



The Face of LCI

“The tools we learned at LCI have helped us truly be sisters in Christ.”

Lee Ann Bisulca, an editor at Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), lives in Purcellville, Virginia. Inspired by her experience in LCI Level 2, she is planning a solo trip to New England for a month or two next spring, after which she would like to pursue an undergraduate degree in counseling.

Abigail Hackman, a membership coordinator at HSLDA, lives in Purcellville, VA and is grateful for the equipping she received at LCI in helping build stronger relationships with those around her.

LCI holds Level 1 Training twice a year to introduce participants to lay counseling. The Training provides individuals with a biblical understanding of people while helping participants learn more about themselves and how they relate to others through self and peer evaluation.

Oftentimes, participation in the LCI Training can have some unexpected effects. The following article is a dialogue between two friends who participated in LCI’s Level 1 Training.

Abigail: When Lee Ann and I saw LCI advertised in the Reston Bible Church bulletin, we both pointed to it and commented on how fun that would be.

Lee Ann: But after making plans to attend LCI I with Abigail, I was a little apprehensive. When I’m in a new situation, I like to control what I reveal to people about myself. Having Abigail there would provide a measure of accountability, forcing me to be more honest about myself—and that scared me.

Abigail: I was very excited because I felt things were a little “off” in my friendship with Lee Ann, and I wasn’t really sure why. I thought this experience would allow me to mend any broken bridges. When we arrived at LCI, we were told that friends are usually put in separate small groups, but that we could stay in the same group if we wanted. I was thrilled!

Lee Ann: Having Abigail in my small group was actually reassuring, because she understood and accepted me. However, it felt strange saying things in the group that I normally wouldn’t have said to Abigail directly.

Abigail: Unlike Lee Ann, I wasn’t afraid of exposing too much in her presence. Still, I was a bit surprised when she started sharing in our small group, because I suddenly saw a different side to her. I felt like I saw her with new eyes—like she believed people saw her. It just clicked into place



Abigail Hackman (on left) and Lee Ann Bisulca (on right).

and I was able to sympathize with her fears of being misunderstood by others.

Lee Ann: I saw a side of Abigail that I had overlooked for a long time—her emotional and spiritual perception, her sensitivity to other people—and I also heard her talk about some of the deep struggles she was going through at the time that I hadn’t really been aware of.

Abigail: The LCI experience can open up a lot of locked doors but provides an opportunity to explore past hurts in a safe environment. We had to drive 1.5 hours each way to get to the LCI Training. Those trips were so emotionally draining! Our raw spots kept rubbing each other. We actually had to take a break from each other during the gap between the two weekend sessions.

Lee Ann: And we took a break for a month or two after the second session! But that summer, we each experienced some significant personal breakthroughs, and that enabled us to work through a lot of the conflict we had been experiencing when we first decided to attend LCI.

As difficult as the past year has been, LCI I forced us to remove the masks we’d been wearing with each other. Without that exposure, we would never be experiencing the deeper, more trusting friendship that we have today.

Abigail: We relate to each other more positively than before. Lee Ann is more vulnerable with me than she used to be, and I try to process things on my own before coming to bounce ideas off of her—I’m not as jealous of her time. We still have our off moments as any friendship does, but I feel like we are real friends now that we have been tested. It was very painful during the process, but

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Barbara Giuliano and Bill Clark lead the LCI Training sessions.

Check the LCI website, www.lciministry.org, for future Level 1 Training Dates in Spring 2007.

New Law allows tax-free IRA donations

If you or someone you know supports LCI and is eligible to receive IRA distributions, you may be interested to learn of new tax legislation which can save money, and in the process, increase the amount of your contribution to LCI. In August the Pension Protection Act of 2006 was enacted, and if you would like further details of an important provision of this new law, please go to LCI's web site for more information, www.lciministry.org and follow the link on the homepage.

Church Update:

– Lanie James, Youth Associate with Reston Bible Church shares from their youth summer camp experience: “Jaye Wiegold, an LCI lay counselor at Reston Bible Church, came to our Summer Camp as a counselor for Jr. and Sr. High teens who had a need to talk with someone about any issues or struggles in their lives.

Jaye had a full week of ministry with many appointments throughout each day, including ministry to our volunteer staff. It was a blessing with that many people to have someone who was available to pull a teen aside and work with them on a more personal level and who has the training that Jaye has. Our camp usually has about 250 people and with the spiritual nature of things, the environment of being removed from distractions, the deep discussions that are sought out in



Shown here are two of the youth enjoying their time at Reston Bible Church's 2006 Summer Camp.

their groups—it's a natural place for teens to feel open and ready to share with a counselor. We are so grateful for their ability to talk with someone who has been trained to handle the many issues presented. We have people struggling with eating disorders, divorce, cutting, broken hearts, death of loved ones, abuse, and more. The teens and staff were incredibly blessed to have Jaye at camp.”

– Maggie Cho, from our partner, Alexandria Bible Church, shares with us what is happening at their church with LCI: “Through the partnership with LCI, the lay counseling ministry at APC is beginning to take shape. Two lay counselors have been part of a Level 3 Supervision group and are beginning to take clients regularly and two more individuals have completed Level 2 training.”



Level 1 Training was held this past fall at McLean Presbyterian Church. Shown here are one of the small groups led by Barbara Giuliano (above) and Bill Clark teaching during a main session (below).



– Cindy Hunter, Church Champion at Mount Oak United Methodist Church, shares, “there are now four lay counselors available to see clients. Currently, there are two lay counselors who are seeing individuals.”

Church Partners:

LOCAL PARTNER

- Alexandria Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, VA
- Bethany Community Church, Laurel, MD
- Church of the Epiphany, Herndon, VA
- Grace Community Church, Columbia, MD
- Mid-Atlantic Community Church, Crofton, MD
- Mount Oak United Methodist Church, Bowie, MD
- New Hope Church, Springfield, VA
- Reston Bible Church, Reston, VA

CHURCH CHAMPION

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- Bert Pasquale
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- Cindy Hunter
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LCI Golf Tournament Update

The fourth annual LCI Golf Tournament was once again a successful fundraising event! “This event not only promotes good fellowship but has also become a mechanism for LCI to reach many who are not familiar with our purpose and mission,” commented Jack Wolfe, Tournament Director. “I know personally some individuals who have shown interest in participating with LCI as a result of this exposure,” said Jack.

One of the highlights at this year’s tournament was hosting 11 veterans who had suffered injuries fighting in the Middle East and who were recuperating at the Walter Reed Army Hospital. These soldiers were an inspiration and welcomed by all participants. Many thanks to both Jack and Mary Wolfe for their tireless efforts on this year’s tournament.

Servicemen from Walter Reed Rehabilitation Center who participated in the LCI Golf Tournament (below and right).



2006 LCI Golf Hole Tournament Sponsors:

We are grateful for the following sponsors as well as others who gave of their time and resources to help LCI.

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- William W. Clark, PhD and Associates, PLC

Meet Eileen and Ralph Polachek

Ralph and Eileen Polachek share a long history of involvement with LCI. Eileen has served as the volunteer Office Administrator for two years and is now focusing her time on LCI’s ministry side involving church partnerships and training. In addition, Eileen is currently a lay counselor at Reston Bible Church and serves on the LCI Board with her husband, Ralph who is also LCI’s Treasurer. In 1987, Eileen and Ralph participated in the initial group led by Barbara Giuliano and Bill Clark.

“This initial group was life changing and had a tremendous impact on my own personal growth and in my relationship with my husband and children. I have never stopped using what I learned in this group as I look at my own heart and motivations and as I listen to other people share,” said Eileen. “Our lives are a weaving of years of difficulty and joy, and I recognize the challenge to glorify God in all of them,” Eileen shares.

One of Eileen’s years of difficulty was in 2001 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Since there was a family history and she saw her sister go through her own bout with breast cancer, Eileen knew what was ahead. “God really prepared me and I never questioned Him. It was the most

intimate time that I spent with God and with my husband. It was a time for me to have everything done for me (whether I liked it or not). Through this experience, I learned acceptance. Total acceptance in everything that God had in store for me. It was a wonderful gift.” Eileen celebrated five years of remission in 2006.

Ten years after the initial group, Eileen and her husband, Ralph, went through Level 1 and 2 Training again. When Eileen was invited to the Level 3 Supervisory group to begin meeting clients as a lay counselor, she came with much “fear and trepidation.” Eileen recalls, “Fear and trepidation come from the fact that you enter a world that will be dark and full of hurting people. As a lay counselor you hear things that are very hard. We must depend upon Christ to protect our hearts and minds—both the counselors and the counsees. Besides the training, Eileen also shares that “there must be humility and wisdom as you walk alongside another individual. My love is counseling. That is where my heart is. I feel quite special that He allows us to do this kind of work.”

We are grateful for both Ralph and Eileen’s faithfulness to LCI and thankful for God’s unfolding story in their lives.

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Regardless of whether God calls you to serve as a lay counselor, He does call us to move towards

deeper relationships with others. As Abigail and Lee Ann experienced, LCI is a valuable tool for applying new insights and biblical principles in all of our relationships.



Bill Clark

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

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We welcome your input & suggestions, please email info@lciministry.org, Attn: LCI News.

The Director’s Couch



Holy Encounters

A client confided in me that she recommended me to a friend. Later, that friend shared something with her that the “new” counselor had told her in the first session. My client, assuming I was the new therapist, was horrified to think that I would say such a thing to her friend. It didn’t match her picture of me. She probed and discovered I wasn’t the counselor, which led to our relief.

Interestingly, this anecdote led to our discussing her views of Jesus. I said I felt the same way about Christ that she felt about me as the supposed counselor of her friend: what she thinks Jesus would say to her and believe about her is not the Jesus I know! “Are you sure you are imagining the right Jesus?” is essentially what I was asking her. To make it more vivid, I asked her to imagine Jesus sitting in my waiting room, not an uncommon request in my office.

“Would you like to go out and talk to Him?” I asked.

“No!” she stated, with feeling.

“Why not?” I wondered.

“It’s too scary” she offered.

I paused, wondering what kind of fear she was feeling. Simple images came to mind.

“Do you mean the kind of fear that you would feel if you were on ‘Who wants to be a millionaire?’ Or, do you mean the ‘haunted house’ kind of fear?”

“The haunted house kind of fear,” she responded immediately.

What I meant by the Game Show Fear is the anxiety we would feel in any performance arena. “How will I do when I meet Jesus in this instance?” Or, “How well might this go?” The nervousness includes the possibility that something positive could take place! The ‘Haunted House’ Fear is the more base terror we all know from scary movies, as well as real life; we are terrified to enter in, try something, or be exposed because it feels like too

much is at stake, like we are risking life or judgment or complete dismantling of our being. That is the fear my client felt when she imagined an encounter with Christ.

Perhaps by now you have figured out that this client is a childhood victim of something soul harming; that is why she (and too many like her) is so prone to fear the God she imagines—a god shaped in no small manner by her early trauma. She knows what she “should” believe about God, but the trauma came before the doctrine and holds far more weight.

What I am telling her is, “You will have to encounter Him, you know. It is one thing to be with His disciples or read about Him. That encourages you and balances out this primitive fear you have... but there is no substitute for being alone in His presence.”

It is not that such encounters are easy. Several biblical characters had “holy encounters” with God that were, at first, terrifying. When Isaiah encountered God in a dream, he too was terrified and convicted. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isaiah 6:5). When Peter first understood that Jesus was, in fact, God, he dropped to his knees in a boat full of fish and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” (Luke 5:8). Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Job, Gideon, Elijah, Paul, and John are among the others who had Holy Encounters which were memorable, disruptive, and life altering (it is noteworthy that God doesn’t have the same terrifying impact on the women who encounter Him, especially when it is Jesus they meet).

From a human perspective, encountering a Holy God is terrifying, just like my client imagines. But if you read what happens after the initial encounter in many of these instances, God is kind, compassionate, even inviting. He may challenge or expose, but He desires connection. When we move beyond the fear of approaching Him, allowing the truth to alter our instinctive fear, we find a compelling and engaging God who wants relationship and response from us.

Reminder on end of year donations

As LCI ends another encouraging year of growth and change, we ask you to remember LCI in your year-end charitable giving plans. We also wish to remind you that significant income tax savings can be achieved through the donation to LCI of appreciated investment property (such as shares of common or preferred stock, or other securities), as the

income tax on the capital gain is avoided. We are prepared to receive such gifts into our securities account through **December 20, 2006** in order that you might receive your income tax charitable contribution deduction for the full market value of your gift in 2006. Please consult your tax advisor and contact LCI at info@lciministry.org for more information and to complete the transfer.

Our Mission

The Lay Counselor Institute (LCI) is a non-profit organization that assists the local church in establishing and growing an effective ministry of biblical counseling by identifying and training caring and gifted believers who are grounded in their knowledge of the Bible and committed to biblical counseling.