

Explanation of Steps 1-5

1. Ask someone in your church to volunteer as the HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS Director (HTH Director). In order to maintain the ministry, your church may want to choose an HTH Director on a yearly basis.

2. The HTH Director should meet with the church staff to decide which nursing home to visit and the best times for monthly, biweekly, or weekly group visits. For convenience sake, most churches will want to choose a nearby nursing home.

3. Next, the HTH Director will contact the Activities Director at the chosen nursing home to explain the ministry and ask if the home would like to participate in this ministry. Give the Activities Director the HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS guidebook. Ask the Activities Director to provide you with a list of all residents who would like to be adopted by your group. This list should include the residents' room numbers. The Activities Director may be able to give you list of all the residents, but due to privacy laws, this may not be allowed.

4. Once a nursing home agrees to participate, then the HTH Director should begin promoting this ministry in the church. Announcements in the church newsletters and/or announcements to the church congregation during church services will let everyone know about the ministry. Small posters announcing the ministry can be placed in the church (See p. 10). Also, a table near the church sanctuary should be designated for the ministry. On this table, keep the HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS Ministry Information Sheets (see pp. 6-9) and the Visitation Card Box. The "Visitation Card" portion of the Information Sheets is to be returned to the Visitation Card Box after each visit made by any volunteer in the ministry.

5. The HTH Director will be encouraging volunteers to visit the residents whenever they can. Your church will also have a time set monthly, biweekly, or weekly that volunteers can meet to visit the nursing home as a group. When visiting as a group, the residents' names can be divided among the volunteers so that many residents will be visited and any adopted resident will be visited by the volunteer who has adopted them. Some ideas for the group visits are as follows (also see "Visiting Tips and Ideas" on pp. 11-13):

♥ Take several kinds of fruit and allow the residents to choose one. Or take an assortment of lotion, tissue, soap, magazines, etc., and let each resident choose an item. Take cards to the residents: for example, Valentine's, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Thinking-of-You cards. **Note:** Make sure the nursing home's Activities Director has given permission for any fruit or food items. Diabetics usually cannot have much fruit or sweets.

♥ Dress for different occasions such as St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day, Halloween, and Christmas (wear Santa hats).

♥ Perhaps one of the volunteers has a small dog they can take to the nursing home. Of course, prior permission from the nursing home would be needed. A copy of the pet's vaccination records should be provided.

♥ Take small flower arrangements or crafts your church members have prepared for the residents. Your group members will think of many other ideas for your visits.