

Hendrik (Henk) Wapstra

Director Emeritus and Founder

Henk was born in the Netherlands, immigrated to the USA with his family as a 13 year-old, becoming a citizen in 1957. While in the Netherlands, his older sister passed away from a disabling condition. Henk is a Presbyterian clergy in good standing with his denomination. He feels at home in all churches and faith communities as well as in social service, medical and business settings. Since 1965, Henk has served seven churches in the Northwest in positions ranging from Director of Youth to Senior Minister, all the while learning some of life's greatest lessons from persons with disAbilities. In 1981, he was a part of the founding team for a vocational training school for persons with physical disAbilities. For two years, Henk also participated in a chaplain program (CPE) at Fircrest School and Residential Center in Seattle for persons with mental retardation.

Being with the residents at Fircrest became one of the highlights and transforming experiences of his life.

In 1987, Henk felt called to work full-time alongside persons with disAbilities, assisting them toward a higher quality of life and fuller inclusion in all of society. This calling resulted in the founding of Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns, headquartered in King County. Bridge developed into a highly successful ministry with multiple staff members and many volunteers, serving several thousand persons a year. Until his retirement in January 2000, Henk served Bridge as its Executive Director and Chaplain for 13 years.

After moving to Marysville in Snohomish County, he researched the unmet needs in the North Sound, came out of retirement, founded Eagle Wings disAbility Ministries, and continues his work with and on behalf of persons with disAbilities and their families. Although Henk is fully retired, he volunteers a great deal of his time on behalf of the people we serve. A passion he will carry with him forever.

Eagle Wings disAbility Ministries received its non-profit status in January 2001 and continues to remain true to Henk's original vision and ministry.