The program is run by 118 volunteers from 8 different churches and 2 synagogues. All the volunteers go through a 4 hour dementia training and are scheduled weekly. It takes approximately 12 volunteers a day to run the program. That is 48 shifts of people working a week and close to 190 hours of service a month needed for the program to be successful, and the ministry has never been short of workers a day.