



**Evergreen
AIDS
Foundation**

Aware

A PUBLICATION OF EVERGREEN AIDS FOUNDATION

Proclaim Your Joy!

Ed Wilhoite

It is important throughout your life to proclaim your joy. So the song says, in a way that makes you sing. In a way that makes you, at least for a while, proclaim.

Some years ago, the extraordinary Mercedes Sosa (alive, and still singing today) was the most formidable voice in the nuevo cancion ("new song") political movement in Argentina. Her song *Gracias al la Vida* ("Thanks to the Life") became the song of a revolution that began in Buenos Aires with the Madres de Plaza de Mayo demanding, simply and eloquently, the return of their "disappeared" children: "They took them alive, we want them back alive" at each turn around the square. The mothers (and artists, and students, and workers) prevailed with pots (and brushes, and pens, and hands) and Mercedes Sosa sang *Gracias a la Vida* before, with, a million weeping people in Buenos Aires. Open armed. In the face of the unimaginably (most of us, especially here, have only hints of such brutality) perverse reality of disappearance (the terror, torture, death, routine and random), thanks to the life. What power a dictator? A dios. To God.

And then, this:

*As if I asked a common Alms,
And in my wondering hand
A Stranger pressed a Kingdom,
And I, bewildered, stand—
As if I asked the Orient Had it for
me a Morn—
And it should lift its purple Dikes,
And shatter me with Dawn!*

A poem by Emily Dickinson.

I thought of these things as I read the other articles in this newsletter, and

Garden Party and Auction



EAF is working with The Whatcom Horticultural Society on a new fundraising event—we are going to host a garden party on Saturday, May 22, 2004.

The Garden Party will be held at the Lairmont Manor in Fairhaven. Guests will enjoy excellent music, food and beverages while strolling the grounds of the Lairmont to bid on a variety of garden-related items in a silent auction format. A sampling of auction items confirmed to date include airfare, accommodations and dinners for two in Charleston, South Carolina with tours of some of the South's loveliest gardens; a custom-built deck by artist Laura Reymore; tickets to *Horticulture Magazine's* 100th Anniversary Party at Heronswood and a wonderful Lummi

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wondered why we give. As the ordinary becomes extraordinary (rivulet becomes river). And that was the easy answer. Or the hard one; I'm not sure. It's deep in us, essentially, organically. When we're not broken, anyway.

But then I thought "Not so fast." We Americans (we few, we precious few, apparently) take much credit for our generosity, and by sheer numbers we seem largely generous. But underneath

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I Didn't Know I Was Giving

Angelina Wood

There are many reasons why people give. Some give in hopes of getting something in return. Others give because they think they have to, or should. It's really a shame that they don't know what giving truly is. My brother was a very giving person. I still keep running across things he gave me over 20 years ago that I still have. I can't remember the exchange of most of those gifts, but I can remember the exchanges when what he gave was intangible. A kind word. Hearing him laugh over the phone. When he would drive an hour just to see me play basketball. I especially remember when I would see him and he would smile and say "Hey, sis!" He was giving me so much in these times. I never told him thanks, for all he gave. I hope he knew.

Ever since Marcy and I talked about me writing something about why I give I've been thinking long and hard

about it. I've been completely stumped. I tried to put words down for weeks. It just took some time and searching for me to figure it out. The reason I couldn't put my finger on why I give is simple. I didn't know I was giving.

I never really considered myself to be a giving person. Maybe I was wrong. We can all say we've given someone something. Times like Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, things along those lines. It's cut and dried in those instances because that's what we do, we celebrate people on holidays. It's tradition. But when you are giving the most, in the purest form, is when you don't even know it. I guess I may not be the sharpest tool in the shed for just coming to this realization, but hey, nobody's perfect.

It was looking back to an email I had received from Marcy at Evergreen AIDS Foundation that finally clued me in. A line that she had written; it read,

"Thanks for all you give." I remember at the time, wondering what she meant. I was grieving for the recent passing of my brother and everything around that time was such a blur. It still is. But I do remember wondering, when reading that email, what it was I had given.

Seeing it now, I know it was the story of my brother. Sharing his life, the loss, and the willingness not only to share that and reach out, but to do so at a time when I didn't think I could. In fact I knew I couldn't. But somehow I still did. Why do we give? I give and you give when we love and care for someone or something. At times because of that love, our hearts lead us down roads we haven't crossed before, doing things we hadn't previously thought of doing or thought we could do and situations we normally wouldn't find ourselves in. For me, one of those times is right now. ●

The Bible insists it's more blessed to give than to receive. And if you define living a long and healthy life as blessed, then indeed the Bible is on the mark...Science has recently added its own grace note, furnishing some supporting evidence that giving increases the giver's longevity...Giving, finds a team of researchers at the University of Michigan, reduces mortality and promotes longevity. It doesn't matter whether the support is in the form of the kind of emotional support that spouses exchange or the instrumental help one might provide to a neighbor. Either way, it had a significant impact on the giver.

Helping others reduces distress in givers, improves both mental and physical health. It gives people a sense of belonging and of mattering. It increases happiness, decreases depression. In short, it increases positive emotions. And positive emotions are good for the body, promoting cardiovascular health and boosting the immune system. So now there's scientific proof: Helping others is a way of helping yourself.

From *Psychology Today*, July 29, 2003

Proclaim Your Joy!

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the numbers (ah, the underneath part!), things are not as they seem. First, as the wealthiest nation in the world, we have much to give. And we do give, but mostly to our churches, which most often goes to benefit those who attend the church. We also give much less per capita than most (if not all) other developed countries in the world. To me, that's a better measure of our generosity. To whom much is given, much is expected. Second, I also recall with interest the observation in a report presented to the Waterfront Futures Group of the poor personal and

business philanthropy in our little part of the world.

Given this "what," I became less sure of the "why" of our giving.

Then I read the other articles in this newsletter. Again. Sure, give money if you can (and most of us can, more than we do, remarking on the number of shirts in my closet). But it is so much more than that. Mother Theresa spoke at my graduation ceremony at Georgetown University. A diminutive woman. Soft-spoken (of course — those with the strongest voices almost always speak

the most quietly). She spoke about the basic human need for food, clothing and shelter. And our individual provisioner responsibility. Not just about food for the stomach, but also about nourishment for the spirit. Not just about shelter from the elements, but also about shelter from oppression. She admonished us to leave our privileged seats and offer (pursue) more than the material.

And so I think about giving. I think we give because we receive. ●

Baldetta's Buddies

By Angelina Wood

The idea for Baldetta's Buddies stemmed from meeting the care team that helped my brother, Johnny Baldetta. Johnny was a young man fiercely independent, who would only ask for help as the very last resort. And even then, it bothered him to ask for anything.

When he became ill with Lymphoma in January 2003 for the second time it hit him much harder. While going through his stem cell transplant in Seattle, he got into the AIDS care team system through Multifaith in Seattle. A group of volunteers was assigned to him. Not because he couldn't do anything for himself, but to give him a better support system of people brought together from different walks of life, with one common goal on their minds. To not only support someone in need, and build a new friendship, but to work together with love and compassion to make a difference in lives, in the community.

It isn't as easy as it may sound. People living with HIV and AIDS today are not necessarily doing better than they may have done 20 years ago. Treatments, and drugs abound, but there is still discrimination and stigma with this disease. It is important for us to

come together and reach out to these beautiful people living among us that are not only fighting for their lives, but in some cases, losing friends and family because of it, or just being alone because people are scared.

The care team Johnny had was amazing. They knew my brother just a few short months, but when I heard them talk about him, it seemed as if they had known him his whole life. This new program through Evergreen AIDS is not only a way to honor my brother, but to give back to the community where he grew up, and make a difference in those lives being affected. When you have not just one volunteer, but a group of volunteers working together, you have a support system within a support system. You have people to help and to lean on who will understand exactly what you are going through.

As a care team for Baldetta's Buddies you will spend time with a new friend, do things that friends do. Spend time watching a movie, playing a game, visiting, normal friend activities. In this world, we often ask very little of people, of each other. Why not ask, "What's

the most you can do?" We often worry when we have routines in our lives and all of the sudden something comes up or someone comes along and challenges that routine. We panic—what if we miss our daily run through the park, or that hour of relaxing in the spa? Later, if we do miss those things or our routine is completely turned upside down, does it really end up mattering that much? Not usually. But, in that time, what if you could make a real difference to another human being? Add another smile to a day that was usually gloomy? Have someone else in your life you look forward to seeing?

Volunteer work isn't always easy; it doesn't always lift your spirits. But it can definitely pull at your heart and change your life in ways you may not have known were possible. In this instance it's about building a relationship that will have its up and its downs, its smiles and its frowns. But isn't that every relationship you have ever had? Life is about change, growing and experiences, love, loss, tears, and laughter. The Baldetta's Buddies care team program is just that and more. ●

Garden Party Benefits Evergreen AIDS Foundation

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Island Garden Getaway Package—a massage, one night and dinner for two at the Willows, native plants from Forest Flor Recovery Nursery, tours of Tree Frog Farm and Ann Morris' sculpture garden and a picnic lunch from Latté Dah and The Islander and works of art, objects, specimen plants, landscape materials and paraphernalia related to gardening and the gardener.

Our Garden Party Chairperson is Ms. Anita George, from the Whatcom Horticultural Society (Board of Directors). We are grateful to have Anita, a long-time supporter of EAF, bringing her wonderful ideas, energy and leadership to this event.

Space is limited at the Lairmont Manor, so if you'd like to attend the Garden Party please RSVP soon by calling Deborah at 671-0703 or mail in this form with your payment information. ●

Garden Party RSVP

Please reserve _____ at \$50 each, total \$ _____

Names of those attending _____

Check to Evergreen AIDS Foundation enclosed

Please charge the total, \$ _____ to my VISA Mastercard

Card# _____ Expires _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Sorry, I can't attend. Enclosed is a donation in support of Evergreen AIDS Foundation.

A Story About Why I Give

By Elizabeth Zook, EAF volunteer

Two young girls, in their grandmother's homemade dresses, prepared to board the plane. Among all of the strangers, they tucked themselves tightly in the folds of their mother's soft clothes, which smelled of home. Ready for their adventure, they sat nervously, nearly choking on their thickening anticipation.

"Is it true?" Elizabeth, the youngest girl asked. "It's true. Mom told me. He's going to be there" replied Mary, with a radiant blushing of pride from being the eldest, the more mature of the two, the one trusted with this treasured information and able to dole it out according to her discretion.

"Oh my goodness, I can't wait! Is he going to bring the dogs?" The news of his presence perpetuated even further the difficulty of breathing the girls were having. In fact, although the girls were unaware, their parents were also debilitated by their joy and excitement. He, Uncle Greg, was actually go-

ing to be at their grandparents' house. Elizabeth thought about how it had been ages since she had last seen him. Nearly a year is forever to an eight year old. Especially now, especially since all of the adults in her life seemed so serious and sad when they spoke to him or even mentioned his name. Everyone still loved him the same but they were all so worried.

That summer of 1989, Elizabeth heard her mother cry alone a lot. She was "talked to" and explained a lot of adult things about doctors and blood transfusions, about Uncle Greg's partner Hugh and how their lives were changing. Her mother sat the sisters down and asked them with the most frightened, desperate look in her eyes to cherish each other and never treat each other badly—and they did from that day forth.

But Elizabeth just didn't get it. She didn't understand what AIDS meant or why Uncle Greg was getting

thinner and was always sick. Or why he and Hugh had to sell everything they had worked so hard for to pay for "experimental" drugs, and doctors. But she did know that he would be fine. He would dance and sing, play tennis, and teach her how to roller-skate in her favorite polka dot dress. Of this she was sure—the sickness was temporary, he was forever. And he loved her, so that settled it.

It was with this solid resolution and determined heart that Elizabeth bounded through her grandparents' front door. She ran past the dogs and bent relatives seeking kisses. She ran to Uncle Greg lying listlessly on the couch with his smile, the only one like it in the whole wide world.

It took me years to understand what AIDS was, how my Uncle contracted it, and how this has truly affected me and my family. It took longer to realize the effect it had and has on millions of others. Uncle Greg was

Inside *Aware* — Marcy Mjelde

My seven year anniversary with EAF was March 31, 2004. I've learned so much from what started as a student internship to my current role as Development Director, and have been blessed to witness many examples of the true spirit of giving. Our volunteers, our donors, our clients, our staff—all have offered inspiration and encouragement as well as lots of time, money, goods and services. Thank you all, thank you again and again, for your giving ways.

Although caring for others is taught by every religion (and by most parents), acting on that teaching is not always what happens. I am blessed (again!) to work at a place that provides an opportunity for that action. EAF—and other non-profits—offer a valuable community service: we are agents providing an opportunity for right action. May all of you who read this newsletter accept our offer to connect you with your good works. We'd love to have you, your talents and gifts share in our efforts.

I had a meeting scheduled with Craig Curtis the other day. (The article he wrote for the *Bellingham Weekly* about our recent "Queer Plan" fundraiser is reprinted in this issue.) This exuberant fellow offered to do some grant writing for EAF, and I gratefully accepted his

assistance and was looking forward to meeting up with him for lunch and fundraising talk. Unfortunately, he had to cancel. His reason: *I have AIDS today.*

How startling a statement! But that's how it is for people with this disease. Today, AIDS is running the show. Can't go to work; can't get too far from the bathroom; can't get out of bed. Thanks to the new medications, people living with HIV/AIDS experience longer, relatively healthier lives than in the early days of the epidemic. It's become easier to forget that people are living with HIV/AIDS—easy for those of us who aren't, that is. AIDS remains a chronic, incurable, often debilitating, ultimately fatal disease.

EAF is working hard to raise awareness about the presence of AIDS in our community. So that we are mindful it's someone close—the woman walking towards you on the sidewalk, the person you tried to pick up at the club, the man standing in line at the post office—who is living with AIDS. It could also be someone you, your partner or your child is having unprotected sex with; it could be someone who doesn't even know they have it themselves (a third don't).

Watch for our upcoming film about the face of AIDS in Whatcom County. You might be surprised by some of the stories. The people you'll see look a lot like you. ●

Why I Give

By Linda Luttrell, EAF Board of Directors

I have lost numerous friends to AIDS, far too many to name. My close circle of friends, during my college years in Bellingham and my party years in Houston, Texas, are nearly all gone with the exception of my former husband. I am so grateful that he is still with us and that we remain close friends. He and I were married before the AIDS epidemic broke out. Shortly after the birth of our son in 1983, our friends began to die. I'll never forget the first, Romero. We worked together at a jazz club in Houston. He was such a beautiful man and lively spirit. It seemed so surreal that this disease had taken one of my friends. Little did I know that it was just the beginning of a seemingly never-ending stream of losses.

I think of those that I loved so dearly every day and the gift that each of them gave to me. They were my family, those I celebrated holidays with, those who knew me best and accepted me for who I am. I miss them deeply and at times feel very lost without them. But I still feel their presence and their love. When I dance, I see them dancing with me. When I'm sad, I find comfort in their memory. I give in order to honor my love for my dear, departed friends and to express my gratitude for their unforgettable friendship and unconditional love. ●

lucky- he was surrounded by loved ones who continue to revel in his life every chance they get. I was lucky to know Greg Bell and to be exposed by my family to the Names Quilt, buddy programs, and the AIDS marathon after he passed.

And now I feel privileged to volunteer for Evergreen AIDS Foundation, to help even in the most minor of ways to support a program that assists individuals with HIV/AIDS and their family and friends.

Gregory Bell died March 11, 1990 at 1:10 a.m. holding my mother's hand. She and his partner Hugh remain in touch. ●



an excerpt from

THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN PHILANTHROPY

By Curtis W. Meadows, Jr.

Robert Bellah wrote: "Our problems today are not just political. They are moral and have to do with the meaning of life... We are beginning to understand that our common life requires more than an exclusive concern for material accumulation. Perhaps life is not a race whose goal is being foremost....Perhaps there are practices of life, good in themselves, that are inherently fulfilling. Perhaps enduring commitment to those we love and civic friendship toward our fellow citizens are preferable to restless competition and anxious self-defense."

The theologian Francis Schaeffer poses the ultimate question that each of us must answer: "How then shall we live?"

We learn our morals and values from our families, from our religious institutions, and from our schools. What

we are taught is tested and influenced by the world in which we live. As we create opportunities for experiential learning about the joy and purpose of giving to others, we reinforce our teachings of faith and humanity.

We cannot hope to solve the difficult issues of our time without some sense of connectedness to others outside of our own small circle. The building of community and civic responsibility is essential to a just and fair, as well as a peaceful and orderly society.

It has been predicted that in the next 20 years as much as 10 trillion dollars will be passed from one generation to another. Whatever the actual amount turns out to be, it will be the largest transfer of wealth in history. Imagine what a difference such funds could make if dedicated to the betterment of mankind.

The American spirit in philanthropy is constantly evolving through its varied expressions by our citizens. Enabled by freedom, shaped by religious conviction, blended with cultural teachings, molded by historical experience, people of passion and compassion throughout our nation daily demonstrate, in millions and millions of individual acts of kindness, enlightenment, and generosity, that "two vital principles abound in this land: the need to do good for one another and the need to love and respect each other."

Martin Luther King Jr. articulated the spiritual challenge so many Americans are answering:

"Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" ●

The Shape of Giving

By Marz Eve

"They come to me in dreams, my paintings, when I'm half awake, fully conscious and in the place in-between. I cannot stop the river's flow, nor do I want to."

I hear a man speaking to me about his art, with one hand folded around a cup of tea, the other resting gently on the curve of his trusted wooden cane. Just 30 minutes ago we met for the first time — he standing on his porch opening the screen door with smiles and a warm heart, wearing comfortable slippers.

"This is Paul Temperio," Marcy gracefully introduced. "Paul, this is Marz. I thought you two should meet." I smiled, stretching out my chilly, thin fingers to shake the hand of a slight-shouldered man wearing baggy blue sweats and an obviously favorite, well-worn bathrobe draped over a forest green t-shirt. His eyes were both tired and alive at the very same time. And the moment I heard him call out his dog's name, "Indie! Come boy, Indie!" I sensed here was an artist, perhaps like myself, who loved color as much as life itself. Here was someone who could think in such a way and would take the impulse to name his dearest pet after a shade of paint — indigo blue. Paul had chosen a color for the name of his dog solely for the purpose of being able to speak in tones of twilight skies many times, anytime of day.

"Glad to meet you," I said, scruffing the head of a furry black dog. Then, nodding to his master, we all entered Paul's wilderness hideaway of a home that shone of sun spots and stretching shadows through low windows.

I could see by the way Paul shuffled across the room, crooked and slow, that there was a story behind his labored walk and another about to unfold right in front of me.

"Would you like some tea?" he asked.

"Okay," I said, quickly adding "can we help?"

"No, no, I've got the water hot already," Paul called from the kitchen. He was efficient in spite of the weariness that seemed to cover his whole body.

I wandered about the living room, struck instantly by seeing a common thread in Paul's sketches hanging on the walls. The portraits of old women spoke to me the loudest because I too, had painted images of elders. Each line detailed in their faces held stages in their lives, revealing winks and wrinkles in

In that moment I saw in Paul's face the shape of a world defined by one word — kindness.

time that showed years of laughter, tear tracks of fierce love. Gazing intensely, staring close up, I saw expressions captured, experiences ranging from birth to death, to the full belly in their cheeks from all the underdog struggles they had grown wise from.

By the time we were all sitting together with our tea, Paul talked of Van Gogh, the misunderstandings of that artist's madness. Then, he spoke of his own starry, starry nights, when the passion for painting drove Paul to points of duct-taping brushes to his tired hand just so he could manage what the muses drove him to create.

"I have no choice," he spoke with conviction. "I have to paint. Often in the long hours of the night, it comes like a crash of rising waves, or like a river."

Later in our visit, Marcy thanked Paul for donating to the art auction.

"Oh it was nothing. I love being able to give," Paul responded.

In that moment I saw in Paul's face the shape of a world defined by one word — kindness. This was a man with compassion and kindheartedness, who gave because he cared, because he could, and because he understood something about compromised lives through his own. In spite of his many daily medications and five diseases, he was able to sustain a certain vitality. He was a man who managed to teach art to AIDS and cancer patients, chil-

dren and others, actually anyone who had a hunger for connection.

I realized this was a man who had to say "no" to many things so he could say a bigger "yes" to giving. Since the melting away of that one afternoon, Paul and I have chatted briefly on the phone and stayed in touch through letters. He last wrote to me on chronic illness (a topic we both know more about than either of us would like.)

"Sometimes," he wrote, "you feel as though a thought, movement, voice or even a scream is not enough; it is as though your very skin is coming off... but it is not; for your soul and spirit remain intact, stronger than ever. No matter what happens, physically, the heart and core can still stand fast and true."

This was Paul's philosophy — the ability to see the whole picture, whole person, and a place of wellness in the midst of chaos and changing physicality. His strength has made me think about the shape of community — how it is honed by each of our individual reasons for why we give. For some it takes the shape of hands-on service, delivering a friend to the doctor or making a phone call to someone in need of a listening ear. For others it comes in the form of writing a check. Each way is equal in the art of giving as far as I see it, since I view life as art and art as life, living with no boundaries to the possibilities and no judgments of what one open door may bring.

That day, when Paul opened his door, it was a gift in itself, of him, one that I will continue to cherish. I want to thank Paul for the action he takes every day with his shuffling slippers and taped on paint brushes —for his willingness to keep going whether he feels or sees the results of his actions rippling out or not. It seems less important to him than his intentions and commitment to making a difference. Dear Paul, I wish you more good days than challenging ones. ●

CHANGES AT EVERGREEN AIDS FOUNDATION

New Board and Staff Members

EAF Welcomes Five New Board Members

Robert Astrove

A graduate student at Western Washington University (Med. Natural History/Science Education) Robert is studying environmental education and non-profit management here in Bellingham. Originally from South Florida, Robert provided HIV/AIDS peer education to middle and high school students and years of volunteer services for a HIV/AIDS resource center. Robert brings his passion and knowledge to the board as well as the much needed youth perspective to EAF. He serves on the Life Enhancement Committee and is enthusiastic about maintaining and improving client services and events.

Elizabeth Joffrion

Joffrion, Archivist at the Center for Pacific NW Studies at WWU, is an affiliated faculty member and teaches in the History Department's graduate program in archives and records management. Prior to accepting the position of archivist at the Center, Joffrion worked for over a decade at the Smithsonian Institution, including positions at the National Portrait Gallery and the National Museum of American History, however, most of her Smithsonian career was spent at the Archives of American Art where she was reference archivist and registrar. Other professional positions include North Carolina State Archives and the Historic New Orleans Collection. She is President of the Northwest Archivist Association, a member of the Bellingham Centennial Coordinating Committee and also served on the Bellingham Capital Improvements Advisory Committee from 2000-2002. She enjoys travel, backpacking, and kayaking.

Janet Johnson

Almost five years ago, death, illness and loss came to be shadow partners in Janet's life as she was plunged into the world of HIV/AIDS. Thankfully her journey had many wonderful people who helped her to mend her broken wings and fly again. Becoming involved in the Community Based



Deborah Westergreen



Darren Davis

Evergreen AIDS Foundation has hired two new staff members.

Darren Davis is EAF's Community Programs Manager, responsible for events management, volunteer coordination and community outreach and education. Darren comes to Bellingham via Los Angeles and has a marketing background in the entertainment industry, having worked for E! Entertainment Television and USA Network.

Deborah Westergreen joined EAF in January as Support Services Administrator. Deborah handles all bookkeeping, payroll, data base management, case management support services and the client newsletter. A Whatcom County native, Deborah's background includes bookkeeping, printing and commercial art. She attended Whatcom Community College. ●

Organization (CLASP), Support Groups, Regional VI AIDSnet, Bridge Consortium and Maternal/Child Health HIV Consumer Advisory Group put Janet on the fast track for learning about the complexities of the systems and the people infected and affected by this disease. In August of 2003 she embarked on a new adventure, relocating from the Olympic Peninsula and connecting with Evergreen AIDS Foundation. Services and support were given to help her adjustment, and once more she felt the need to be of service where she could. She says: "Two months ago, I was elected to be a Board of Directors team member. Although my experience as a Board member has just begun, I feel this is a great team of individuals who have a combined force of skills, talents and compassion that will continue to strengthen EAF to meet the changing needs of the HIV/AIDS community."

Sara Moore

A twenty-year old college student, Sara Moore is a former vice-president

as well as a former president of the Whatcom Community College Gay Straight Alliance, and remains involved with that student organization as Secretary. She also volunteers as a speaker with the Safe Schools Coalition, and is an activist and student leader focusing on gay and minority rights, especially outreach and services to women, teens, and children.

Teresa Schmidt-Wiggs

Teresa Schmidt is a native New Yorker who happily moved to Bellingham in 2003 after 20 years in the southeastern US. She lives in an old house in the York neighborhood with two old dogs, two cats, and one young husband. Teresa and her husband own Signs By Tomorrow and have enjoyed working with EAF since they opened last June. "I'm very excited about my new relationship with EAF, and plan on working hard to increase community awareness, involvement and support for this fantastic group and the important work they do." ●

Queer Plan for the Straight Man

Evergreen AIDS Fundraiser a Smashing Success!

By Craig Curtis

As if you hadn't heard, Bellingham's own gay Fab Five—Gavin Rosenkilde, Eric Humphries, Ty McBride, Dan Raymond and Patrick Bertels—performed a radical make-over on general contractor and proprietor of “Three Little Pegs,” John Marshall Harris, in a spin-off from the television smash *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. Our local version, a fundraiser for AIDS and a fabulous time to boot, was called *Queer Plan for the Straight Man*.

In 1984, I was 21, living in San Francisco's Castro district. My roommates and I had a Victorian flat, furnished to the hilt, and we all had trendy jobs, trendy hair and trendy clothes to match. We spent night after night out in trendy clubs and haunted trendy parties. We thought ourselves the ultimate. In the arrogance of youth, our lives shimmered with possibilities. Of course, there was this thing out there killing people, which was vaguely referred to as “Gay Cancer,” but the people dying were not anyone we'd ever associate with! They were older, dressed alike and probably did lethal doses of amyl nitrate. Obit sections were pages long, but we didn't care.

Then, in 1991, reality struck. I tested HIV-positive. The doctor shook his head sadly, and gave me two years.

In the past 12 years, I've been a client at many AIDS Service Organizations (ASO). I wrote grants for one in San Diego, which served homeless African Americans with HIV/AIDS. I volunteered at the LA Cannabis Resource Center, where they dispensed Medical Marijuana to patients with terminally uncomfortable illnesses: cancer, AIDS, glaucoma, crippling arthritis. We had one client who tested HIV-positive at 70! She had AIDS related Cancer. There she'd be in her turban, ID card in hand.



John Harris, After and Before

I also wrote about LACRC for the behemoth APLA's (AIDS Project Los Angeles) monthly, *Positive Living*. I know all the stats, and what's more, I live with it.

Thirty percent of African American men who have sex with men are infected with HIV. Twenty-five percent of Evergreen's local clients are women. Thirty-seven children are affected county-wide. AIDS is not only for white gay men anymore and major federal cuts across the board for public service organizations are severely weakening our efforts in this battle. Nowadays, ASOs must ask concerned citizens for support, and Whatcom County showed an abundance of it on April Fools Day at the *Absolut Queer Plan for the Straight Man* kickoff party.

After riding to the gala in a limo, I got to meet the Fab Five's fashion victim, John Marshall Harris: “It feels great to participate in this for such a worthy cause. My wife (Sasha) asked if I wanted to participate. I said no way! Just send them some money. The next thing you know, the Fab Five called me and said you're the one! They came over to my house and looked in my closet, my fridge, everything. I'm just lucky to put on a clean shirt. I had one passable pair of shoes, though.”

The Evergreen AIDS Foundation is supported by the community, and they, in turn, serve everyone. You want a free, anonymous HIV test? Unsure of the risk? Need information? What doctor do I see? What are the risks using

CONGRATS TO VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH!



Rick Alcantara, Mr. March



Linda Pratt, Ms. April

Rick Alcantara, Mr. March

Linda Pratt, Ms. April

Both Rick and Linda have been tireless volunteers for EAF, having done too many tasks over the years to list even if we used a full page. Their most recent efforts include a Krispy Kream fundraiser managed by Linda and Rick's rummage sales held to benefit EAF. In addition to our undying gratitude, Rick and Linda each received two passes to the Pickford Cinema. Thanks again for all you do and enjoy the show!

Get Your Party Photos!

Robynne (Roby) Sapp, owner of IMPACT Images, recently provided event pictures for our event, *Absolut Plan for the Straight Man*. Following is how you can view those event pics:

- Click on "View Your Photos"
- Enter Username: Absolut
- Enter Password: 5436

Robynne says that her photography reflects the synergy of mind, body and spirit. Her on location photography means, "Your wish is her command" as she offers photography customized to meet the needs of YOU, the client! Indoors or outdoors, Robynne will go wherever you wish to discover that special moment in time! Robynne's event packages are particularly popular with clients, allowing event guests to later visit a secure website with password



and view and purchase photographs at their leisure.

Robynne says "From professional business shots to romantic, intimate shots to fantasy shots - from family photos to children (I also include PETS!); I am available to photograph you in the unique environment of your choice. I also extend my expertise to special events - holy unions/weddings, corporate events, as well as travel. Through either posed and candid images in black & white or color, the memories I capture will be treasured forever."

Visit www.Images4Impact.com or email robby@Images4Impact.com or call her at 360-305-0808. ●

Thank you to....

- Rick Alcantara, his friends and all who donated to the rummage sales given for our benefit
- All who helped with the "Queer Plan for the Straight Man", especially our Fab Five—Gavin Rosenkilde, Dan Raymond, Eric Humphries, Patrick Bertels and Ty McBride and committee members Paul Niemi and Linda Luttrell. Also, our fabulous donors, Absolut, Alicia's Bridal, Emerald Bay Events, Elie Samuel/Samuel's Furniture, Chris Foss/The Greenhouse, Chrysalis Inn & Spa, Christe & Rita/Dragonfly Cleaners, Bryant Davis / Remax, Gold's Gym, Yolanda Hughes, U & Me Dance Company, Robynne Sapp/Impact Images, Bed, Bath and Beyond, Starbuck's, Dream On Futon, Men's Wearhouse, Eddie Bauer, Paris Texas, Salon Capelli, Michelle Whittaker/MW Interiors, The Body Shop, Blanchard Mountain Coffee, Carl Miraldi and Caryl Clark, and our many extraordinary volunteers, including the models, bartenders, doormen, ticket takers, set-up and clean-up folk. You made it work!
- Mike Hovander, for his generous donation of a hospital bed and other items
- A Belated Thanks - In our Winter 03-04 issue of *Aware* appeared an article entitled "Hope." Our belated thanks go to EAF volunteer and friend Hap Hanchett, who interviewed John and Quinn for the article and put together such a nice recollection to share with us. Thank you, Hap - hope to hear from you again soon.

*thank you thank you thank you thank you
thank you thank you thank you thank you
thank you thank you thank you*

needles? Mental health issues? Housing? Call EAF—they'll answer almost anything. This is case management at its best. When you live in a subculture, it's good to have guidance.

Yeah, I live with AIDS. It means lots of medication, an odd sense of the unknown (I nearly died several months ago), and the weird way people look at you and think "you don't look sick." It lends subtle shading on every aspect of life.

Whatcom County has 219 clients affected by AIDS, with 63 new clients in 2003 alone. We suffered 5 AIDS-related deaths (in 2003) and it's growing. AIDS might be right next door. And that's why witnessing the community's enthusiastic support of

the "Queer Plan" and Evergreen AIDS Foundation was heartening.



The author and his mother in a limo enroute to the Queer Plan party. ●



Run or walk for Evergreen!

The Human Race is a fun 5k/10k walk or run sponsored by Whatcom Volunteer Center and local businesses to raise funds for Whatcom County nonprofits. Individuals collect donations for the nonprofit organization of their choice.

Saturday, June 12th 2004 at Maritime Heritage Park

Check in at 9 a.m. The "Race" starts at 10 a.m. The celebration culminates with a picnic lunch, music, and prizes for best times, most money raised, largest teams, pets costumes, etc.

How does it work?

- *Stop by our office or the Volunteer Center to receive a packet.*
- *Collect donations from friends for your Evergreen AIDS Foundation.*
- *Then walk or run and enjoy being part of The Human Race!*

EAF receives 75% of the donations collected for them and the Volunteer Center receives 25% to continue connecting volunteers with nonprofits throughout the year. Pre-registration is \$10 per individual.

Day of race registration cost is \$15.

Call Darren at 671-0703 for details about the EAF contingent plans for a Parade for AIDS as part of this year's Human Race.

More than just a number... Our 2003 stats....

- **Under the Ryan White CARE Act, EAF provided services to a total of 219 clients (172 HIV positive and 47 HIV-affected).**
- **Of this total, 63 were new clients (47 HIV-positive and 16 HIV-affected). Of our HIV-positive clients, 140 were male and 32 were females**
- **Most were between the ages of 25-44 (100) and 45-64 (65). They were White (143), African American (6), Asian (5), Native American (11) and Pacific Islanders (2).**
- **A total of 161 clients received case management services, and there were a total of 9,912 service encounters.**
- **66 clients received emergency financial assistance: 35 received housing assistance; 57 received transportation services, 8 received buddy companion services and 44 received mental health services. Many of these clients received assistance multiple times.**
- **Our clients are raising thirty-seven children.**

Calendar of Events

Call Evergreen @ (360) 671-0703 or (800) 249-2437 for info

Evergreen AIDS Foundation: Ongoing Programs

NEW SUPPORT GROUP INFO

Our *ongoing drop-in support group* has moved from EAF offices to Interfaith Community Health Center, 220 Unity Street. Still meeting on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m., the group is facilitated by Lisa DeMilio, a licensed mental health counselor. A light snack will be provided.

A second group began April 21st — “*Our Women's Circle of Friends*” meeting the third Wednesday of every month, 10:30 to noon, at EAF offices. This “by women, for women” group will have two experienced peer facilitators with clinical support.

Unity Group AA has moved from the EAF offices and is now meeting on Wednesdays, 7pm in the ML Room at St. Joe's South Campus, 809 West Chestnut Street.

Special Events

Call Evergreen @ (360) 671-0703 or (800) 249-2437 for info

GARDEN PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION

Saturday, May 22, Noon to 4pm

Lairmont Manor — 405 Fieldston Road — space limited, please RSVP

\$50 per person, includes an elegant lunch and music by Jazz Omelette

Join us at noon for mimosas. Lunch begins at 12:30, desserts and keynote speaker at 2:30 and the silent auction closes at 3:30. Reserve your spot today!

THE HUMAN RACE

On Saturday, June 12th at Maritime Heritage Park you can walk for Evergreen and help raise dollars in support of our new programs. Come be part of our “parade for AIDS”. Contact Darren for details.

DINE OUT FOR AIDS

Coming in June... watch for us at area restaurants — we'll be your waitstaff for the evening, you'll go out to eat and leave your tips to EAF... Already committed to participate — Cafe Akroteri, The Calumet...

4TH OF JULY CRUISE

Darren's throwing this bash on the boat, so plan on a party under the fireworks! Tickets available soon, watch our website for details.

FIRST CONCERT IN OUR NEW SERIES—FRUIT

Friday, July 16 at 8:00 p.m.

BHS Performing Arts Center

Tickets - \$18

Fruit was recently named the best up-and-coming live act by the Australian music industry. This group of not one, not two, but three frontwomen, each of whom sings and writes well enough to carry a band on her own, delivers a pure theatrical rush. Their pop powered by dramatic harmonies and charismatic shifts of style only gets better when one of them picks up a horn for an unexpected solo interlude. Tickets go on sale in June for this exciting concert, first in our series.

SUMMER PICNIC

This year's picnic will be on Sunday, July 18th at Lake Padden and will be bigger and better than we've ever had! There will be more fun, more food, more activities for all — games and prizes and clowns and an inflatable jungle jump and face painting and kayaks and croquet and badminton and great picnic food! Plan on bringing your whole family to this event — we'll have something for everyone!

ALSO COMING UP

BENEFIT ART AUCTION - Saturday, September 18th

WORLD AIDS DAY — Wednesday, December 1st

SEATTLE WOMEN'S CHORUS HOLIDAY CONCERT - Friday, December 3rd

SEATTLE MEN'S CHORUS CONCERT — Saturday, March 26th, 2005



Evergreen AIDS Foundation

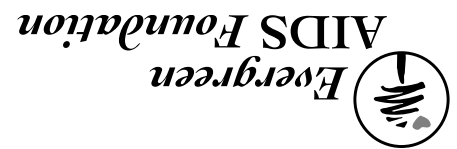
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Aware is the newsletter of the Evergreen AIDS Foundation. If you have a story, article, or announcement related to HIV/AIDS, you may submit it for inclusion in the newsletter when deemed appropriate. EAF is a non-profit, non-discriminatory services organization that provides information and referral services to everyone, regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religious affiliation. *The opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors of EAF.*



Purpose

The purpose of Evergreen AIDS Foundation is to ensure services for any person in Northwest Washington who is either infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Services may include, but are not limited to: case management, in-home chore and practical care services, information and referral, emotional and social support, community outreach and education, resource library, transportation assistance, food and meals, emergency financial assistance, and loss and bereavement resources.

Support

Evergreen AIDS Foundation relies on a number of funding sources to provide our professional and volunteer services in Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties. All financial contributions made by individuals and corporations are fully tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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Board of Directors

Toni Taft, President
Dr. John Tilley, Vice President
N.F. Jackson, Secretary
Shane Crowder, Treasurer
Gloria Rivera, Past President

Special Thanks

MEMBERS: Robert Astrove, Kathleen Block, Hal Glott, Carole Hanaway (on leave), Terry Hinz, Elizabeth Joffron, Janet Johnson, John Huff, Linda Luttrell, Sara Moore, Teresa Schmidt Wiggs
ADVISORY MEMBERS: Margaret Eisenhardt, Lea Kouba
To Rod Burton of Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design (360) 671-0156 for all his support, guidance and volunteer time in the creation of this newsletter. Thank you Rod, from all of us at EAF.