



CHRISTIAN
REFORMED
CHURCH

Disability Concerns

Everybody belongs. Everybody serves.

Most churches are very good at helping people through short-term crises such as accidents and illnesses. But churches have more trouble walking alongside someone who does not “get better.” People in congregations don’t always know how to relate to people with disabilities and their families. Likewise, churches tend to exclude people with disabilities from ministry because they focus on the *disability* rather than on the abilities of the person.

The staff of Disability Concerns (paid and volunteer) helps churches to include all of God’s people in their life and ministry so that all members know that they belong and can use their gifts fully. A full-time director as well as administrative assistants working part-time in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and in Burlington, Ontario comprise the paid staff. Their work is multiplied by a network of hundreds of volunteers who serve individual churches as church disability advocates, and who serve entire classes as Regional Advocates.

Disability Concerns subcommittees support the consultants in the Canada, Chicago, west Michigan, and the U.S. Midwest. The Canada committee holds a well-attended training conference every spring in Ontario, and DC has sponsored other conferences throughout the U.S. and Canada. Disability Concerns also cooperates with Friendship (www.friendship.org) in their ministry

with people who have intellectual disabilities in the United States and Canada.

Quick Facts

- Disability Concerns communicates with churches primarily through its network of volunteers, but also through its newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*.
- The services of Disability Concerns are offered to churches free of charge.
- Individuals and special church offerings support one-third of our budget. The other two-thirds comes from CRC ministry shares. We could not carry on our work without this steady, reliable, and generous source of funding.
- Studies by the U.S. Census and Statistics Canada indicate that about 17 per cent of their populations live with at least one disability. That translates to over 42,000 Christian Reformed people, or 17 out of every one-hundred people in your church, who live with a disability, and about one in every four families in your neighborhood.
- Funded by ministry shares, Regional Advocates receive annual training to better serve the churches.

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Disability Concerns is a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). To learn about the CRC’s work in North America and around the world, visit www.crcna.org.

