

P E N T E C O S T A L evangel

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NATHANIEL'S HOPE

Special Needs Ministry Grows Nationally

A Central Florida special-needs ministry launched by ordained Assemblies of God minister Marie Kuck and her husband, Tim, has mushroomed nationwide by sharing the hope of Christ with children with disabilities and their families.

The Orlando, Fla., couple started Nathaniel's Hope (NH) in 2003 in honor of their son, Nathaniel, who



Tim and Marie Kuck

was born with multiple birth anomalies and overcame many health challenges before he died in 2001 at age 4.

NH's Buddy Break program, which offers caregivers of special-needs children — called VIP kids — a break for three hours, currently partners with 17 churches in Florida, Tennessee, Califor-

nia, Maryland and Virginia.

"Buddy Break is such a gift for my family," says Lucette Helotie. "My kids have found a place where they fit right in, are cared for and loved in ways that sometimes I — as an exhausted mom — just can't do."

More than 1,000 people have been trained to serve as "buddies" in the program, caring for 425 VIP kids and 100 siblings, according to the 46-year-old Marie, a former youth pastor who with her husband is an active member of Orlando's Evangel Assembly of God church.

NH's Make 'em Smile event — which attracted about 650 people in 2003 — drew more than 7,000 people in June, including in excess of 1,000 VIP kids. Additionally, NH's Caroling for Kids Christmas Day outreach attracted 550 people who visited 10 children's hospitals and 72 homes of homebound special-needs children.

More than 3,600 kids are registered in the VIP Birthday Club, which represents families from 31 states and five countries.

— Eric Tiansay

they said it

The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of *Pentecostal Evangel* or the Assemblies of God. This column contains quotations from a broad spectrum of people, including non-Christians. The intent is to promote a greater awareness of the spiritual state of our nation and, hopefully, to stir readers to prayer and action. Today's Christian must be informed and committed to prayer if America is going to experience spiritual renewal.



"Children have a primal need to know who they are, to love and be loved by the two people whose physical union brought them here. To lose that connection, that sense

of identity, is to experience a wound that no child-support check or fancy school can ever heal."

— Institute for American Values President **David Blankenhorn** on divorce, in *Time*

"This goes against everything I am, my belief system, and what I know the character's belief system is aligned to."

— **Patricia Mauceri** on Fox News after being fired, she says, for objecting to a homosexual story line in the ABC soap opera *One Life to Live*. Mauceri had portrayed deeply religious character Carlotta Vega for 14 years.



"It's terribly ironic, and disappointingly so. I never dreamed that Kansas would be the first to try this experiment."

— House Speaker **Mike O'Neal**, who fought unsuccessfully to block legislation authorizing new casinos and slot machines at racetracks in the traditionally conservative state, in an AP article

Church Multiplication Network Forms Partnership

The Assemblies of God Church Multiplication Network (CMN), recognizing that coaching is a crucial tool for the starting and sustaining of churches, is partnering with Purdue University's Organizational Leadership Development Lab to provide a unified approach to the certification of coaching competency.

"Well-executed coaching has been demonstrated to provide invaluable support for starting vigorous new

churches," says Steve Pike, national director of the Church Multiplication Network. "Coaching helps ensure that the investment of resources will not be wasted."

In addition to the Purdue partnership, CMN is working with Assemblies of God Theological Seminary so those participating in CMN coach training experiences may receive credit toward a graduate degree program.

— AG News