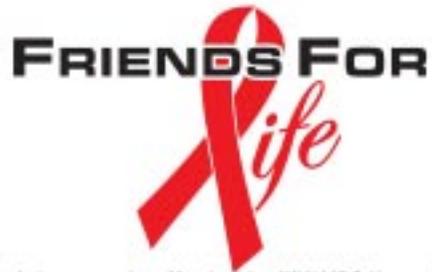


Among Friends

The 20-Year History of



...helping people affected by HIV/AIDS live well...

Foreword



Kim A. Moss



Jeanne D. Richardson

April 7, 2006

Dear Reader,

The year 2005 was the 20th year anniversary of Friends For Life. The staff and Board of Directors felt it essential that the history of the agency be written to ensure that the memories held in so many people's minds would also be put into print. Though none of us will ever forget our dear friends and loved ones who have passed because of AIDS, this history provides us a way to not only memorialize them but to also recognize the hundreds of people who gave tirelessly during this time in the fight against this disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Kim A. Moss".

Kim A. Moss
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Jeanne D. Richardson".

Jeanne D. Richardson
Chair, Board of Directors



DEDICATION

The Friends For Life history is dedicated to all persons in Memphis and Shelby County who have lost their lives due to complications associated with HIV and AIDS.

Acknowledgments

We want to express our gratitude to all those who agreed to be interviewed for this project. In particular, Friends For Life (FFL) and the author thank the following individuals who generously provided their time, memories and perspectives for this history. Apologies are offered if we overlooked anyone; it was not our intent.

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The history was researched and written by Cathy Marcinko. Interviews were conducted in 2005 and 2006 by Cathy Marcinko, Lydia Spencer, Corky Neale and Cassie Rogers. Lydia Spencer assisted with the research and provided editorial assistance. The author is solely responsible for and regrets any errors that may remain.



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Chapter 1

The Birth and Rise of ATEAC 1985-1990

Later, everyone agreed the baths should have been closed sooner, they agreed health education should have been more direct and more timely. And everybody also agreed blood banks should have tested blood sooner, and that a search for the AIDS virus should have been started sooner, and that scientists should have laid aside their petty intrigues. Everybody subsequently agreed that the news media should have offered better coverage of the epidemic much earlier, and that the federal government should have done much, much more. By the time everyone agreed to this, however, it was too late.

Instead, people died. Tens of thousands of them.

—from *And the Band Played On* by Randy Shilts

Gay Memphis Before AIDS

The end of the World War II in the United States marked a time when gays began to migrate to urban areas and form their own cultural enclaves and communities. Ten years later, the start of the Civil Rights and Feminist movements in the 1950s and '60s led gays to recognize their own social oppression and desire greater freedom of self expression and political empowerment. The 1969 Stonewall Riot in New York City was a watershed event that many regard as the beginning of the gay liberation movement. The movement's centers were the large cities on the east and west coasts, particularly New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, where gays came together and lived their newfound ideologies of freedom and non-conformity.

During these years of transition and change, the gay community in Memphis and much of the South was still largely closeted, and outside the mainstream of gay activism. Police harassment and arrests of gays in Memphis were common. Both of the city's major newspapers, the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* and *The Commercial Appeal*, would readily publish the names and addresses of those arrested for suspected homosexual activities, even when at private parties (Buring, p. 48). Still, gays and lesbians met and socialized at gay-friendly restaurants, clubs and bars such as The Closet and Frank's Show Bar. Gay social clubs also formed in the mid-1970s, including The Queen's Men, sponsor of the Miss Gay

Memphis Pageant (Buring 38).

Private homes, "tearooms" (public restrooms) and public spaces such as Court Square and Overton Park were also popular meeting places for gay men, and a bath house, Club South, opened in 1983. Club South apparently never achieved success, perhaps because of the negative publicity surrounding the spread of AIDS in bathhouses in San Francisco, and it eventually closed in 1986 (Buring 65).

Gay political organizations in Memphis formed relatively late compared to those in other large cities. The Memphis Gay Coalition (MGC), a chapter of the Tennessee Gay Coalition for Human Rights, was founded in 1979 with the purpose of achieving "economic, social and political equality through education and legislative change." The MGC published *Gaze*, a monthly newspaper that included national, regional and local news about gay issues and organizations, under the co-editorship of Allen Cook and John Stilwell. In 1985, suffering from a lack of leadership and action, the MGC established a board of directors and renewed its work in the political arena until 1991, when it dissolved. Cook and Stilwell went on to publish *Triangle Journal News (TJN)*, the most influential gay publication in the Memphis metro area, beginning in October 1990.

Other important gay and lesbian organizations and institutions formed in the 1970s and '80s included: *Gaity*, the city's first gay newspaper, published from 1975 to 1976; the Memphis Gay Switchboard, established in December 1975 and still operating today; the Gay and

Lesbian Community Center; and The Memphis Lambda Center, founded in 1987 by members of a mostly gay Alcoholics Anonymous group. A number of churches in the 1970s and '80s were also founded and attended by gays, including Metropolitan Community Church, Holy Trinity Community Church and Prescott Baptist Church.

The racial divisions that have existed throughout much of Memphis's history were also reflected within the gay community, though there were efforts to bridge that divide. Black and White Men Together (BWMT) was an inter-racial group formed in 1982 by MGC members as a chapter of the national organization established a few years before. BWMT held some AIDS workshops for the minority community, produced several safe sex pamphlets, and distributed condoms at the Apartment Club, a black-owned gay bar (Buring 107).

Although AIDS was presented in the media as a disease of white gay males, in actuality, from 1983 to 1990, a greater percentage of black men in Shelby County were affected than whites. Unfortunately, during these critical years, many black men viewed the disease as something that only promiscuous whites got. The fact that it was affecting the black community was seldom recognized or accepted. Many African-Americans who were infected unfortunately discovered that they had AIDS when the disease was in its later stages (Buring 125).

Two other black gay groups were active early in the AIDS epidemic. The Memphis Committee was formed in 1981 to combat racial discrimination in the gay

community, and Black Gays and Lesbians Allied for Dignity (B-GLAD) was established in the summer of 1990. Both of these groups eventually folded. AIDS may have depleted their memberships, or their brief existence may have reflected the fact that many black gays identified more strongly with their racial community and its historic institutions, including the church, than with organized groups representing sexual orientation (Buring 119).

AIDS Awareness Begins

At some point in the early 1980s, members of Memphis's white gay community became aware of the mysterious disease that was affecting fellow gays in large east and west coast cities. The national gay media and friends and acquaintances in these cities relayed news of the terrible symptoms of young men who were falling sick in the prime of life and dying from a variety of unusual illnesses such as Kaposi's Sarcoma and Pneumocystis Pneumonia. Over the next few years, talk about the so-called "gay cancer" or "Gay Related Immune Disorder" (GRID) infused fear and uncertainty in those even remotely aware of their own mortality. *Gaze*, Memphis's monthly gay publication at the time, carried numerous stories describing the disease's mysterious origins and symptoms.

These stories, and a small number of local cases, led many gay Memphians to fear that they, too, might have contracted the disease. Lack of knowledge about how the disease was

spread became a factor in people's daily lives. Jim Easter recalled a friend who became sick with an AIDS-related illness in these early years. The man was an avid bridge player and when the severity of his illness became apparent, his bridge partners asked him to wear rubber gloves whenever they played cards.

Even members of the health profession, who were more aware of evidence that HIV/AIDS was transmitted sexually or through contact with infected blood, were concerned about catching the disease through some yet unknown means of transmission. Don Lilley, a home health nurse with the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) in Memphis recalled an AIDS patient at Baptist Hospital in 1985. Although the medical staff knew the disease was blood-borne, the staff and family "dressed up in space suits" when they went in to see the man. Lilley had his own moment of irrational fear, which struck one day during a visit to another patient. The man was a Memphian who had come home from San Francisco. When he dropped a wad of tissue on the floor Lilley automatically leaned over to pick it up and toss it in the trash, but was suddenly immobilized by fear. "I kept thinking, 'I have to reach down and put it in the bag'—but I panicked. Everybody was panicked."

Against this backdrop of fear, the first private conversations about organizing a local group to address AIDS began among gay men, those who were most aware and most threatened by the storm on the horizon. Tommy Stewart, the owner of J-Wag's, a popular gay bar founded in the 1960s, and reputed to be one of the oldest gay bars in Tennessee, remembered

his first conversation on the matter in 1984. Stewart was approached by two brothers who were members of The Queen's Men, Larry and Harold ("Granny") Weaver. The brothers said, "We think we need to do something." Stewart agreed. By December, The Queen's Men (TQM) had called a meeting at the Coach House Hotel at 1262 Union (formerly across from Methodist Hospital), on Sunday, January 13, 1985, to organize a local committee to tackle the question of how to deal with AIDS.

Aid to End AIDS Committee

In the weeks leading up to the meeting, TQM members put up posters in bars to notify anyone who might be interested in attending the meeting. A front page article in the December 1984 issue of *Gaze* also helped publicize the meeting, stating its purpose "will be to raise funds which will be used locally by the University of Tennessee Center for the Health Sciences (UTCHS) to conduct research into the cause and cure of the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)." The article also said the committee would offer assistance to Memphians with AIDS. TQM's president, Gary Salles, emphasized that the meeting was organizational. A separate board of directors would be established to include all segments of the gay community. The proposed name for the new group was the "Aid to End All AIDS Committee." (The word "All" was eventually dropped.) The scheduled speaker was Dr. Linda Pifer, a scientist conducting AIDS research at UTCHS, but as she was called out of town, Dr. Mark Land attended in her place.

Below, AIDS and ATEAC-related headlines and news stories from *Gaze*, 1984 and 1985.



Twenty years later, Jim Easter recalled that between 25 and 30 people attended the first Aid to End AIDS Committee (ATEAC) meeting in the Surrey Room of the Coach House Hotel. The Queen's Men's recommendation that the board of directors consist of two representatives each from business, social and service organizations, and one independent member, was unanimously approved. By the meeting's end, Tommy Stewart had been elected president, Rick Bray vice president, Allen Cook secretary, and Jim Easter treasurer. The other board members were Larry Weaver (representing TQM), Sharon Wray and Joe Calhoun. Wray, a bar owner, was the sole woman, and Calhoun was the one African-American and a member of Black and White Men Together (BWMT). Easter recalls that when the hat was passed, \$88 was collected. The next meeting was set for Sunday, February 10 at the Georgetown Inn. Everyone was invited to attend and join the organization.

ATEAC's Early Leadership

The election of Tommy Stewart to be ATEAC's first president and spokesman was an obvious choice. Stewart was self-employed and had the flexibility to attend speaking engagements during the day. His acceptance also reflected the closeted climate in which Memphis gays in the mid-1980s lived. In 2005 Stewart recalled, "I was the only one who could be openly gay at the time. Everyone else had a job they were worried about losing if people knew they

were gay. They looked at me and said, 'You own your own business and the property on which it's located. It's a gay bar. Nobody can do anything to you. They can't evict you or cancel your lease.' This was 20 years ago, and it was different then."

Stewart's office at J-Wag's became in effect ATEAC's headquarters for the first few years. He dedicated himself to the organization's cause, becoming a one-man speaker's bureau, attending local, state and national meetings, and doing TV and radio interviews, including monthly appearances on Marge Thrasher's TV show. In 1987 he was recognized by the gay community for his work for ATEAC by being named Tsarus "Man of the Year."

Twenty years later he reflected that the most important achievement of ATEAC during his term as president was forging lines of communication on behalf of the gay community with the public and local government. He recalled an early struggle for recognition that occurred a few months after ATEAC formed. The board wanted to apply for a grant from the U.S. Conference of Mayors to produce educational brochures, and needed Mayor Richard Hackett's endorsement. Stewart recollected, "I had a little trouble at first. The mayor wouldn't see me, wouldn't even talk to me. I went to his office and told his secretary, 'OK, 10 percent of Memphis is queer, so if the mayor won't endorse this, he'll lose 10 percent of the vote.' Before I got back to my office, I got a message saying the letter of endorsement was being written."

According to Stewart, this and other grants for early funding were prepared by ATEAC's treasurer, Jim Easter, who helped manage the business of the organization, including writing the first bylaws together with vice president Rick Bray. By March 1, 1985, ATEAC had a charter, was incorporated and had received donations of around \$1,000 from Tsarus and the Memphis Gay Coalition.

Easter made up the first budget for the organization based on a projected income of \$10,000 in donations in the first year. Thereafter he published regular financial reports in a new section of *Gaze* called "AIDS Update," which debuted in the July/August 1985 issue. The updates featured "current information on the AIDS crisis" and "accounts of the activities of ATEAC." Easter's insistence on transparency in the organization's financial matters in these early years helped build trust and credibility for the organization. "We want the community to know what we're doing," he said. With help from the co-publisher of *Gaze*, (who happened to be ATEAC's secretary, Allen Cook) the provision of this and other information was much easier.

Joe Calhoun, a founding member of BWMT, does not appear to have been active on the ATEAC board for very long. However, in October 1985, BWMT began to work separately on minority AIDS outreach and produced a "culturally sensitive" brochure and safe sex kits. After Calhoun, there does not appear to have been another African-American on ATEAC's board until 1990. Sharon Wray, then owner of the gay bar WKRB and a well-known figure in the gay community, was a member of the board for a short

period of time. Over the years, Wray remained a faithful supporter of ATEAC and hosted and participated in many of its fundraisers.

Defining a Mission

With the work of organizing mostly done, by the summer of 1985 ATEAC's leadership was ready to focus on mission. The organizers may have at first thought that raising funds for research was among their aims, but this quickly took a back seat to the more pressing need for education and services for People with AIDS (PWAs). ATEAC's officers also spent considerable time attending meetings with state and local health officials discussing the ramifications of a new AIDS antibody test, the need to protect the anonymity of those tested, and to ensure the safety of the community's blood supply. Although ATEAC was the first AIDS group founded in Tennessee, Nashville CARES and aids Response Knoxville (aRK) were formed just a few months later.

Donations to ATEAC soon began pouring in as numerous gay and lesbian organizations rallied to raise funds. A Ladies Plus/Tsarus benefit at the Pendulum netted \$1,300. A benefit by Aphrodite raised \$1,500. A gay rummage sale organized and executed by George Wilson at the Georgetown Inn brought in \$1,200.

Happily, the organization's first grant proposal also met with success, and in September 1985 ATEAC received a \$9,000 grant from the U.S. Conference of Mayors for an AIDS education

Play Safely.

Playing Safely
 Hugging, holding, cuddling
 Body to Body Rubbing
 Social (dry) Kissing
 Mutual Masturbation

Possibly Playing Safely
 French (wet) kissing
 Anal intercourse with a condom
 Sucking — if you stop before your partner comes
 Watersports (urinating) on skin without sores or cuts

Playing Unsafely
 Anal intercourse without a condom
 Swallowing semen
 Watersports in your mouth or on broken skin
 Fisting
 Sharing dildos, toys or dobbing equipment
 Rimming/scat

**The Aid to End AIDS Committee
 cares about YOU.
 PLAY SAFELY.**

Above and below, early ATEAC advertisements from *Gaze*, 1984 and 1985.

program. An upbeat Tommy Stewart proclaimed, "We think it's great. This is the first grant we applied for and we got it." The grant was unusual in that it didn't require tax exempt status and it was only one of nine awarded nationally. ATEAC's plans for the grant included a series of TV public service announcements, cable programs, a quarterly newsletter on AIDS called "AIDS Update," a speaker's bureau, billboards, safe sex seminars and brochures.

A good deal of AIDS education had already been accomplished through the pages of *Gaze*, where the publishers ran scores of articles about the epidemic from every conceivable angle. However, far more was needed to change the sexual habits of gay men. ATEAC began to publish a constant stream of

educational articles and ads in *Gaze*, and picked up slogans created by AIDS groups in other cities. An example was "Play Safely," motherly advice that was followed by an explicit list of "safe" to "unsafe" sexual activities. In 2005, a variation of the same theme was used by Friends For Life in its "Play Safe" poster campaign. Another ad in *Gaze* was, "The Only AIDS Vaccine Available Right Now is At Your Drug Store. It's Called a Condom." *Gaze* also helped promote ATEAC programs such as the state-funded STOP AIDS project and the "buddy program," which was started to provide daily living support to PWAs.

Statistics and early articles in *Gaze* suggest that ATEAC members might not yet have known large numbers of people with AIDS, and in the first few months, ATEAC members contacted hospitals asking them to refer PWAs for assistance, and the readers of *Gaze* were encouraged to do the same. ATEAC's founding without the presence of an overwhelming need shows the foresight of the founders in anticipating the crisis. Because of their marginalized status and the lack of support shown to those with AIDS elsewhere in the country, gays in Memphis anticipated that they would be forced by the inevitable emergence of the epidemic locally to be proactive, depend on themselves and help each other in dealing with the oncoming tragedy.

**The Only AIDS Vaccine
 Available Right Now is At
 Your Drug Store.
 It's Called a Condom.**

ATEAC's Programs, 1986-1988

About a year after ATEAC was established, on February 27, 1986, the famous AIDS researcher, Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Institutes of Cancer, spoke at the University of Tennessee (UT) in Memphis. At the time, Gallo was credited with co-discovering the HTLV-III virus (though, in fact, the French Pasteur Institute had discovered it first). He spoke to an overflow crowd at UT about the likelihood of discovering a vaccine and other matters of interest. Meanwhile, figures released by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta showed that Tennessee AIDS cases had doubled since 1984, up to 42 cases in 1985. Of this number, 37 percent were in West Tennessee.

A year after its founding, ATEAC's annual report was published in the April 1986 issue of *Gaze* in "AIDS Update." The report included a detailed listing of the group's activities over the first year and a Financial Statement provided by Treasurer Jim Easter. Donations to ATEAC in the first year had totaled \$8,352. Half of the U. S. Conference of Mayors grant or \$4,500 had been advanced for educational activities. Expenditures totaled \$2,521, most of which was spent on condom dispensers in gay bars and for printing brochures. Although the report indicated that eight AIDS patients had received services from ATEAC during the year, there were no obvious expenditures of funds related to these services, which may have been provided at no charge by volunteers or

by other organizations.

A buddy program had been established during the year, commencing with the screening of *Buddies*, a dramatic film about an AIDS volunteer and the patient to whom he was assigned, which was shown in Memphis and Nashville. Around 30 volunteers were subsequently trained to provide "practical and emotional support for PWAs." A support group for those with AIDS and ARC (AIDS-Related Complex) was also set up and a professional advisory committee was established to advise ATEAC and make referrals.

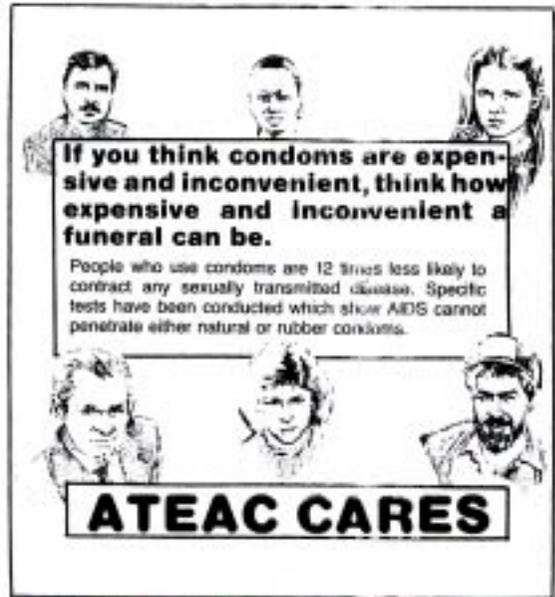
Education was a major focus of ATEAC in the first few years. Ten television public service announcements (PSAs) were produced in 1985-6 to spread the word that AIDS was not transmitted through casual contact. The PSAs were distributed around the state, showing the early effort at collaboration among statewide groups. In addition, an AIDS switchboard was established as an



offshoot of the Memphis Gay Switchboard to provide information and received more than 1,500 calls in the first year. The switchboard was apparently operated out of Allen Cook's home until the first ATEAC office was set up in 1986. A speaker's bureau was also established which provided speakers to area hospitals and a host of other organizations. Two "AIDS Update" TV programs were produced and a "media relations coordinator" was appointed to handle radio and TV appearances by members of ATEAC with more than 75 appearances made around the state. Five different brochures on a variety of AIDS topics and concerns were acquired, and more than 15,000 distributed. By March 1986, three issues of the quarterly "AIDS Update" had been published and distributed in Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi in *Gaze*.

In April, ATEAC and the Red Cross teamed up to produce the first brochure on AIDS aimed at 13- to 19-year-olds. Allen Cook, a member of the ATEAC/Red Cross team designing it, described the brochure as having a "prevention message," without explicit descriptions of high-risk sex practices. The brochure was so well received that it generated orders from Red Cross chapters around the United States. Another successful AIDS brochure mentioned in *Gaze* was produced by Black and White Men Together (BWMT), and was reprinted at the request of Nashville CARES. BWMT's Health Committee also had safe sex kits, which it distributed free of charge.

Although ATEAC and BWMT were both involved with early AIDS awareness education and prevention, it appears that



Above and below, ATEAC notices from *Gaze*, 1986.

ATEAC was able to access more resources to conduct outreach. However, its largely white board, staff, and volunteers were not all that comfortable with working in the black community, and few black gays involved themselves in ATEAC either, possibly because they did not feel comfortable, or because they did not have a sense of being invested in the group. Many black gays seem to have been unaware of ATEAC, which may have been part of a general lack of awareness about AIDS in the black community in these early years (Buring 126).



Sisters and Brothers Together

Members of Memphis's gay and lesbian community showed their heartfelt support for ATEAC's mission by raising large sums of money on an annual basis to support the organization's work and particularly for direct support for PWAs. Benefits ran the gamut from passing the hat and rummage sales to theatre-staged plays, parties, auctions, concerts, drag shows, and nationally and locally sponsored events such as *Heart Strings*, the musical benefit created by the Design Industry for AIDS, which performed in Memphis in 1989 and 1992.

One early gesture of community support was the "Unity for Life" blood drive for PWAs and gay men. By 1985, gays were barred from donating blood because of their risk of having HIV. In response, a blood drive for gay men was organized by Aphrodite, a lesbian service club, and ATEAC in the fall of 1985. Lesbians, who were said to have the least chance of HIV infection, and straight friends were asked to donate blood to the Unity Plan. This relieved gays who were sick or burdened with financial concerns from having to pay for blood. In the spring of 1986, a follow-up blood drive was organized by Aphrodite and ATEAC because the Unity blood supply had diminished over the winter months.

Lesbian service organizations such as Aphrodite were remarkably successful at fundraising. In 1985 Aphrodite contributed more than \$1,500 to ATEAC, and during the first eight months of 1986 the group donated \$2,200. In 1986, Aphrodite was named "Tsarus Man of the Year" for its efforts on behalf of ATEAC and PWAs. ATEAC's mission created an emotional bond between Memphis gays and lesbians in the 1980s and '90s. Lesbians sat on ATEAC's board, served as its first executive director, and dozens volunteered for fundraising events, delivered essential services and personally cared for PWAs. One gay man gratefully acknowledged, "Our sisters have been there taking care of us, burying us, mourning us," (Buring 187).

Aphrodite/ATEAC Organize Blood Plan
Aphrodite Does It Again!

Above, headlines from *Gaze*, 1986.

A Helping Hand

As the availability of its financial assistance became known, ATEAC's board was faced with more and more requests for assistance and began to screen applicants to ensure that its funds were appropriately provided and used. According to Jim Easter, individuals in need of help would come directly to the board and present their case. Among the legitimate applicants were drug addicts scamming for money to buy drugs, so the board had to be careful, and when possible, provided goods rather than money. By the end of 1986, the board also decided to make loans rather than grants, since grants affected income and eligibility for Social Security disability payments. Easter recalled that some people paid the loans back, but it wasn't expected. In the summer of 1986, ATEAC was asked to help two people with AIDS (PWAs) with housing. Soon after, an appeal for housing was published in the August and October issues of *Gaze*.

Hope for some form of treatment for AIDS appeared for the first time in October 1986, when it was announced that AZT (azidothymidine) would be made available to PWAs. Up to that time, there were no treatment options other than the drug isoprinocine (an immune system stimulator), which was available in Mexico and was sometimes paired with the antiviral medication ribavirin. Officials stressed that AZT was not a cure, but could prolong life for PWAs by inhibiting the reproduction of the HIV virus in the body. It was not officially approved for sale until March 1987, one of many frustrating delays in the saga

of slow drug approvals by the FDA and drug companies.

Another ATEAC project late in 1986 was the purchase of condom machines for seven gay bars. The money made from selling the condoms at 25 cents each eventually paid for the machines. The seven bars included J-Wag's, George's, French Connection, The Apartment Club, Jackie's, Backstreet and Pendulum. These were predominantly white bars, with the exception of The Apartment Club, which was predominantly black. Volunteers like Matthew Presley, also known as "The Condom Kid," distributed free condoms and safer sex kits at bars and pushed safe sex. Presley admitted, "I was one of those who wasn't shy." In addition, ATEAC printed 5,000 safe sex and 5,000 "When a Friend has AIDS" brochures for distribution.

In November 1986, ATEAC received notice that the IRS had granted the agency tax exempt status. The published statement in *Gaze* of revenues and expenses for the six month period June 1 through December 31, 1986, showed the organization had brought in \$7,645 in donations, grant funds and sales proceeds. By far the greatest amount of donated revenues came from Aphrodite, \$3,185 in all, with sales proceeds being the second largest amount at \$2,080. ATEAC spent \$9,369 during this same period, with printing being the greatest expense, totaling \$2,527. Direct assistance to PWAs totaled \$1,017.

**PLAYING SAFE WON'T
GIVE YOU AIDS**

Advertisement from *Gaze*, 1987.

ATEAC's first major fundraiser, an AIDS Auction, was inaugurated on Jan. 15, 1987, at George's. Miss Billie Jo Casino hosted the event and was "admirably assisted by Veronica York, known for the evening as 'Vanna White.'" The auction was organized by Mark Whitehead and raised \$2,720. It was the first of what would become a recurring event in the history of the organization, one with which Whitehead, then ATEAC's treasurer, would have a long association.

Another important event in January 1987 was a meeting co-hosted by ATEAC and the Memphis Chapter of the American Red Cross. This first meeting of the Memphis AIDS Coalition included about 100 people who gathered to prioritize AIDS issues in the areas of religion, business, education, health and social services. Participants identified a need for more education services to "diffuse the AIDS hysteria" and for a central clearinghouse for AIDS information. The group met again in March and worked on identifying service needs in the areas of prevention, working with churches, and creating a speaker's bureau.

Throughout 1987 ATEAC's board intensified its educational efforts, including distributing 100,000 informational brochures, 20,000 safe sex kits, publishing "AIDS Update," and, in October

1987, establishing a separate AIDS Switchboard apart from the Memphis Gay Switchboard using state grant funds. ATEAC received \$15,000 in state health department funds for AIDS education in 1987-1988, and ties with local and state government agencies involved in the fight against AIDS were being forged. Three ATEAC board members served on the Tennessee AIDS Coalition and three sat on the Shelby County Mayor Bill Morris's AIDS Task Force.



We're ready willing and able!

Because we started when the AIDS epidemic was only first beginning to show up in Memphis, we're ready.

In our first two and a half years of operation, ATEAC has received two federally funded grants for public education. We produced the first educational material specifically designed for adolescent use in the schools. And with the cooperation of the Red Cross, we've had it in the Memphis City Schools for over a year.

An independent study showed that the educational material provided by ATEAC provides more information and is trusted more than almost any other source.

But ATEAC is more than public education. The real test of any community-based AIDS organization shows in how they care for people with AIDS.

ATEAC's "buddy" program is modeled after the most successful AIDS practical support programs in the country. Don't get us wrong. We're not perfect. But we've been providing practical assistance to PWA's almost since the first case was diagnosed in Shelby County. And with the assistance of many fine organizations, we've even been able to provide emergency housing and financial assistance.

We've come a long way, but we need your help. Please join our efforts.

Aid To End AIDS Committee
 P.O. Box 40389
 Memphis, TN 38174-0389

Advertisement from *Gaze*, 1987.

ATEAC ANSWERS SOME HARD QUESTIONS FROM THE GAY COMMUNITY

ATEAC's task, however, was difficult, and not everyone was always happy with the new organization. In the August 1987 issue of *Gaze*, a full page was headlined "ATEAC Answers Some Hard Questions from the Gay Community." The questions mostly concerned a previously published financial statement and ATEAC's use of donated funds. In response to the query, "Why does PWA assistance represent such a low figure on your financial statement?", the answer board members gave was that every possible means was used to access other resources before using "the money the Gay community has entrusted to us. If there are agencies which will provide for a PWA, we find them." The "question and answer" series ended on a light note, with the question, "Why are all the AIDS fundraisers held by women?" The answer: "Good question. We like to think it's because they care. The majority of money coming from the Gay community has been raised by Aphrodite, for which we are continually grateful ... On the other hand, most of the volunteers actually working with ATEAC are men, so there may be a trade off."

If there was sometimes an underlying vein of mistrust within the white gay community, there was all the

more reason for mistrust and poor communication between white and black gays, given the historic racial divisions in the city. In the summer of 1987, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop expressed frustration over the inability of the public health system to reach minorities regarding the threat of AIDS. Koop even warned the NAACP that because the incidence of AIDS was now rising disproportionately among minorities, they might expect to see an increase in racial discrimination.

Alpha House, the 2nd Auction and ATEAC's First Office

Alpha House, the first housing for PWAs in the Memphis area, opened in January 1988, and a month later it had two occupants. The house was located in the Buntyn community and ATEAC leased it for \$400 per month using private funding from the PWA fund. Residents were expected to pay a portion of the rent based on their income and to move into other housing after they received disability benefits and were financially able to leave. ATEAC collected donated housing items to furnish and equip the house. Upon seeing his new home, the first occupant exclaimed, "I love it." During its first nine months, Alpha House provided shelter for six PWAs. ATEAC President Tommy Stewart emphasized, "The house is not a care facility ... not a hospice. It's just a supportive landlord/tenant relationship." However, the lack of long term care and hospice for PWAs was a growing problem. Increasingly, indigent PWAs

were shuttled between the hospital and home, if they had a place to live at all, and were cared for by family, lovers, friends and nonprofits such as the Visiting Nurse Association.

By 1988, ATEAC had grown to the point where the organization itself needed a new home to house its expanding outreach and services for PWAs. In June the board entered into an agreement with St. James Episcopal Church to use its carriage house to the rear of the main building at Central and Melrose. It was conveniently near the Red Cross, and the rent was free, though ATEAC paid for the utilities, and up to \$2,000 was needed to get the office ready. In making this move, the decision was also made to hire Marty Katz to work part-time as ATEAC's first employee. Funds from the State Department of Health and Environment, and from a special federal grant to support a mass mailing of AIDS information to every home in the U. S., helped pay for the telephone and Katz's position. The mass mailing was "Understanding AIDS," a booklet by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, which became the single most widely read AIDS publication in the U.S., with 87 million readers. Allen Cook indicated in a *Gaze* article that an executive director or caseworker would likely be hired next "to do intake interviews, follow up on benefits, and coordinate our activities better." Cook admitted, "Those of us who are active volunteers have been stretched

to the limit."

ATEAC services by now included at least three support groups being facilitated by board members or volunteers, including a Sunday HIV support group led by Dale Caldwell; a PWA/PWARC group led by George Newton; and a Families and Friends Support Group led by Vickie Ford Freedland. The Buddy Program was being managed by board member Peter Barrosse and had 22 trained volunteer buddies, with 14 assigned to PWAs. There was also a support group for buddies. The AIDS Switchboard was run by volunteers, and once the move to the new office was made, would have extended hours.

ATEAC board meetings were being held the fourth Monday of every month, and an administrative subcommittee had been set up to work on housing and financial assistance guidelines. At the August board meeting, two new board members, Vicki Ford Freedland and Betty Dawson from Prescott Baptist church, were approved. ATEAC board members attended a Tennessee AIDS Council meeting in Nashville and learned

YES, AIDS IS DEPRESSING
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU HAD IT?

A small, but dedicated group of individuals is working very hard to educate the community and care for the needs of our AIDS patients - black, white, male, female, straight and Gay. If you think you would like to help or just want to know more about our organization, please attend our next meeting.

Aid to End AIDS Committee
Sunday, October 19 3:00 PM
Red Cross Building 1400 Central

This ad space was donated by the Memphis Gay Coalition.

Above and on previous page, an advertisement and a headline from *Gaze*, 1987.

that the Tennessee Dept. of Health and Environment (TDHE) was doing AIDS surveillance. There was an ongoing national debate about the confidentiality of AIDS testing and status, and the board subsequently passed a motion that "ATEAC will neither confirm nor deny a person's HIV status or diagnosis without the written, informed consent from the client." Other decisions included hiring a state grant-funded educational coordinator and undertaking an audit.

The gay community, including service groups like Aphrodite, continued support for ATEAC's direct assistance to PWAs. ATEAC held its second

Auction for AIDS on March 18 at the Hilton Inn Ballroom and raised about \$7,460. Money donated from two fundraisers at the Pipeline and J-Wag's in July totaled more than \$3,000. By October 1988, ATEAC had expended about \$26,000 on direct services for PWAs, including housing, food, medicine and transportation. An average of \$525 each was provided to 25 PWAs needing help with utilities, phone bills and medicine. Even though access to federal disability benefits was getting easier, the benefits were often insufficient to cover PWAs' living expenses. Underscoring the importance of the auction and other events



ATEAC's first office was in the carriage house behind St. James Church, at 689 Melrose. Photo credit: C. Marcinko.

for PWA assistance, Tommy Stewart said, "Since there are no grants available for providing direct care to PWAs, we have to rely on events like this for funding." Indeed, it was not until 1994 that the first federal funding for HIV/AIDS services became available under the Clinton administration.

Throughout the community, awareness of the needs of growing numbers of PWAs was reflected in the

creation of several new AIDS organizations in Memphis, including an AIDS Ministry Group at Prescott Baptist Church and the previously mentioned Memphis AIDS Coalition, a coalition of groups providing AIDS services,

including the Red Cross, Planned Parenthood, and others. A local chapter of the Human Response Council (HRC), another provider of services to PWAs, had as its mission the creation of a hospice. In early 1988 tension arose between HRC and ATEAC's leaders due to concerns that HRC was not a nonprofit tax-exempt organization and was not accountable for funds raised in the gay community. A June meeting of the two organizations was called by Matt Nelson, Tennessee State AIDS Education Coordinator, which resulted in a recommendation that a representative from each group attend the other's board

meetings. But when ATEAC board member Jean Hofacket attempted to attend an HRC meeting in September she was reportedly turned away by the HRC's administrator.

At a national level, frustration mounted over the slow access to new anti-viral drugs. When the Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic issued a report in June 1988 it declared that Food and Drug Administration (FDA) procedures were failing to meet the needs of people with AIDS. In response, in October more than 1,000 ACT-UP demonstrators virtually shut down operations at the FDA headquarters. Eight days after the ACT-UP demonstration, the FDA announced new regulations to speed drug approval. Angie Dagastino, ATEAC's first executive director, observed in a 2005 interview that such activism 20 years earlier made possible what little money is now available for AIDS research and programs. Dagastino said, "I remember demonstrations in Washington where gay men lay on the street and poured fake blood on themselves" to get the attention of drug companies and the government.

During this fractious time ATEAC's vice president, Rick Bray, was getting involved in another national effort—the NAMES Project Quilt, the international AIDS quilt conceived by Cleve Jones, a



**AZTea Dance
at Another Bar
Sundays from 2-6**

**\$2 donation to ATEAC gets
FREE BEER BUST
Plus
SILLY HOUR PRICES**

**Bottle Beer - .60
Set-ups - .10
Plate Lunches - 2.00
Literature - Free**

**THE D.J. WILL PLAY ALL REQUESTS
SPOT NUMBERS BY YOUR FAVORITE
PERFORMERS
GUEST BARTENDERS**

**HELP US HELP
OURSELVES**

All door proceeds benefit the AIDS End AIDS Committee's Patient Relief Fund.
In addition to buying medicine, this fund also provides the necessities of life for those with AIDS who cannot afford them.

Above and lower left, advertisements from *Gaze*, 1988.

San Francisco gay activist, which would eventually commemorate thousands of lives lost to the disease. The quilt was displayed nationally and internationally in 1988 and became a focus of media attention. Growing to include more than 8,288 three-by-six-foot panels, each memorializing a person who died of AIDS, the quilt was displayed in front of the White House in November 1988, a showing that Bray attended together with thousands of other AIDS activists.

World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day was established in 1988 to increase public awareness, to educate the people of the world, and to fight prejudice against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The day has also come to be a time to memorialize those who have died of AIDS.

Each year a new World AIDS Day theme is selected. In 2005 the theme was "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise." This theme is a call upon world governments and policy makers to meet the funding and promises they have established in the fight against global HIV and AIDS. Some of the most important of these promises are contained in the 3 by 5 Initiative which was signed by all 189 members of the United Nations in June 2001. The initiative set a number of targets for the global fight against AIDS, including providing access to anti-retroviral treatment to 3 million people living with HIV in developing countries by the end of 2005.

Many challenges and obstacles to implementing the initiative exist, including the fact that many nations lack the medical infrastructure to serve those with HIV/AIDS. Perhaps most troubling, there appears to be insufficient political motivation or will to provide needed funding. In February 2004, Stephen Lewis, Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, warned, "If 3 by 5 fails, as it surely will without the dollars, then there are no excuses left, no rationalizations to hide behind, no murky slanders to justify indifference. There will only be the mass graves of the betrayed."



AIDS Cases 1982-1988

The first two identified cases of AIDS in the state of Tennessee were reported in 1982. By 1983 there were four cases, which sharply rose to 21 in 1984. The number of new cases more than doubled every year after that, to 42 in 1985, 91 in 1986, 184 in 1987, and 321 in 1988. Within nine years there were 665 identified cases, and 370 AIDS-related deaths. Of these, 640 or 96 percent were men, 76 percent were white and 22 percent were black. The ages of those infected ranged from 3 months to 85 years.

In 1985, when ATEAC was formed, there were 12 documented cases of AIDS in the Memphis area including a 13-year-old and a 21-year-old hemophiliac. Six of the local cases were known to be gay. Nationwide, 7,400 cases of AIDS had been confirmed by the CDC.

During this early period, little if any effective treatment was available, and caregivers in the early 1980s learned through talking with one another and "trial and error," according to Joyce McAlister, a local caregiver for PWAs. Many in the gay and lesbian community lost 20, 30 and even 40 friends and acquaintances to AIDS. Later, in the 1990s, the reported incidence of new HIV and AIDS cases among gay white men slowly leveled and dropped off.

There is little doubt that the efforts of ATEAC and other groups helped create awareness among white gays about the danger of unsafe sex and the practical meaning of "Play Safely." As one man said, "If there was a bathhouse

here and you go to it, why not go get a pistol and blow your brains out?"



1989—End of a Dark Decade

In early 1989 ATEAC's treasury was sitting on empty, a situation that was to recur more than once in the agency's history. However, more than \$8,000 was expected in reimbursements from the state, and several fundraisers were being planned, including the third Annual AIDS Auction on March 25. The auction, held at the Memphis Airport Hilton, was a huge success and raised nearly \$14,000 with the help of 40 to 50 volunteers and more than 300 attendees. Peter Barrosse and Mark Whitehead co-chaired the event and the auctioneers and entertainers included Mark Davis of WMC News Talk 79, Nancy Hart and Joe Birch from Channel 5 News, WEGR's Bev Hart, and singer Joyce Cobb.

Prescott Baptist Church (PBC) was also planning to host the benefit *Dance Against Darkness* (first produced in 1988), to support the church's AIDS Ministry and ATEAC. PBC was supplying food baskets for ATEAC clients and Betty Dawson reported to ATEAC's board that the AIDS ministry group made five hospital visits, two home visits, and had cleaned and done the laundry at Alpha House.

Angie Dagastino, who for a time in the late 1980s was an ATEAC volunteer, vividly recalled the sense of urgency and self-reliance that possessed

those involved in ATEAC in the late 1980s through the mid-'90s:

ATEAC started as a group of concerned men in the gay community, raising money at gay bars and through gay organizations. It had not matured into a formal agency as it is now. It was still on the fringes, trying to do consciousness-raising. The level of grief, of immediacy of the crisis, was very intense. Every day was intense. There was never enough money, and the board was constantly holding fundraisers. The original board was there for years and they were always there, giving hours and hours of their time. They were not an oversight board; they were a hands-on, working board. Their friends were dying and dying very rapidly. It was a very different time, emotionally and psychologically ... We were a family taking care of each other. There was a sense of taking care of our own, since no one else even acknowledged that we existed.

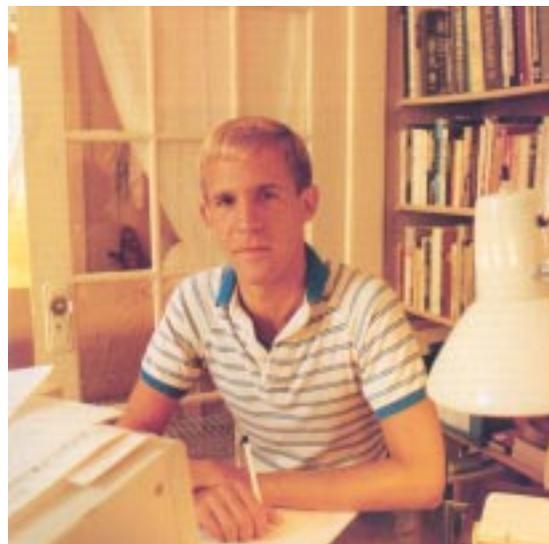
In early 1989, Rita Underhill was hired to be ATEAC's first full-time education coordinator under the state grant. Underhill was soon working on a resource directory in consultation with Jeanne Dreifus. Both Underhill and Marty Katz attended the Eleventh National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and Seventh National AIDS Forum. While attending the conference, Katz was appointed to the board of the World HIV Network. He afterwards gave the ATEAC board a written summary of the things he learned at the conference, including recommendations that ATEAC work on clarifying volunteer roles, on proactive planning, organizational charting and finding ways to access SSI benefits for clients.

Several ATEAC board members had AIDS, including Peter Barrosse, who

in the previous two years had become well-known regionally as a spokesman for PWAs. Barrosse came to be regarded as the first “face of AIDS” in Memphis as a result of a cover story he wrote for *Memphis Magazine* in September 1987, titled “My Battle with AIDS.” This article led to scores of interviews and speaking requests for the 30-year-old Cleveland, Ohio, native. He became involved with ATEAC first as a client, then as a volunteer and board member. Although he was not physically well in early 1989, Barrosse wanted to continue public speaking, but he eventually turned the buddy program over to Underhill and the newsletter to staff member Marty Katz.

At June’s ATEAC board meeting there was discussion about the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department’s AIDS Counseling and Testing service, where there had been a number of staff firings and resignations. The board decided to send a letter to Health Department Director Richard Swiggart, outlining their concerns and asking for assurances of confidentiality in testing. Revised guidelines for financial assistance to ATEAC clients were also adopted, and a new “Stop AIDS” campaign, which was to be implemented by ATEAC with state funds, was discussed. Members of the board were also excited about the nationally heralded *Heart Strings* program and were eager to bring it to Memphis to help raise money and garner public attention. The board approved \$5,000 to do this, which the Memphis AIDS Coalition agreed to match.

By this time, a new board had been elected, including most of the



Peter Barrosse, 1987. Photo credit: Larry Kuzniewski/*Memphis Magazine*.

former officers in the same positions as the year before, including Tommy Stewart as President. One board member was removed from the board for having missed more than three meetings without an excuse, a policy which the board was strict in enforcing. Angie Dagastino was newly elected to the board and, with Rita Underhill, planned to attend a Pediatric AIDS Conference. Dagastino also worked on several ATEAC grant proposals. A state education grant, due in August was supposed to enable ATEAC to reach out to new underserved populations, and the board discussed ways to increase outreach to Asians and people with low-level reading skills. The fact that African-Americans did not seem to have been discussed as a target group seems significant given that statistics indicated that this was one group where the virus was continuing to rapidly spread. AIDS among women was also rising, and Diane Butler and Vicki Ford Freedland were trying to set up a Women

With AIDS support group in conjunction with the MED.

During the summer and into the fall, ATEAC's board and volunteers worked on their largest AIDS fundraiser attempted to date. The traveling revue known as *Heart Strings*, underwritten by the Design Industry Foundation for AIDS, was produced in Memphis on Sept. 25, 1989, and was attended by 1,200 people. Approximately \$40,000 was raised, and according to Vincent Astor, it was one of the most memorable events of the decade. About the same time, Tommy Stewart announced that the owners of the rights to the Miss Gay Memphis Pageant had assigned them to Stewart, and that through 1995, the annual proceeds would be used to benefit

ATEAC. The pageant featured some of Memphis's most talented drag queens.

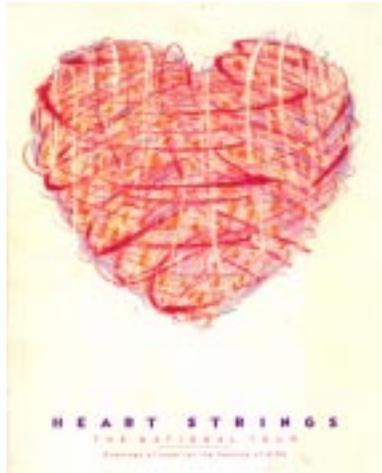
Another important event that fall was the hiring of Angie Dagastino as the agency's first program coordinator. Dagastino, whose experience included directorship of the YWCA's Wife Abuse Shelter and working at the health department's HIV Counseling and Testing Center, was hired to work 20 hours a week on fundraising, grant writing, and staff and volunteer supervision. She wasted no time, submitting a grant proposal to the U. S. Conference of Mayors for an AIDS video project, and beginning weekly staff meetings, internal assessments and six-

month work plans. In October she reported that 625 ATEAC brochures had been distributed to social service agencies and copies of a Directory of Services for PWAs were distributed at hospitals and the health department. In November, she recommended that the board look at housing alternatives other than Alpha House, which was in disrepair and whose landlord was uncooperative.

There were other signs of progress. As a result of ATEAC's previous dialogues with the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department, the new AIDS testing release forms now clearly defined the difference between "anonymous" and "confidential" testing. The board started an HIV+/PWA social outreach

group on a trial basis at the Gay Community Center. In November, ATEAC staff made 12 presentations to 190 people, logged 418 phone calls to the office and AIDS Switchboard, wrote three grants and coordinated 15 volunteer buddies working with 12 PWAs. Then more good news arrived. The state approved ATEAC's education grant request of \$49,200—an amount double the previous year's grant. Part of the money was to be used to hire a part-time volunteer coordinator.

In November 1989, Tommy Stewart, president of ATEAC since its founding in 1985, resigned citing personal and business reasons. Under



Heart Strings logo from 1989 publicity catalogue, courtesy of Sandra Palazolo.

his leadership ATEAC had grown from an all-volunteer group to one with three paid staff and an annual budget close to \$100,000. In the early years Stewart had often been the first ATEAC representative a PWA saw. According to Angie Dagastino, Stewart was a "powerful personality whose attitude was 'people in our community are not going to ignore this issue.'" She added that

Stewart "endured a lot of hostility." ATEAC's vice president, Rick Bray, took over the duties of president. By the end of 1989, Marty Katz, also resigned, and volunteer Dottie Jones took on the task of bookkeeping until new staff could be hired.

During the 1989 holiday season, PWAs were remembered by groups such as Aphrodite which distributed food baskets to those in need. In December, the Waggettes held a benefit for ATEAC at Barbara's, and students at Vollintine Elementary School raised and donated \$340 for PWA services. Prescott Memorial Baptist Church's AIDS Ministry Group, which had grown from five to 15 members, helped make hospital and home visits to PWAs, filling food pantry orders, performing cleaning, laundry, yard work and providing transportation as well as attending funerals.

As the year drew to an end, the ATEAC board discussed bringing The Names Project Quilt to Memphis. The

quilt had galvanized national attention on AIDS and had drawn a strong emotional response from the public. It was, however, an expensive proposition, expected to cost up to \$7,000.

Board member Peter Barrosse had continued work on behalf of ATEAC although he was increasingly disabled by AIDS. In early October he requested ATEAC's financial assistance to purchase

a wheelchair, but he died by the end of the month, on Oct. 28, 1989, at the Regional Medical Center. He was survived by his mother, Mary Barrosse.



Peter Barrosse's quilt panel. Photo credit: FFL.

According to a report by Angie Dagastino given to the ATEAC board, by November 1989 there had been a cumulative total of 359 reported AIDS cases and 198 AIDS-related deaths in Shelby County. Dagastino recalled, "People were being diagnosed with AIDS and were dying in 6 months. AZT was new, and was the only treatment option available." The high cost of AZT angered many—a year's supply for one person cost about \$7,000. The manufacturer, Burroughs Wellcome, was accused of price gouging and in September cut the cost of the drug by 20 percent. In October, a second drug for the treatment of AIDS, dideoxyinosine (ddI), was made available, even though only preliminary tests had been completed.

Chapter II

ATEAC 1990-1994

The Start of a Difficult Decade

As 1990 began, Alpha House was closed at the request of ATEAC's landlord, after only two years of operation. The PWA who lived in the house was reported to have obtained benefits and a new place to live. Briefly, Angie Dagastino conferred with MIFA about getting a HUD house to take its place, but other demands for service took precedence. It would be two years before another attempt at housing PWAs in Memphis would be made. During this time keeping PWAs housed and helping those who were sick with daily needs were mainly addressed by ATEAC, other social service and health agencies, and individuals through personal aid and direct financial assistance.

That January, ATEAC's staff received 352 calls and saw 40 walk-in clients seeking services at its office in the carriage house on Melrose. A new ATEAC staff member, Jack Woods, began working as volunteer coordinator. There were many plans in the making, including the establishment of a new HIV+ social group, called "A Positive Atmosphere," which held a potluck dinner at the MGLCC on February 10. The event was a success, with 36 people attending, and a second meeting was planned for April.

Still looking for ways to build public awareness about AIDS, ATEAC's board began working with the Memphis AIDS Coalition to bring The Names

Project Quilt to Memphis, and committed \$3,500 to the project. The annual AIDS auction was also coming up at the Hilton Inn on March 24 with \$4,500 approved for expenses. Through the first quarter of 1990 financial and other pressures on the board and staff increased as the number of AIDS cases exceeded 400, and more and more PWAs sought ATEAC's services and assistance. Cash shortfalls meant that Angie Dagastino and Rita Underhill had to forego being paid for a few weeks until after the March auction. The shortfall was attributed to the heavy demand for PWA assistance, which tripled in late 1989 and early 1990.

About this time, ATEAC's fiscal year was changed to July 1 through June 30, and the annual meeting was moved to July. The board decided that the current officers would serve until the end of the new fiscal year, including Rick Bray as acting president. Angie Dagastino continued working on organizational issues such as clarification of the chain of command, volunteer supervision, program evaluation and the issue of "firing" volunteers. She met with Shelby County Health Department officials to develop a better referral system and with staff at the United Way, who for the first time agreed that ATEAC could apply for United Way funding in the fall. Dagastino also met with the PWA group whose facilitator, George Newton, had recently resigned, and with

buddy group volunteers to discuss their needs. In March, Ralph B. Chumbley, facilitator of the buddy program, resigned for personal reasons, but in his resignation letter complimented the agency on the direction it was headed. By then, there were 49 trained buddies, with 13 assigned to PWAs.

The new educational program called "Stop AIDS," funded by the Tennessee Dept. of Health and Environment through a CDC grant, was being rolled out. It was designed to target gay men initially and then was to be broadened to other at-risk groups. Training for the model, which involved the use of volunteers to lead small group discussions for at-risk individuals, was provided in April 1990. The model stressed empowerment of individuals to "take personal action about AIDS prevention."

The staff and board were also working on grant opportunities and were meeting with various groups including the Community Foundation, the American Health Centers Programs of Tennessee, the Hemophilia Society, and representatives of the American Psychological Association (APA), who were planning an AIDS conference for Memphis in July 1990. The APA conference was to provide training to promote clinical competence in responding to the psycho-social needs of PWAs as well as to "promote linkages between organizations and individuals critical to the development of comprehensive systems of AIDS-related care."

Heavy client demands continued, with 50 walk-ins in March (including six

new clients) and 376 calls to ATEAC and the AIDS switchboard. In response, at its March 12 meeting, a resolution was passed by the ATEAC board regarding its role and ability to provide services to PWAs and those with asymptomatic HIV, essentially giving the right to staff to

"withhold some services to a few in order to provide as much service as possible, to the many." The agency's prior year financial statement was also published in *Gaze* in March and showed an income of \$12,857 in the PWA fund, close to \$39,000 in the general fund and about \$5,500 in state funds. The donations to the PWA fund included AIDS Awareness Nights at bars, the annual auction, and special events at bars and clubs. The single largest contributor to the fund was Trixie Thunderpussy, who raised thousands of dollars in a single benefit for the agency.

est contributor to the fund was Trixie Thunderpussy, who raised thousands of dollars in a single benefit for the agency.

In April 1990, still struggling to meet the many requests for assistance, the staff asked the board to revisit the guidelines for providing financial assistance to PWAs. Demand for assistance had grown from four PWAs in January of 1989 to 50 PWAs in April 1990, with amounts ranging from \$30 to \$1,500. The staff noted as well that the nature of PWAs was changing to "a larger population of IV drug users and men who do not identify as gay although they engage in sex with men. We are concerned that this is becoming more of an issue within the gay community." In addition, the staff had more "repeat" clients and wanted advice on how to deal with those suspected of "abusing the assistance that ATEAC has provided."



ATEAC logo,
Gaze, 1989.

The resulting revised guidelines for providing financial assistance to PWAs emphasized housing and limited rental/utility assistance to \$300 per year (later increased to \$750 and expanded to include mortgage assistance) and medical assistance up to \$500. Annual assistance might also be given for transportation, insurance (\$300) and telephone service. If a person was employed they would be provided with a loan instead of cash award. Awards would not be given for funerals, auto, food and other forms of assistance.

The pressing need for more money to assist PWAs led to a flurry of fundraising activities in the spring and summer of 1990, including an "Afternoon Nibbles and High Tea" at the MGLCC featuring Miss Victoria Endora, Lady Astor and Mr. Leather Tennessee, Vance Reger, and an S&M (Salvage and Miscellaneous) Auction by Tsarus at the Pipeline. By late spring, ATEAC was financially better off with income from *Heart Strings* coming in at \$15,500, and the fourth annual AIDS auction at the Memphis Hilton Inn bringing in \$16,500. This windfall was the board's impetus to offer Angie Dagastino a full-time position as Executive Director, effective April 1, 1990, through March 31, 1991, "funds permitting." New guidelines were also issued to clarify board versus staff functions.

Upcoming board elections prompted Dagastino to write a memo to board members in May reminding them that "if we are truly to be representative of the community ... we must bring minority members onto the Board through direct action." There were at



Benefit advertisement from *Gaze*, 1990.

least three board vacancies and the board unanimously agreed to work on identifying prospective minority board members before the July 9 annual meeting. Although there were few African-Americans involved in the agency's management, there were a growing number of women, including Dottie Jones, Wendy Smith coordinating the buddy support group, and Dr. Lisa Alex, who together with Sloan Young from North East Mental Health was facilitating the PWA Support Group.

At its June meeting the board approved new bylaws and allocated \$3,000 to be spent on establishing an ATEAC Food Pantry for PWAs as part of the Memphis Food Bank system. Up to that time, ATEAC had referred those needing food to other agencies. Darrell

Bowers and Phillip Chambliss, both PWAs who worked as ATEAC volunteers, were to run the food pantry. It was also reported that in the previous fiscal year, July 1, 1989, to June 30, 1990, ATEAC had provided \$5,790 for rental assistance, \$656 for financial assistance, \$625 for medical needs, \$3,138 for utility assistance, and about \$1,175 on clothing and other forms of assistance.

At the July annual meeting, Rick Bray presided as incoming president, and four new board members were nominated: Carolyn Tisdale, Phillip Gray, Kerrel Ard, and J. J. Jones. Dr. Lisa Alex was nominated to the board from the floor. Tisdale appears to have been the second African-American elected to ATEAC's board following Joe Calhoun who served in 1985.

By August, attendance at the Thursday PWA support group led by Dr. Lisa Alex and Sloan Young had quadrupled from five to 22, and Kim Moss and Desi Owen were leading a Sunday group. ATEAC's volunteer coordinator, Jack Woods, resigned and Phillip Chambliss was hired to replace him. A Financial Development Committee was working on personnel issues such as job descriptions, policies and procedures.

In the fall ATEAC sponsored an AIDS walk in Overton Park to commemorate the death of Peter Barrosse. The walk, held on Oct. 28, was to benefit the PWA fund and was organized by Mark Whitehead. That evening, "A World of Passion," a benefit by Dabbles Hair Company, was at the Omni New Daisy on Beale Street and featured "a celebration of colorful fashion and unique hair design." The walk was attended by 75

people and raised \$1,800 and the "World" event raised \$2,400.

Another fundraiser for the PWA fund that fall was the production of playwright and New York AIDS activist Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* at Theatre Works. The expenses for the play were underwritten by donations, with all admissions going to the PWA fund. Kramer was a co-founder of the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York and had been an early critic of the gay community's response to the epidemic. A number of local gay talents were part of the cast, including Vincent Astor and Jimmy Gray.

A New Home, New Blood

AIDS continued to take its toll on American lives. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than 100,000 had died in the epidemic during the 1980s. Gay and bisexual men and intravenous drug users continued to be at highest risk, accounting for more than 86 percent of AIDS-related deaths nationally. Tennessee ranked 29th in the nation with 1,393 AIDS cases reported. Of the state's total reported cases, 382 or 27 percent were reported in 1990.

Still scrambling for funds to keep up with the needs of a growing pool of clients, ATEAC was the frequent beneficiary of fundraisers sponsored on almost a monthly basis by community organizations, small and large. A skating party was held on February 23, 1991, by the MGLCC for ATEAC, and in late March Theatre Memphis produced the play *You*

Gotta Have Friends with the \$25 ticket price benefiting ATEAC's PWA direct assistance program. The play starred well-known local performers Carla Thomas and Joyce Cobb and brought in \$3,150. A benefit performance of the off-Broadway comedy *Greater Tuna* was also held at Playhouse on the Square in late May, with audience members coming dressed as their favorite Tuna characters.

ATEAC's 5th Annual Auction for AIDS was held April 6th, 1991, at the Memphis Hilton and was billed as one of the two major in-house fundraisers. Auction co-chairs Allen Cook and Mark Whitehead tried to come up with "new twists to keep the Auction fresh," and add "entertainment value." The auction netted \$20,000, about the same as the previous year, with sponsorship provided by Regency Travel, and offered items such as Broadway show tickets and trips to Key West and San Francisco.

In June ATEAC completed its first major audit. Angie Dagastino told *Triangle Journal News*, "With the audit under our belt, we are in a better position to apply for and receive additional grants to provide services." The audit showed ATEAC spent \$96,588 in operations in FY 1990, of which \$37,108 was from the education grant from the Tennessee Dept. of Health and Environment. A total of \$34,054 was spent on direct assistance to PWAs, most of which was

from private donations. The PWA fund was augmented by money from the general fund and Rick Bray reminded *TJN* readers, "The PWA fund has had a shortfall every year since we've been in existence. The need is very great." Dagastino also announced that ATEAC had applied for city and county funds to hire a caseworker.

A major transition took place in the summer of 1991 when ATEAC moved from the carriage house behind St. James Episcopal Church (which was closing) to a new home at St. John's United Methodist Church on Peabody. Vincent Astor and others at ATEAC approached St. John's pastor, Frank McRae, for donated space to house a counseling

service. To McRae, "It seemed a natural event. Why not? There were many others using donated church space." St. John's administrative board approved the request. The move was made in July and an open house at the new office was combined with the annual meeting on August 26.

Around the time of the move and over the next six months, several staff changes took place. Rita Underhill left and Anette Chaney was hired as education director. In June, Vincent Astor became ATEAC's business manager and education specialist. Terry Orgel joined as part-time case manager and Darrell



Dottie Jones (left) and ATEAC's first Executive Director, Angie Dagastino (right), in 2005. Photo credit: FFL.

Bowers began managing the food pantry.

Soon after starting work, Chaney began submitting a series of articles to *Triangle Journal News*. These included fairly explicit articles on the risk of HIV transmission through various sexual practices. In one article, she described an AIDS Awareness Night where the ATEAC staff distributed "Men Aloud", "a set of explicit sex-positive brochures" at local bars. She observed, "More men read these brochures than read our state-funded, less explicit brochures." Angie Dagastino later observed that ATEAC's explicit approach to prevention education was very different from the educational approach of most AIDS agencies today: "We're not in people's faces any more. Funding sources no longer let us do and say what they used to. We used to hold groups where we gave specific sexual instruction—'This is what you can do to be safe; this is what is not safe to do; this is how you clean your sex toys.' Today funders (the federal government) tell you what words you can use, how to say it."

Other groups besides ATEAC were also distributing HIV prevention information. Free HIV forums targeted to minorities were held in October 1991 by BWMT and B-GLAD. Nevertheless, in December, a front page article in *Triangle Journal News* noted the lack of minority participation in AIDS research—only 15 percent of participants in clinical AIDS trials were minorities. Magic Johnson's announcement that he had AIDS late in 1991 brought mixed reactions. It was seen as good news that Converse was going to create an AIDS awareness campaign with Johnson. On the other hand,

many criticized Johnson for stressing he was not gay.

By this time, ATEAC's staff and board were consciously trying to become more "mainstream" in order to serve an increasingly diverse clientele that included women, children, non-gays and African-Americans. But in October, the board was caught up in public hearings and a debate about the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment's proposal to end anonymous AIDS testing. The state held hearings, and in December announced that the names of all HIV-positive individuals would have to be reported so that the spread of HIV/AIDS could be more closely monitored. ATEAC's president Rick Bray told the *Commercial Appeal*, "We think it is the wrong way to approach this. It will drive more people away from being tested."

Towards the end of 1991, *An Event in Three Acts: Heart Strings, the AIDS Memorial Quilt and You*, was making its national tour and a major drive began to bring the production to Memphis. Allen Cook and Rebecca Locke, president of the Memphis AIDS Coalition, co-chaired the effort. As plans unfolded, 230 volunteers signed up and 12 committees were formed. The group hoped to raise more than \$100,000 to bring the production to Memphis in April 1992. Meanwhile, smaller benefits continued to bring in desperately needed funds, including *A World of Passion* in November 1991, sponsored by Dabbles Hair Company and the Flower Market.

New Name, New Place, and Changing Leadership

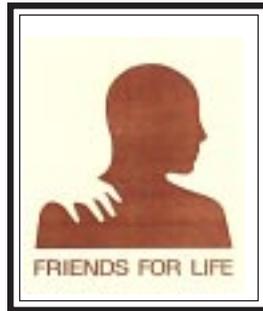
In January 1992, ATEAC's executive director, Angie Dagastino, resigned. During her two years with the agency, Dagastino transformed ATEAC from a grassroots organization into a full-fledged social services agency, and helped increase the agency's budget from \$60,000 to more than \$100,000.

As Dagastino was leaving, ATEAC's President, Rick Bray, announced that the agency had been awarded \$5,000 from the city of Memphis to help fund a part-time case manager position, and another \$7,500 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for emergency shelter, utilities and food for PWAs. Although the grant amounts were relatively small, Bray observed that the awards showed that local government was beginning to recognize ATEAC's role and capacity, adding that ATEAC had received state grants for more than five years for AIDS education, including the current grant for \$50,000. Later in the year the city gave another \$4,200 emergency shelter grant to the agency for homeless prevention.

ATEAC also adopted a new name early in 1992, becoming Friends For Life—HIV Resources. The name was inspired by a new logo, the result of a design contest. According to Allen Cook, the logo struck "the proper chord" with the review group. ATEAC's name, and especially the word "committee" had

become confusing, said Cook, since "We're an agency—like MIFA, Red Cross, and Salvation Army are agencies. We provide educational, financial and counseling services and that wasn't being communicated by our name." The new name was phased in along with the logo designed by Terry Griffin, a senior at the Memphis College of Art.

With the departure of Angie Dagastino, the Friends For Life (FFL) staff now consisted of Vincent Astor, Terry Orgel, Anette Chaney, and Darrell Bowers. The staff had quickly outgrown the space at St. John's and sick clients were sometimes unable to climb stairs. Frank McRae, the pastor at St. John's, saw Astor



FFL logo, 1992.

talking with a client on the church's back steps one day, and decided that something needed to be done. McRae began to work on acquiring a nearby building where FFL's staff would have offices to meet privately with clients, and the agency could expand.

At that time FFL had around 300 case files, though they weren't all active. Orgel recalled that "everything was crisis-management." PWAs "showed up on the doorstep with a suitcase and no place to live," clients would drop by to talk, and hospitals would call asking for help in locating housing. If the individual didn't have a drug problem, there was often no place for them to go—it was easier to find housing if they were addicted to drugs. Fortunately, some gay men owned rooming houses where they would let FFL clients live, and Orgel would make the rounds periodically to



St. John's United Methodist Church housed ATEAC from 1991 to 1995. Photo credit: C. Marcinko, 2005.

The Church and AIDS

In the early 1990s, as AIDS deaths became more widespread, many churches and religious groups became involved in the effort to help PWAs. Prescott Baptist Church, which began providing support for PWAs early on, had a buddy program and provided other assistance as well. First Congregational Church became involved in supporting AIDS events, and an AIDS ministry was opened by Agape New Life Church at 405 N. Cleveland. The priest at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Father Joe Pfeiffer, also reached out to support Catholic PWAs, and in 1992 began prayer services and a "Book of Names" for those who had died of AIDS. According to Don Lilley, Bishop Edmond Browning influenced Calvary and other Episcopal churches to get involved at a national conference in Washington, D.C., when Browning challenged church leaders to say, "My church has AIDS." By the late 1980s Doug Bailey at Calvary Episcopal Church was offering a regular healing service for PWAs, their families, friends and partners.

For some who had once been alienated by church attitudes towards homosexuality, this was a turning point. Before this, Lilley said, "I didn't go to church. I could pray, but I didn't have a religious community...I didn't go until 1990 when [Calvary] asked me to join a committee and opened their arms to me. I found out that's where I needed to be." However, controversies continued, such as one that broke out in the early 1990s when Tennessee Episcopal Bishop Alex Dickson opposed the formation of a Memphis Chapter of Integrity, a group that advocated that the church sanction same sex unions. Many in the church continued to be divided on this and other gay rights issues.

check on them. She also went to jails and prisons once or twice a month to see prisoners with HIV/AIDS, attend parole hearings and help parolees find places to live.

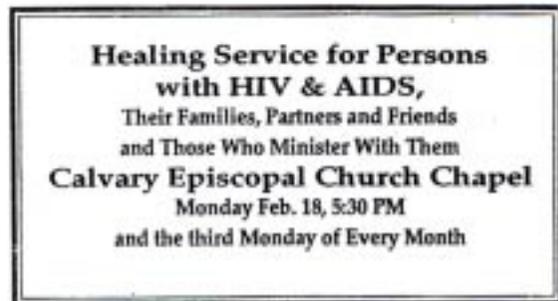
As the staff worked to meet the growing demands of clients, the FFL board was seeking to renew itself. An article in the May issue of *Triangle Journal News* headlined "FFL Seeks Board Members" invited nominees for the June annual meeting. The board was also looking for a new Executive Director and hoped to have someone by fall with experience in fundraising, grant writing and program management. At the August board meeting the slate of new members included Jim Browne, Wade Bryant, Paul Kelly, Sandra Palazolo, Michael Pozgar, Dennie Wade and Margot Wilkins. Allen Cook and Chris Miller were re-elected to the board and the new officers were Cook as president, Carolyn Tisdale vice president, Paul Kelly secretary, and Sandra Palazolo treasurer.

In August, FFL's annual report published in *Triangle Journal News* showed that in the preceding fiscal year ending June 30, 1992, the agency had spent \$31,572 in direct assistance to PWAs. The assistance provided included rent (47%), utilities (19%), medicine (6%), food (10%), clothing/personal (3%) and other assistance (15%). The majority of funds were used to help clients remain in existing housing. In order to meet client needs, the agency used about \$5,000 from its general fund. Terry Orgel recalled that during this period the majority of PWAs she saw were gay, but increasingly, clients were women with children. FFL president

Allen Cook frankly stated, "Our requests for assistance far outweigh our ability to provide it."

Immediately after the installment of the new board, FFL moved to new offices at 321 Bellevue, on Sept. 19, 1992. The move had been made possible by Frank McRae and the generosity of St. John's congregation which purchased the building. The rent was free and FFL was only responsible for utilities, interior upkeep and grounds. From two small offices on the second floor of the church's education building, the agency and its staff could now expand into 10 rooms, including a reception area, individual offices, interview rooms, storage and a space for the food pantry. For the first time, support groups—which had been meeting at the Visiting Nurse Association and other locations—could meet at FFL. Volunteers from Federal Express helped clean up the new building and the move was accomplished in a day. FFL's education specialist and office manager Vincent Astor said, "It's an answer to a prayer."

Soon after the move was accomplished, in early October, Mike Coleman took the helm as FFL's new executive director. About the same time, Jim McCarty was hired as education



Church service notice from *Triangle Journal News*.



FFL moved to 321 Bellevue in 1992. Photo credit: C. Marcinko, 2005.

director, replacing Anette Chaney who resigned in August. McCarty's main role was implementing the education grant from the state. With a new building, board, president, staff and executive director, the agency seemed at last ready to grow to meet the needs of its clients, and to seek additional resources and community support.

Feast for Friends

The story of Feast for Friends began soon after ATEAC moved to St. John's United Methodist Church. A young man named Derrick Moore had moved to Memphis from Atlanta and became the "buddy" of Darrell Bowers, FFL's peer counselor and food pantry coordinator. Moore told Bowers about a congregational meal program he had seen in Atlanta, and the two discussed starting something similar in Memphis as a way to bring PWAs and their families and friends together for a relaxed and friendly meal. Angie Dagastino recalled that there was another important purpose the two had

in mind as well: "It was outreach to people who were alone because their families had disowned them because they were gay or had AIDS. It would be the one good meal some of them had all week."

Inspired and moved by the idea, Bowers wrote a proposal and approached St. John's pastor, Frank McRae, to see if the church's Fellowship Hall and kitchen could be used for the program. McRae recalled that at first the proposal met with some opposition from members of the church who feared that AIDS could be spread through church-owned food service items. A recently-released study had suggested that the disease might be transmitted through the saliva of infected persons. But McRae had attended an urban ministry seminar in Atlanta, where he had seen a similar congregational meal program. Dr. Scott Morris of the Church Health Center also assured him that there was no evidence that HIV was transmitted by saliva, and that there was little danger. St. John's board subsequently approved the use of the church and its facilities for Feast for Friends.

Moore, Bowers and Terry Orgel



Notice from *Triangle Journal News*, 1995.

attended classes at the health department to be certified in food handling, and then rounded up a group of volunteers, including Darrell Bowers' mother, Martha. Initially, the food was provided from the FFL food pantry, but it was soon supplemented by the Memphis Food Bank's Round-Up program, which collected excess food from area restaurants. Orgel remembered the food arrived at St. John's around three in the afternoon for the bimonthly dinners. Because it was donated by different restaurants, the staff never knew what it would

be, and when it arrived, they rushed to the office to type and copy the menus.

Family members also started bringing desserts, and later on private donations were used to buy food and the meals were cooked on site. Feast for Friends became, in Orgel's words, "definitely more than a dinner. This meal was served to clients by waiters on tables set with tablecloths, flowers and candles. An atmosphere of dignity and respect was created that made people want to be involved."

Feast for Friends was Darrell Bowers' passion. At the first anniversary of the dinner, Darrell, who had AIDS and

had been hospitalized, made a surprise appearance. Frank McRae remembered, "When he arrived, everyone just stood and cheered. He was an inspiration, because of the person he was, and his spirit." Darrell Bowers died two weeks later.

Feast for Friends flourished thanks to many dedicated volunteers, among them Martha Bowers, Darrell's mother, who has continued to work in the kitchen and support the program over the years. FFL staff members like Butch Valentine and Ed Brandon brought additional enthusiasm and ideas

that helped the program grow. Dozens of individuals have supported the program over the years financially and through their work, including Tim Andrews, David Gairhan, Angie Dagastino, Sister Mary Jane Herlik, Dottie Jones, Dr. Marshall Koonce, Frank Cooper, Terry Orgel and Dennie Wade to name just a few. Wade, who had the job of dishwasher, jokingly remarked in a *TJN* story, "When it's my turn to be in charge of one of these, I'm going to call my maid and get her in here." Years later, Feast for Friends continues to be a largely volunteer-run effort, in its original location in the Fellowship Hall of the



Feast for Friends volunteers in 2005, from left: Kelly Fish, Martha Bowers and Kathy Fish. Photo credit: FFL.

Heart Strings, The AIDS Memorial Quilt and You Come to Memphis

The national 35-city tour of *An Event in Three Acts: Heart Strings, The AIDS Memorial Quilt, and You* arrived in Memphis in April 1, 1992, and generated a buzz of excitement. It was the first time that a portion of the quilt was displayed in Memphis, and the performance of a re-vamped version of *Heart Strings*, into an "upbeat AIDS musical production," according to Allen Cook, would "celebrate the heroes of the epidemic—the survivors living with AIDS, the caregivers, and the families." Local groups such as the Lambda Men's Chorus performed, and Rhodes College's gymnasium was the site for 100 panels of the quilt displayed as part of six days of AIDS awareness activities.

The tour was sponsored by the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS and the NAMES Project Foundation, and benefited FFL and the American Red Cross HIV Education Project. According to Vincent Astor, the event eventually involved 400 volunteers and drew an attendance of 1,000. Astor described the quilt as "bittersweet in its brightly colored solemnity" and "something hallowed."



Above, Anette Chaney with ATEAC quilt panel. Above right, logo for *An Event in 3 Acts* from the promotional catalogue, courtesy of Sandra Palazolo.



Inspired by the quilt and all of those who came to see it, Astor went on to visit Washington, D.C., in October when the entire quilt was displayed on the national mall.

church-with-a-heart on Peabody Avenue.
World's Greatest Party...Party...

In 1992 one of the most popular and successful fundraisers in FFL's revelrous history was conceived and organized by Dennie Wade and Mark Whitehead. Originally called "High Heels, High Hair, and High Times," it was planned as an enormous Halloween party for 500 or more people. In fact, it exceeded all expectations and drew 864 party-goers to Beale Street Landing for an evening of music, dancing and fun. Tarot card and palm readers, a best-decorated table contest, and a costume contest won by two women dressed "in body paint and little else" were part of the entertainment. The best table was possibly Nancy Fletcher's 101 Dalmatians, with dog bowls and guests in spotted costumes. Nancy was



Party-goers cavort at a "High Heels and High Hats" party. All photos this page: FFL.

reported to have arrived at the party dressed as Cruella DeVille with her dogs (table guests) on leashes.

Due to its huge success, the Halloween party became an annual event which in many ways epitomized FFL's money-raising philosophy, articulated at the time by Allen Cook:

"We like to stage fundraising events that are not only fun and profitable, but celebrate life and involve the community." About \$25,000 was raised by the Halloween party, topping even the annual auction.

But the "high times" were just beginning. Through to the end of the year, no less than five other events were held to benefit FFL including *That's Entertainment* at WKRB to purchase Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, the Miss Gay Memphis Pageant at Rumples, "A Leap of Faith," art show by Tim Andrews at



Jackie Thompson belts out a song for the audience at the 2003 Fabulous February concert.



Working Space Gallery and the third annual *World of Passion*, entitled Love is the Fashion: AIDS Telethon for Life. During December's AIDS WEEK activities, a Music-AIDS benefit for FFL was also held at Zinnie's, featuring three bands.

Partly as a result of its emphasis on fundraising events throughout the 1990s, FFL gained a reputation as a party-throwing organization. Jan Young of the Assisi Foundation recalled, "They were the big party group—they had great parties and personalities. Their mission was sometimes

lost in that perception, and although they certainly cared about offering programs to clients, sometimes the focus got lost in the drive to prepare for the next big event." However, Young also observed that "it was a major accomplishment for FFL to be able to transcend the perceptual biases and demographic barriers to gain engagement and support from well-respected members of the community. They might have done that by throwing

great parties and by making people feel good because they wrote a check, but they did it."

Another Year of Loss

HIV infections in Tennessee declined among gays in 1992, but continued to rise among minorities, women and heterosexuals. During the year Shelby County saw 650 new cases of HIV: 379 among black men, 111 among black women, 148 among white



Lanny Phillips' quilt panel. Photo credit: FFL

men and 8 in white women. The new AIDS cases in the county numbered 196, with the majority, 106, among blacks. One of those who died in 1992 was Renee Williams, a "beloved entertainer and member of the board of Friends For Life" who died of complications of AIDS on March 6 at age 41. Williams was a glamorous brunette "who worked tirelessly to raise money for AIDS" and at her 40th birthday party raised more than \$20,000.

Lanny Phillips was another Memphian who died of AIDS-related illness in October 1992 at his Midtown home. Phillips' partner Tom Roden, his family and others attended a celebration of his life at Trinity Community Church. Phillips was a registered nurse and was 38 years old.

AIDS Switchboard
Information
Counseling
Services
458-AIDS

ATEAC
Aid to End AIDS Committee
689 Meirose
Memphis, TN 38104

Space for this ad was donated by the Triangle Journal News as a public service

Notice for ATEAC AIDS Switchboard, *TJN* 1991.



A Halloween Party to Benefit Friends for Life

Saturday, October 31, 1992

9:00 pm - 1:00 am

Beale Street Landing

(Beale and Front St.)

featuring live

BLACK WIDOW

Costume Contest Grand Prize

Six days and five nights in Key West, Florida Travel and Accomodations

\$15 admission benefits Friends For Life

Tables for 10 available for a \$200 donation

Groups are encouraged to buy a table and decorate it for the Table Decorating Contest.

Tickets available at

Meristem, 930 S. Cooper

Star Search Video, 1411 Poplar

Mid-Town Hair, 1926 Madison

Call Mark Whitehead at 725-4311 for more information

"High Heels, High Hats and High Times" advertisement in *Triangle Journal News*, 1991.

Fighting for the Mainstream

FFL's new executive director, Michael Coleman, who was hired in October 1992, was African-American. FFL's president, Allen Cook, was among those who had previously served the organization in many capacities, including serving on the board and working on some of FFL's most successful fundraisers. Cook was also co-publisher of *Triangle Journal News* and was a leader in a number of gay organizations in Memphis and around the state.

Although Cook and other capable leaders had guided the agency since its beginnings, the changing demographics and growth of FFL's client base had convinced many of those involved in the organization that it was essential for FFL to grow beyond its gay roots into more of a mainstream social service agency. In doing so, the board and staff needed to become more diverse and capable of delivering services to a varied clientele. As part of this effort, Michael Coleman and the board began reaching out to African-American churches, and new AIDS ministries were formed in several congregations.

Equally important, the agency needed to begin to seek funds from local government, foundations and corporations. Without greater access to funds, FFL's ability to meet the increasing demand for services through private fundraising alone was unlikely to be sufficient or sustainable. Federal cuts in AIDS funding between 1991 and 1993 had resulted in a 50 percent reduction in FFL's state education grant. Many hoped the incoming Clinton administra-

tion would come through on its promise for more AIDS funding.

The move towards diversifying FFL's board proceeded slowly. At the annual meeting on July 14, 1993, at the American Red Cross, there were eight vacancies to be filled on the 15-member board. Four new members came on: Fred Dorse, Cleora Fears-Tucker, Vickie Ford and Carolyn Bryant, and all four were African-American. Four members re-elected to the board included Kerrel Ard, Paul Kelly, Margot Wilkins and Carolyn Tisdale. The officers were Allen Cook as president, Carolyn Tisdale vice president, Paul Kelly secretary, and Sandra Palazolo treasurer.

In 1993 the FFL board and staff geared up to apply for federal funding administered through the city's Division of Housing and Community Development. Initially FFL was not recommended for funds because "it received funding from other sources." Presumably, this referred to state funding or to the fundraisers held by the gay community. However, an amendment was presented by City Councilman Myron Lowery which proposed cutting other funded agencies by 3.4 percent in order to provide \$50,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to FFL for additional case managers and a volunteer coordinator to help manage the 200 volunteers FFL used to provide services. According to Michael Coleman, at that time, FFL was serving about 500 HIV-infected clients with two case managers. The additional funds would bring the agency's budget up to about \$175,000. The funding was finally approved after a successful lobbying

effort by FFL staff, volunteers, board members and members of the local Memphis chapter of ACT-UP.

Behind the City Council funding battle another fight was taking place between FFL and Memphis ACT-UP. ACT-UP had used FFL's name in flyers that were aimed at getting the City Council to increase FFL funding. Allen Cook was concerned that the apparent affiliation between the two groups "would polarize those in a decision-making capacity," and said in *Triangle Journal News*, "Friends For Life is not a political organization. We view ACT-UP as a very political organization with an agenda that does not quite mesh with ours. Our styles are very different." In response, ACT-UP members accused Cook of being "un-professional" in his dealings with them. ACT-UP had only been in existence in Memphis for a few months, though the national organization had been formed in the mid-1980s by Larry Kramer, the New York playwright and AIDS activist.

Vincent Astor left FFL at the end of 1992 when the state education grant funding his position ended. By the fall of 1993, FFL's staff numbered five, including executive director Michael Coleman, a new education director, Virginia Stallworth, client services director Terry Orgel, case manager Nancy Hoskins, and administrative assistant Sharon Carter. An agency newsletter, *Among Friends*, was published in January 1993 and included articles from president Allen Cook and other members of the staff. Terry Orgel, now Client Services Director, described greater inter-agency collaboration, including some client services funding from MIFA, as well

as the creation of a support group for African-Americans, a grief support group and a group for children of PWAs.

Still Having Fun Raising Funds

Money raised through special events continued to be critical to FFL's capacity to deliver direct services to clients, and 1993 continued the successes of previous years. Since the 1970s, the bar scene, cruising, and entertainment provided by drag shows had been important aspects of gay social life in Memphis. Memphis was particularly well-known for its female impersonators who performed locally in drag both in professional and non-professional settings. ATEAC's early auctions and fundraising events featured female and male impersonators in pageants and shows sponsored by bars and other social groups. Perhaps the most successful and long-standing of these was the King and Queen of Hearts, an annual event staged at WKRB and other venues by Jimmy Gray a/k/a Dee Dee Whitaker.

February is traditionally the month for love, and the second King and Queen of Hearts benefit, attended by 250 people at WKRB, raised more than \$1,600 for FFL. The event, hosted by Sharon Wray and organized and orchestrated by Dee Dee Whitaker, gave patrons the chance to vote for their favorite King and Queen. The 1993 winners crowned were Danny Lee and Nat Marquette.

The FFL Auction, held April 4, was once again at the Memphis Hilton, with Allen Cook and Paul Kelly serving as auction co-chairs. This year, the event

was moved to Sunday afternoon and evening to allow things to move at a more "leisurely pace." Among the auction items was a hardcover autographed copy of John Grisham's *The Firm*, with signatures of the film's cast members Tom Cruise, Gene Hackman, Jeanne Tripplehorn, and others. As was customary, admission was only \$5. As it turned out, this was the most successful auction ever, with net proceeds amounting to \$23,500 according to FFL treasurer Sandra Palazolo. The copy of *The Firm* went for \$1,100, and more than 400 people attended.

A 4th of July benefit for FFL held at the Pipeline by the Pipettes and other local performers and surprise guests included a cookout and other holiday festivities. The Mystic Krewe of Aphrodite also produced a benefit that raised more than \$2,500 for FFL's direct services fund in which The Nuns, "a mixed gender specially costumed guest group," brought the house down with two numbers from *Sister Act*—"I Will Follow Him" and "My Guy (God)." Apparently, the act was especially appealing to audience members from Holy Trinity Community Church.

The 1993 "High Heels, High Hats and High Times" Halloween party was held at the Cook Convention Center and \$250 tables were sold to any group willing and able to pay for a front row seat. Paul Kelly, chair of the FFL fundraising committee, expected 1,200 people and hoped to raise more than \$25,000 at the Mid-South's best costume party.

Other holiday fundraisers and events continued up to the end of the year, including World AIDS Day, for which FFL produced its second commemora-

1993
Friends For Life
Auction
For AIDS

ADMISSION
\$5

Visa, Mastercard, and
Discover Cards
Accepted on all
purchases.

Auctioneers
Tom Prestigiacombo
Charles Billings
Bev Hart
Marge Thrasher White
Dennis Phillippi

Sunday, April 4, 1993
4:00 - 8:00 PM
Memphis Airport Hotel Ballroom
2240 Democrat Road

*Trips • Original Art • Antiques • Dinners • Plays
Chandeliers • Appliances • Flowers*

Proceeds benefit the programs of Friends For Life — HIV Resources.
According to IRS rules, purchases made at charity auctions are not deductible as donations.

Notice for the 1993 FFL Auction for AIDS, *TJN* 1993.

tive panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt in memory of those who had died of AIDS in the Memphis area. The 3X6 foot panel was sewn by friends, lovers and family members and displayed at First Congregational Church during its World AIDS Day program. The program drew more than 300 people to hear the Memphis Civic Orchestra and personal testimonies by Tim Andrews, a PWA, and Leanne Kleinmann, who lost her father to AIDS. The event was co-sponsored by First Congregational, FFL, Integrity Memphis and the Memphis AIDS Council on Education (MACE).

At the end of the year, the U. S. Postal Service also recognized World

AIDS Day by issuing a commemorative AIDS stamp.

1993 Statistics and Losses

Although those contracting HIV in Shelby County in 1993 dropped by about 33 percent from the previous year to 432 cases, the number of new AIDS cases rose significantly and more than doubled, to 412. Black men continued to be most affected by HIV/AIDS and accounted for more than half of all new cases from this point forward. Of the others contracting AIDS in 1993, three were children of HIV+ mothers. There were also four transfusion and four hemophilia cases, and 56 cases from heterosexual contact. The number of black women getting AIDS nearly quadrupled, rising from 13 in 1992 to 48 in 1993.

Deaths from AIDS in 1993 increased sharply, rising to 270, the largest number of AIDS-related deaths in any year in Shelby County in the history of the epidemic. Don Lilley, working for the VNA as an IV therapy nurse, remembered it as a very hard year. "In the summer of 1993 I lost 40 patients, nearly two every week. It was overwhelming. At one point I said, 'I just can't do it anymore.' Guys would ask me, 'Will you be with me when I die?' It was something I had to do. I learned a great deal about dying."

One of the better known individuals in the gay community who died was female impersonator Billie Jo Casino (Billy Creasy), who suffered and passed away after a long illness of AIDS complications at the age of 44 on May 27, 1993. A *TJN* article remembering her

said, "She became famous over the years for her rendition of country music songs and for her charm and poise on stage. She leaves a legend and an empty space which can never quite be filled."

Another deeply felt loss was Darrell Bowers, one of the founders of Feast for Friends. Born in 1961, Darrell worked as a bartender at George's on Marshall Street in the late '80s and was diagnosed with AIDS after a near-fatal case of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP). After Peter Barrosse's death in 1989, Darrell had begun to volunteer at ATEAC and "from 1990 to 1993 gave hundreds of talks to groups, hours of phone counseling and was a frequent media representative for PWAs." With Rita Underhill and Phillip Chambliss, he founded the PWA food pantry operated by FFL. Darrell was a member of St. John's United Methodist Church, and his life, according to Frank McRae, was "inspiring and added huge growth to many in the St. John's congregation." About 150 people attended the Feast for Friends holiday dinner at the end of 1993, at which Frank Cooper, Memphis businessman and owner of Amnesia, made a donation to support the dinner program, and requested that any excess funds be given to the Darrell Bowers Memorial fund.

1994—A Rising Tide

On January 7, 1994, the Memphis Chapter of ACT-UP held protests in front of the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department (M/SCHD) demanding more services, anonymous testing and

education on AIDS within the African-American community. According to a report released at the end of October 1993, 73 percent of new cases of HIV in Shelby County were among African-Americans. There was a growing concern among health officials and AIDS service providers that the mounting HIV/AIDS epidemic in the African-American community was just the tip of the iceberg.

In February FFL sponsored an "Eroticizing Safer Sex" workshop at the MGLCC. The program was part of FFL's educational efforts funded through the state and CDC and was a "sex positive" workshop that stressed how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS while maintaining intimacy and eroticism. The workshop was free and open to singles and couples. FFL also co-sponsored a conference titled "Business Responds to AIDS" with the health department, West Tennessee Area Health Education Center, and Memphis AIDS Council for Education (MACE), aimed at educating businesses on how to plan comprehensive HIV workplace programs and policies.

Client services director Terry Orgel's departure early in 1994 left a void at FFL. Two new additional staff members, LaTonya Sallie, an HIV/AIDS edu-

cator, and Stephanie Mellor, volunteer coordinator, came on board. The caseload early that winter approached 600 according to case manager Nancy Hoskins' report, and between January and May, the FFL staff and volunteers gave 52 presentations, held 18 workshops, set up 13 information tables, distributed 3,579 Safer Sex Kits, and took 181 calls on the AIDS hotline. FFL announced a new series of "Seminars for Better Living," which included stress management, relaxation, safer sex, health and nutrition and "Accessing the System: SSI and SSDI" workshops. Other groups were also offering AIDS education and services, including Trinity Community Church, which opened a Wellness Counseling Center at its new location at 1559 Madison Ave. to provide individual, group and couples therapy for people with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases.

With its ever-growing staff and clientele, FFL had outgrown its offices on Bellevue, and by mid-summer, executive director Michael Coleman was seeking a larger space. Two new case workers were expected to join the staff in six months, and Coleman feared that lack of space would jeopardize the funding for the positions. Meanwhile, an



FFL staff members at the Bellevue office in 1994. From left: Kerrel Ard, Sharon Carter, Michael Coleman, Anthony Reed, Stephanie Mellor and Virginia Stallworth. Photo credit: FFL.

FFL advisory board was exploring the concept of an expanded food pantry arrangement that would allow clients to shop and select their own food and hygiene items, rather than simply being handed a sack of groceries. "It's important that clients be allowed to choose," said Bill Andrews, an advisory board member and volunteer, who saw this as a way to support the dignity of PWAs.

The food pantry was being managed by Ed Brandon. Although he was not in full agreement with the "shopping" concept, Brandon, who had a degree in Agricultural Science, was intent on providing the best nutrition possible

to FFL clients. When he arrived at FFL as a PWA and volunteer in April 1994, his initial impression was that "the employees were great, but their situation was pathetic," due to lack of funding and resources. He recalled that "the food pantry was in the shower, which had shelves." Brandon drove his Datsun to the Food Bank each week, completely filled it with food and drove back to the office. Eventually he became a part-time member of the close-knit FFL staff. Brandon said, "Everyone had a personal reason to be there, and that made everyone cohesive. When you or someone else was struggling with illness

or anything that made them a weak link, all the other links would just get stronger."

At the 1994 annual board meeting, four new board members joined FFL: Dr. Marshall Koonce, Yvonne Yetman, R.N., attorney Jim Farris, and Bill Andrews, president of Memphis Scenic. Koonce was a retired rheumatologist. There were many

demands on the organization and staff at this time, which in May was carrying a caseload of 479 clients. The Volunteer Department at FFL had logged 1,889 volunteer hours from January to May, and more volunteers were needed to help



New 1994 FFL board members, from left: Yvonne Yetman, Jim Farris, Bill Andrews and Dr. Marshall Koonce. Photo credit: FFL.

with the Food Pantry, Feast for Friends, AIDS Awareness Nights, support teams, the AIDS Hotline, Speakers Bureau, informational exhibits, newsletter, administrative support, special projects and events, and professional services. The ongoing work included various support groups, plans for expanding the food pantry, the proposed formation of a client advocacy committee, and an upcoming National Night Against AIDS.

The funding scene for AIDS was beginning to change as Federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) and Ryan White CARE Act funding, enacted by Congress in 1990,

finally became available to agencies in Tennessee in 1994. The Regional AIDS Consortium was formed to distribute HOPWA funds, and the Memphis/Shelby County HIV/AIDS Care Consortium, administered by United Way, distributed Ryan White funding. Both consortia were initially chaired by Kim Moss, who was then employed at Midtown Mental Health Center, and included representatives from FFL, Hope House, the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department, Loving Arms and Family Services of the Mid-South. Planning and applications for the coordinated use of the funds began. Over the next few years, FFL received funding from both grants to hire case managers and provide other client services to eligible PWAs.

Events of Notoriety & Originality

FFL's annual AIDS Auction was held on April 10, 1994, at the Cook Convention Center. Live and silent auctions were held, and Tom Prestigiacommo of FM100 was the auction host, accompanied by comedian Dennis Phillippi. The auction co-chairs were Yvonne Yetman and Chris Miller, with Mark Whitehead and Allen Cook providing support. The proceeds that year came to about \$20,000 after expenses. The hot item on the auction block this year was a ticket to a Barbara Streisand concert in Detroit.

Later that year in August, Circuit Playhouse produced an AIDS benefit play, *Marvin's Room*, written by Scott McPherson. Plans for "High Heels, High

Hats and High Times III" were also under way. Billed as a "Night in Hell," the event was at the Youth Building at the Fairgrounds. Attendance was expected to reach 1,000. Matthew Presley and Bill Andrews were given the task of transforming the Youth Building, "what may be one of the ugliest cinder block buildings ever," into something worthy of the event. By early October, 15 host tables at \$500 each had been pre-sold—enough to cover expenses. A \$500 cash prize was given for the best costume, and the event drew 800 revelers and was a spectacular success.

Perhaps the most original fundraiser of 1994 was a "Chicken Shit Contest" sponsored by Memphis Alliance. The event benefited Aloysius Home, a nonprofit organization that had been founded in 1992 to provide supportive housing for PWAs. Open to all, according to an article in *Triangle Journal News (TJN)*, invitations were also sent to the Mayor's office, as well as other local politicians. It took place on the 501 Club's "exquisite patio," and the stars of the show were live chickens. In a game similar to roulette, players laid bets on squares with numbers. Next, a live chicken was released, and the first square the chicken chose to relieve itself on was the winning square. Half the money won went to the players and the other half to Aloysius Home. The *TJN* article concluded, "Remember folks, we have to take care of ourselves, because no one else will. See you on November 6 at 4 p.m. Be there and rent a square!"

Abiding Need

New drugs to treat HIV/AIDS emerged in 1994, but this initially had

little impact on FFL's caseload, which in August stood at 448. In July and August, 250 clients were assisted by the food pantry and 274 people dined at Feast for Friends. Ed Brandon, manager of the food pantry during this time, observed that FFL increasingly had a "systematized" clientele, which due to social stigma, racism, mental illness, poverty and other life problems, were marginalized and used social services agencies to meet their daily needs. In the mid-'90s, Brandon said, FFL was still helping PWAs die with dignity—but new drugs were coming out, and although they were "horrible and made you feel sick," they began to keep people alive longer. The state's health care program for the uninsured, TennCare, paid for these newer drugs, but wouldn't pay for less expensive medicines, so people used their own money to get those. "That's when the food pantry became a long-term program."

Education and outreach continued during the summer of 1994, with 2,635 Safer Sex Kits and 4,922 pieces of written material distributed in bars and other places. FFL was also participating in educational conferences conducted by the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department aimed at reducing drug use among youth, and in a panel called "Straight Talk About Sex." An expanded newsprint version of the FFL newsletter, with a new name, *LifeLine*, premiered in July. Virginia Stallworth, FFL's education director, saw the 8-page tabloid as both an agency newsletter and a way to distribute information of general interest to the HIV+ and gay communities.

During July and August volun-

teers helped distribute an average of 1,200 condoms per month at AIDS Awareness Nights. In gay bars like Amnesia, Club Hideaway, J-Wag's and Pipeline, volunteers continued making one-on-one contact with bar patrons in order to distribute safer sex kits and informational brochures. FFL volunteers also provided AIDS education at the Cooper-Young Festival, the Walk for the Homeless, and the Black Family Reunion Celebration. Anthony Reed, FFL's Feast for Friends Coordinator even solicited the bounty from readers' summer gardens in a *LifeLine* article titled, "How Does Your Garden Grow?" The agency also began to seek donated holiday gifts for children of clients, and an FFL Clothes Closet was opened in space donated by Don Morgan, owner of Gypsy's Antique Clothing.

In November, FFL added more staff, bringing the total to eight. Tam Taylor was added as a case manager and June Lee joined as volunteer coordinator. By this time the agency's caseload had risen to 502. The FFL "Wish List" now included the desire for "a larger building, food pantry items and volunteers." In particular, support volunteers to provide housekeeping, shopping, meal preparation, and home and hospital visitation for PWAs were needed. Volunteers were trained to work in teams to keep from being overwhelmed.

1994 Statistics and Losses

1994 saw an increase in the number of new HIV cases in Shelby County, with 484 new cases, 58 percent of which were among black males,

20 percent among black females, 17 percent among white males and 2 percent among white females. The highest risk category continued to be men having sex with men, but heterosexual exposure was rising. New AIDS cases dropped significantly, down to 239 from the previous year's figure of 412, but black males continued to make up more than 60 percent of those new cases. So far, only two Hispanic individuals were known to have contracted AIDS in previous years. Known deaths from AIDS fell by half, to 142.

One of those who died was Jackie Wilson, born in 1955. Wilson was a bar owner, a member of Tsarus and "a fine young individual" who held many benefits for the community. He died of complications due to AIDS in June 1994. Michael Pozgar, another FFL activist who died in 1994, was remembered by then-FFL board member Bill Andrews as someone who "found power in his circumstance and rejected any possibility of denial, in himself or the people he cared about."



1995—Déjà Vu

The 10th anniversary of Friends For Life was a year marked by internal changes at the agency and a sense of déjà vu. A retrospective editorial by Allen Cook described the growing pains and changes at the organization, but underscored the fact that the original spirit of compassion and caring remained:

We all know, after thirteen years of dealing with AIDS, that a magic bullet is not just around the corner. Friends For Life, begun when we all naively thought it'd all be over in a year or two, is in it for the long haul.

Friends For Life is not the same organization it was in 1985. It has expanded and professionalized its staff. It has expanded its client base and its accompanying services. It has, perhaps, lost some of the warm and fuzzy feeling of the early days—a defense mechanism you develop when you deal with literally hundreds of people dying by degrees in front of your eyes.

But a more compassionate organization you will never find. Scratch the surface and you will find people working for less than they could elsewhere. You'll find volunteers who are there because they want to make a difference. You'll find donors who give not only their money, but their goods and services as well. Why? Because there, but for the grace of God, go we all.

Education and outreach continued to be a major thrust of FFL's work in 1995. With the advent of new protease inhibitors to treat HIV and AIDS, FFL collaborated to bring Martin Delaney, the founding director of Project Inform, to speak in Memphis on March 29. Delaney was a leading promoter of FDA reform. AIDS Awareness Nights also continued and volunteers were constantly being

sought by staff members Anthony Reed and Virginia Stallworth to distribute condoms and information at Club 501, Mad Dog Mary's, Pipeline, Cross Roads, Club X-scape, and Amnesia. Volunteer teams of two or three received training and typically went to bars for a few hours a night. The staff also held AIDS Awareness Nights focus groups to try to determine the effectiveness of the outreach activities.

A workshop specifically for African-American men was also presented in collaboration with Black and White Men Together Memphis. Billed as "non-judgmental," it offered opportunities to discuss thoughts, fears and concerns, as well as ways to remove barriers to practicing safer sex to prevent infection and reinfection. By May, four new strains of HIV, (A, C, D and E) were reported to be spreading through Africa and Asia, mainly through heterosexual contact. These were believed to be far more transmissible than the B strain most common in the U.S.

During June and July, AIDS Hotline training and AIDS Awareness Night Outreach training were offered several times by Tara McAdams, the new Volunteer Coordinator. McAdams proposed creating teams or committees of volunteers to address specific areas such as fundraising, newsletter, recycling, bulk mail, food pantry, etc. A Client Advisory Council was also formed to "provide input and feedback on current and future programs and

services of FFL." The Advisory Council was also reviewing a new client handbook to be distributed to all clients during intake.

A Change in Management

June 1995 proved to be a month of major change at FFL. In a one-week period, the agency moved to larger quarters at 1450 Poplar, got a new executive director, and a new board president. Michael Coleman resigned to take a position with Northwest Airlines in another city. The FFL board met and approved

Allen Cook as interim executive director for six months. Since Cook was president he first resigned from the board. The board then formed a committee to seek applications and hire a permanent new director.

Two months later, in August, other changes were made to the board at the annual meeting when attorney D'Army Bailey and community activist Matthew Presley were elected to the FFL board for three-year terms. The board then numbered 14 with one vacancy. The board also approved a new logo, formally incorporated as Friends For Life (they had still been operating under the old name of ATEAC), and approved a \$364,000 operating budget for the year 1995-96. Budget concerns were raised as there was a reported delay in federal



HOPWA funding, which raised fears that FFL's ability to provide utility and rental assistance would be affected. By the end of December, FFL's staff had grown to 13, including five case managers and two HIV/AIDS educators.

Cook announced a Cummins Foundation grant for \$10,000 received by FFL which would provide funds for FFL's support team program, an evolution of the buddy program that used teams rather than individuals to assist HIV/AIDS clients. Allen Cook observed that "the one-on-one relationships established in the buddy program resulted in premature burn-out." The grant would be used to hire a part-time employee to coordinate teams and make sure clients were benefiting from the services offered. Larry Alderman, a longtime FFL volunteer, joined the FFL staff as the Support Team Coordinator.



Larry Alderman, Support Team Coordinator for FFL in 1995. Photo credit: FFL.

Still Havin' Fun

Financial support for the fight against AIDS also continued to flow from a generous gay and lesbian community as well as from others. Early in the year the Tennessee Leather Tribe held an "Entertainment Extravaganza" at WKRB to benefit Aloysius Home. In April, FFL's annual Auction for AIDS raised \$24,000

with about 200 people attending the event. Perhaps offering more in entertainment value, the second annual Drag Olympics, held Aug. 31 at Amnesia, raised \$2,234 for FFL. A crowd of 300 at-



From 1995 to 1999, FFL's offices were at 1450 Poplar Avenue. Photo credit: FFL.

tended the sweaty event which began at 11:30 p.m. and featured fast-paced performances by 18 female impersonators. Performances ranged from the serious to the ridiculous, with Love Shack Betty being selected as the "Drag Olympics equivalent of decathlon winner Bruce Jenner."

Late in the summer, Playhouse on the Square presented *Five Guys Named Moe*, a benefit for FFL. In September, FFL won the Memphis Pride Award for "Most Helpful Charity in the Memphis Community." The visibility of and appreciation for the organization in the gay community remained high. At the Cooper-Young Festival that year a fleet of FFL volunteers helped pass out information to the public. On October 5, the agency held an open house at its new building at 1450 Poplar.

The wildly popular "High Heels, High Hats and High Times" party was held on October 28 at the Holy Trinity Community Church on Madison. Design-wizards Matthew Presley and Bill Andrews once again would "weave their magic" to transform the garage space into a Gothic-Moorish church. Around 700 people attended the event which grossed about \$26,000.

1995 drew to a close with World AIDS Day celebrated on Nov. 30 at Temple Israel. The ceremony, co-sponsored by First Congregational Church, included music, speakers, and displays of quilt panels made in memory of those who died the previous year. At Christmas, the FFL Food Pantry "literally overflowed" with donated items, including 100 toys donated by Memphis City Schools students.

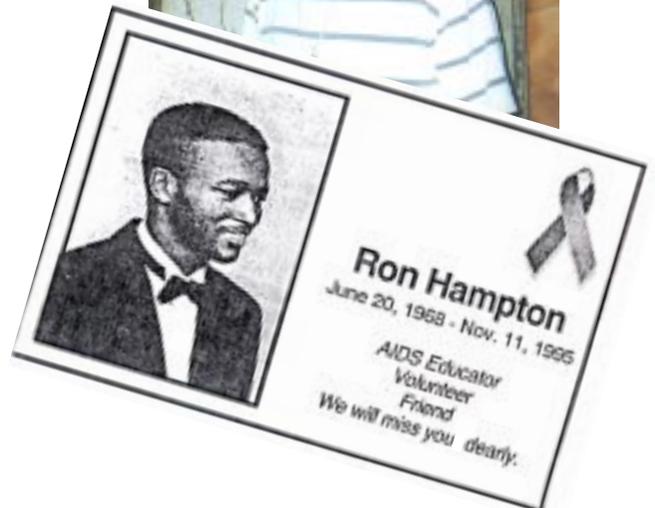
1995 Statistics and Losses

1995 once again saw an increase in the number of new HIV cases in Shelby County over the previous year, with 540 new cases reported. Of these, 52 percent were among black males. Increased numbers of new cases were also seen in all other race and sex categories. The highest risk group continued to be men having sex with men, but heterosexual exposure continued to increase. New AIDS cases rose to 283 from the previous year's figure of 239. Black men continued to make the majority of new cases. Known deaths from AIDS in Shelby County in 1995 totaled 151, a slight increase over the previous year.

Derek Underwood was among those who died during the summer of 1995. He was one of FFL's most requested speakers. According to FFL board member Bill Andrews, Derek was initially an angry young man, but transformed himself into a passionate advocate who worked to empower people with AIDS.

Ron Hampton, another FFL volunteer and client, died at the end of 1995 at the age of 27. Ron's commitment to FFL led him into helping with Feast for Friends, working at the front desk, and serving as an inspirational speaker. Voted Outstanding Volunteer for 1993, Ron touched many lives through his honesty and eloquence.

Derek Underwood. Photo credit: FFL.



Chapter 3

1996 to 2000: The Changing Face of HIV/AIDS



Snapshots of community members participating in FFL events over the years. Photo credits: FFL.

"Face of HIV/AIDS Changing Locally" announced the January 1996 issue of *Triangle Journal News*. The story confirmed what most people working with PWAs had known for several years: that a growing percentage of HIV-positive individuals were African-American and female. Most gay men, the story reported, had "gotten the message and modified those behaviors conducive to the spread of HIV." And increasingly, FFL was being "called on to provide services to women living with AIDS. Unfortunately, we can look forward in the next few years to an increasing number of women—many of them with infected children," said the article.

The winter of 1995-1996 bore down hard on the city, and the needs of FFL's clients were at times overwhelming. Due to the unusually cold weather, \$329,000 in HOPWA funding for housing, utilities and other services was depleted by March. This mainly impacted Midtown Mental Health Center and FFL, two providers of emergency aid to PWAs. In response to the crisis, Memphis City Council granted an additional \$90,000

for the agencies to help clients through to the end of the fiscal year.

According to the *Triangle Journal News*, another important event took place in February. It was the announcement that, after "three years of application, apprehensions, inspections, dissensions and contentions, Aloysius Home is poised to accept its first resident at the former St. Francis Convent near St. Joseph Hospital in downtown Memphis." A building owned by St. Joseph Hospital at 273 North Parkway would house 12 PWAs while the agency's building at 28 North Claybrook was being renovated. Aloysius Home's executive director, Jim Shaw, hoped to get a longer term lease for the North Parkway facility that would allow the agency to operate both buildings and serve 21 persons. The agency was also running an adult daycare at 273 N. Claybrook five days a week. Later in the fall of 1996, HUD awarded two other grants to Aloysius Home. One, for \$1.2 million, was to provide transitional housing for Aloysius residents at the Claybrook location, and increase the number of beds from nine to 14. The

second grant, for \$404,000, was to increase the permanent housing at North Parkway from 10 to 20 beds and to provide support services.

Meanwhile, FFL received a much smaller \$700 grant early in 1996 from Hoffman-La Roche, Inc. to update its "Safer Sex Kits." The funds helped pay for new wrappers, a "four-color folded package with instruction printed on the inside," that made the kits more attractive and easier to put together. The new packages came in four designs, including ones specifically aimed at the African-American and gay male populations. By this time FFL staff and volunteers were distributing about 72,000 condoms annually through AIDS Awareness Nights, safer sex workshops and other avenues.

At the end of April the FFL board chose a new executive director from among 38 applicants for the job. Tom Roden took the place of Allen Cook, the former president of FFL who had been appointed interim director in June 1995 when Michael Coleman resigned. Roden had a Master's degree in Hospital and Health Services Administration and had experience in grant writing, program services and market research. He was given a three-year contract.

Dr. Marshall Koonce had taken the FFL presidency after Allen Cook resigned from the position. The other officers were Yvonne Yetman, vice president, Paul Kelly, secretary, and Fred Dorse, treasurer. The remainder of the board included Dr. Lisa Alex, Bill Andrews, D'Army Bailey, Billy Buchanan, Jim Farris, Cleora Fears, Don Lilley, Matthew Presley, Linda Sowell and Carl Weibel. A

large number of people also served on an advisory board, including state Senator Steve Cohen.

Towards the end of summer, FFL began two new support groups. The group for partners of people living with HIV/AIDS focused on issues in relationships affected by HIV and was led by case manager Michael Reading. The group for family members, friends and caregivers of PWAs dealt with the emotional and practical aspects of caring for someone living with AIDS and was facilitated by Alice Scott, a FFL case manager, with assistance from lead case manager Charlee Blankenship. An AIDS Awareness Festival targeted to the African-American community was also organized and held in mid-October at the Walter Simmons Housing Development. The festival was attended by more than 250 people who were provided with information, health screenings and entertainment.

Late in the summer of 1996, the HEARTH AND HOME Emergency Fund was established to assist clients with rent, utilities, prescriptions, and other emergency needs. The fund was the brainchild of the Client Services Department staff, with Butch Valentine named as "Godparent." A number of special events were created to build the emergency fund up, including "The Day After Brunch" and a "Beat AIDS" promotion on World AIDS Day, December 1st, which featured a hearse bashing. An appeal to churches in late November and December also raised \$13,963 for the fund, with 30 churches participating.

The HEARTH AND HOME fund was not only a response to clients' needs.

It also stemmed from ongoing problems in reimbursement of federal HOPWA funds, due to inadequate documentation provided by FFL to the administering agency, Midtown Mental Health Center. Deficient reimbursement requests created delays in payment and a shortage of funds. This and other administrative problems which arose during 1996 created interagency tensions and, as a result, according to Kim Moss, there was some "mudslinging."

During this period some also questioned whether FFL was being as effective in providing services to clients as it could have been. Though there were blanket services, there were no client assessments or long-term planning to help individual clients improve their situations. High staff turnover, low pay and job insecurity among FFL staff contributed to these problems, and made it more difficult for the agency to effectively develop programs to meet the rapidly changing needs and demographics of PWAs. Kent Fisher, who was a volunteer and later a staff member at FFL in the mid-1990s, recalled "the old files were unorganized, the recordkeeping was bad and there was no intake for clients." He also observed, "The fundraisers were good for awareness, but contributed to the problems of those who had alcohol issues."

Lifeline, the FFL newsprint tabloid, ceased being published after December 1995. By that time Virginia Stallworth had left and Anthony Farmer was education director. Later, the news-

letter re-emerged as *Lifelines* and the November/December 1996 issue included an "open letter to the Friends of Friends For Life" from president Marshall Koonce and executive director Tom Roden in which they urged readers to give to the agency. The letter noted that

FFL's annual budget had grown to \$500,000, and was expected to grow to \$1 million over the next two years.



FFL logo from the mid-1990s.

1996 Special Events

One of the quietest fundraisers of the year was *What's Cooking in Politics?*, a cookbook published by Mrs. William Farris and others and sold to benefit FFL. The cookbook was available for \$12. Meanwhile, plans had been cooking for months for the King and Queen of Hearts benefit, organized by Jimmy Gray at WKRB. This year's cover charge to see the show was \$2 or two personal hygiene items for the FFL Food Pantry. The benefit doubled the previous year's proceeds, raising nearly \$6,000 for FFL.

The 1996 FFL Auction for AIDS was held on April 27 at the Peabody Hotel on a Saturday night, with Tom Prestigiaco serving as the crowd-pleasing auctioneer/entertainer once more. An even faster-paced event was the Tennessee Leather Tribe's First Annual Drag Race at the WKRB Runway on June 9. The flag dropped at 7:30 p.m. and they were off and running "twenty laps of rip-roaring action, chiffon versus

chrome, as your favorite queens do battle with Memphis' leather community." The drag race benefited the FFL PWA fund.

During the summer, Playhouse on the Square presented *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* by David Drake as a benefit for FFL. The date for the "High Heels, High Hats and High Times V" was set early on October 19th so that people who usually went out of town for Halloween would have "no excuses," according to Bill Andrews, co-chair for the event. Held at the Peabody Hotel, individual tickets were \$25, and tables were \$300, \$400, \$500, \$1,000 and \$2,500. The theme was "Red Hot Blues" and the winner of the "best overall costume," appropriately, was someone dressed as the Peabody Fountain, complete with flowers. The group prize was won by the "Dead Presidents" team which included a post-assassination JFK accompanied by Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe. The ball raised about \$28,000.

The follow-up to the masquerade ball was "The Day After" brunch held at Maxwell's in Cooper-Young for partygoers in need of repast and respite following the party. Violinist Charles Friedman and classical guitarist Mark Allen provided the entertainment and the brunch raised about \$9,500, an impressive amount for a first-time event. The Day After's creator was Butch Valentine, who had begun volunteering at FFL the previous year, two years after being diagnosed with AIDS. Valentine's "fire in the belly," sales experience and "uncanny ability to motivate others" made an impact in virtually every corner



Butch Valentine entertaining the crowd at a 1997 Feast For Friends dinner. Photo credit: Lance Murphey/*The Commercial Appeal*.

of FFL. He booked entertainment for Feast for Friends, requested donations to help sponsor meals, and began a successful run of lucrative special events. His work helped raise \$28,000 for the HEARTH AND HOME fund in just a few months. For his contributions, he was named FFL's 1996 Volunteer of the Year.

At the end of a difficult year, a grant from Methodist Hospital Foundation enabled FFL to provide hundreds of food baskets to its clients. Staff and volunteers delivered the baskets in December, reaping thanks from recipients.

Science and Statistics

1996 marked a turning point for those infected with HIV/AIDS in the United States. From this time forward, medical science offered a potent new class of drugs called protease inhibitors, which when taken in combination slowed down the progress of HIV/AIDS disease. The newest drug, indinavar, sold under the brand name Crixivan, was often combined with AZT and 3TC, two other standard AIDS drugs that had been available before. Crixivan and other drugs offered the possibility of a longer life for many with HIV/AIDS.

In 1996, the number of reported new HIV cases in Shelby County fell to 460. Of these, more than 80 percent were among black men and women. New AIDS cases numbered 277, and black males were 52 percent of these cases, black women 21 percent, and white men 23 percent with white women and Hispanic men making up the remainder. Known deaths from AIDS in 1996 totaled 85, a sharp and welcome decrease from the previous year. The total number of reported AIDS cases in Memphis stood at 1,845 with 2,454 reported cases of HIV.

Learning to Live with AIDS

Drug-resistant HIV was a hot topic in early 1997 as reports began coming out about patients with HIV drug resistance. The new protease inhibitors or three-drug cocktails were a major breakthrough in lowering HIV viral levels, but they required that a strict regimen be

maintained in order to avoid mutations of the virus, which could then lead to resistance.

As the new drugs began to extend life expectancies, AIDS agencies were adapting to longer-term relationships with clients that increasingly focused on helping those with HIV/AIDS learn to manage the disease and return to a productive life, including employment. Some agencies, particularly those oriented towards hospice, began to close due to either overlap with other agencies or a dearth of patients. However, the continued spread of HIV/AIDS into the black community, and especially among socio-economically disadvantaged groups, was still a major concern. U. S. Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders urged black churches to take more of a leading role to educate their communities about AIDS and the need to practice safe sex.

At the FFL office on Poplar Avenue, the New Year began with the addition of a third case manager, Shana Parker, to the staff of 12 headed by executive director Tom Roden. Carol Dunn was client services director. Tony Farmer was still director of education, and was supervising two HIV/AIDS educators. In January the agency announced the receipt of a new HIV Prevention Grant from the Centers for Disease Control totaling \$106,400, and of a Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) grant from the City of Memphis's Division of Housing and Community Development of \$147,000. By fall, two new HIV/AIDS educators were added to the staff: Kristin Evans and Charles Howerton. Evans was to conduct outreach in the Foote Homes

public housing community and work with youth agencies. Howerton's role was to coordinate outreach to "men and women of diverse sexual orientations," including working with volunteers for AIDS Awareness Nights.

In addition to FFL's existing services, the new TBRA program was intended to help eligible clients with housing through rent subsidies. Financial assistance in paying health insurance premiums was also available and the HEARTH AND HOME Emergency Fund, Food Pantry and Feast for Friends bi-monthly suppers at St. John's United Methodist Church continued to be programs supported by volunteers, private donations and benefits. Pledges and contributions for

Feast for Friends in 1997 raised \$7,350 at the annual July 5th anniversary dinner.

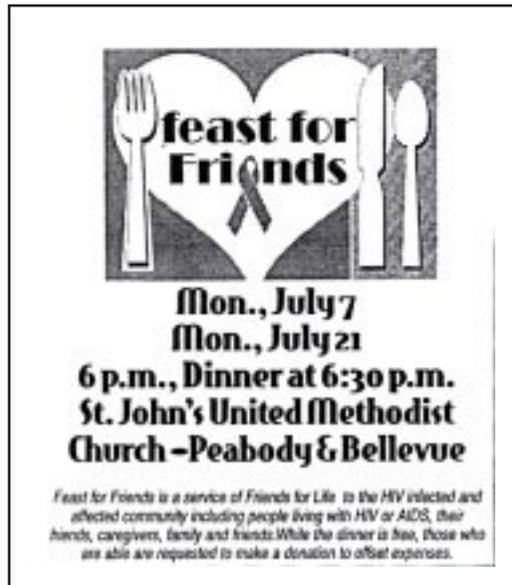
HOPWA funding in 1997 was interrupted in July and August and despite the more than \$30,000 in funding raised by HEALTH AND HOME activities, FFL spent nearly \$9,000 from its general fund to prevent homelessness. Ryan White funding had been renewed by the Clinton administration in 1996 and the funds were to be distributed through the Southwest Tennessee HIV/AIDS Care Consortium and were administered by United Way.

FFL slowly continued its transition towards becoming a "mainstream" social service provider with diverse clients and a base of support crossing racial, social, sexual and political divides. A letter to the co-chairs of the High Heels High Hats masquerade party illustrates the tensions present in this transformation, in which the writer complained

that there seemed to be a bias towards giving awards to gay rather than just "gay friendly" groups. A response from the event's co-chair and board member Bill Andrews acknowledged that the writer's implication that the party was aimed at the gay community, rather than the community as a whole, generated a spirited discussion among the

board. Andrews probably expressed the views and hopes of many in saying, "For too many years Gay white men have provided the energy and cash support for PWAs in a community blinded by ignorance, apathy and hostility. The Board of FFL is actively working to expand our base of volunteer, financial and political support without alienating those whose hard work and personal commitment has brought us so far."

Another sign of the changing times was seen in a letter from a *TJN* reader identified as "A Concerned HIV Community Member." The writer said



Feast for Friends notice, *Triangle Journal News*.



Post-event thank you, *Triangle Journal News*, 1997.

that more support groups were needed for those with HIV/AIDS who now worked, and that there weren't enough alternatives to bars and bookstores for meeting others in the gay community.

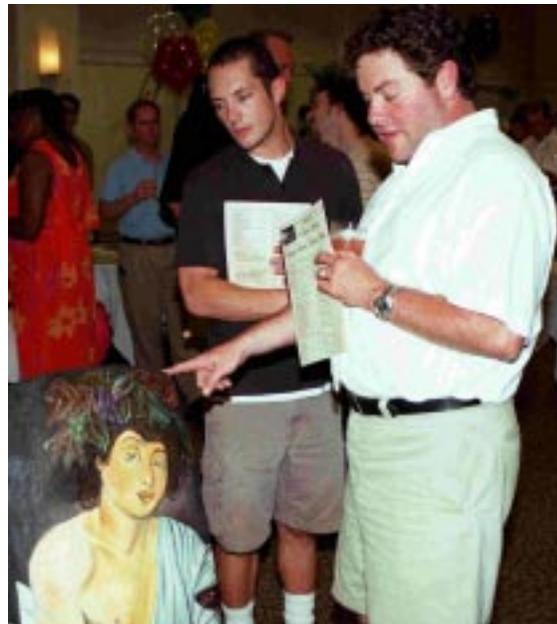
Special Events for a Good Cause

The first major event of the year, the annual Memphis King and Queen of Hearts raised \$6,216 for FFL. This sixth year of the benefit was dedicated to the memory of Grant Montgomery and Lester "Peaches" Phillips. King and

Queen Diane Starr and Angie Baker were crowned at WKRB/Carla's Place and Jimmy Gray was subsequently honored by the FFL Board. He was also voted "Favorite Valentine" along with Carol Stockton.

FFL's annual AIDS auction was held at the Peabody Hotel on Saturday, April 12, and had a "Hurricane" theme. Part of the night's entertainment was a modeling show where artists painted tropical scenes on shirts worn by models who then proceeded to "sell the shirt off their back" to benefit FFL. The perennial auctioneer, Tom Prestigiacom, was there and the admission was still an affordable \$5. In spite of a large attendance, the net proceeds was only \$18,000—down by about \$6,000 from previous years. Silent auction items apparently went for bargain prices.

In mid-July the cast, crew and theatre management of Playhouse on the Square put on a special showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to benefit



Auction shoppers. Andy Kynerd/*The Commercial Appeal*.

FFL. Conversely, the theme of High Heels, High Hats VI was "Hollywood" that year. The site was the Fairground's Shelby County Building and even though the "tradition" of the "High Hats" party was never to duplicate a party site, the event's co-chair Bill Andrews remarked that the building had plenty of parking and "lends itself ideally to this year's party theme, and will serve as a great background for Memphis' most outrageous costume event."

On Dec. 1, 1997, began a week-long observance of World AIDS Day which included church services, testimonials by PWAs and those affected by AIDS, and dedication of quilt panels made in honor of those who had died locally. Afterwards the panels were added to the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, which by now had more than 25,000 panels and was an international symbol of the devastation wrought by the AIDS pandemic.

Politics and Science

In October 1997 U. S. "AIDS Czar" Sandy Thurman said that news about new successful drug cocktails and a decline in AIDS deaths was "leading many into a sense of false security. Many believe the fight against AIDS has been won. They are wrong." Thurman, whose official title was Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, said that people were "turning a deaf ear" after years of hearing about the problem. Reaching the young, drug users and minorities were the new challenges. By the beginning of 1997, there had been a total of 548,102 reported AIDS cases in the United States, with 343,000 reported deaths. AIDS was now the leading cause of death in the United States for

people in the 25 to 44 age group.

By the end of 1997, the number of reported HIV cases in Shelby County had increased by 514 to 2,968. The number of new AIDS cases that year was 254, for a total of 2,098. That year, 58 deaths from AIDS deaths were reported in Shelby County.

Troubled Times

The administrative and funding problems which begun in 1996 continued to plague FFL through 1997 and into the first half of 1998. Both HOPWA and Ryan White funding continued to be held up by bureaucratic red tape. On a day-to-day basis, the lack of program funding to help address client needs made life at FFL a "tiresome struggle," according to Butch Valentine, and was "more frustrating every day." The computers and office equipment were old, outdated and broken, and administrative operations had to run on private donations until grant funding was released. Of the \$709,000 annual budget, 13 percent or \$92,000 was used for administration. By this time, nearly 25 percent of FFL clients were women with dependent children.

In August 1998, FFL's grant troubles were reported in a *Triangle Journal News* article. Problems with three separate grants were described, including a HOPWA grant deadline that was missed and a second round of funding which "bypassed" FFL altogether. According to the story, the HOPWA funds were formerly awarded to and administered by Midtown Mental Health Center (MMH) with FFL acting "as a subcontractor in qualifying applicants and dispensing services under the grant." MMH had withdrawn from the grant process, citing its

inability to "front" the funds needed to administer the grant. The Ryan White funds, supporting two other case manager positions, were reported to be in jeopardy because the FFL staff were not judged to be qualified to manage the program. Funding for the FFL Food Pantry was also imperiled if paperwork and reporting were not brought up to date. In addition, FFL had apparently failed to reapply for an \$8,000 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant which had been awarded for several previous years.

The FFL staff in 1998 numbered around 13 and included four case managers under the director of client services, Carol Dunn. Education director Tony Farmer continued to oversee a staff of three HIV/AIDS educators and volunteer speakers, and Martin Hurley joined the FFL staff as volunteer services coordinator, having been a volunteer in a variety of AIDS-related work in Memphis since 1989. Butch Valentine continued in his role of coordinating special events and fundraising, as well as being the most visible spokesperson for the agency.

Those Fabulous Fundraisers

Fundraising and special events



marched on despite delays in government grants. The newest event conceived by Butch Valentine was the Fabulous February concert series which began with "A Holiday with Billie Holiday." The concert was held at the New Daisy Theatre and featured the 17-piece Memphis Jazz Orchestra accompanying singers and entertainers Teresa Pate, Kelly Hurt, Sandra Bray and Gary Johns. The success and popularity of the event was so great that it was repeated in following years, each time featuring a different well-known entertainer.

The Seventh Annual World of Passion, produced by Dabbles Hair Company, was scheduled for October 11, 1998, to benefit FFL. The organizers solicited donations and promised a night "full of fashion, music, dance, theatrics and fan-

tasy." In addition, the annual Halloween "High Heels, High Hats" party took place and was followed by "The Day After Brunch" which raised \$8,500.

For the 10th World AIDS Day, three agencies, FFL, Aloysius Home and Loving Arms, joined together to invite the public to "An Artful Observance For World AIDS Day" at Ledbetter Lusk Galleries. The art shown was by Aloysius Home residents who participated in an art therapy program. The art show was followed by the annual "To See the Stars Instead of the Night" program held at Mt. Olive CME Cathedral, co-sponsored by First Congregational Church.



1998 Statistics

1998 saw a slight drop in the number of new HIV infections reported to the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department, though the percentage of black women contracting the virus continued to increase. 461 new cases of HIV and 261 new cases of AIDS were reported in the county, and 49 deaths were attributed to AIDS.

Year of Upheaval and Transition

The first six months of 1999 brought a number of changes to FFL. In February, the agency moved from its location on Poplar, which had become too cramped, especially for the Food Pantry operation. Executive director Tom Roden reported that the food pantry was providing the equivalent of 40,000 meals annually. The agency's new location, at 1384 Madison, was roomier, would better accommodate the Food Pantry operation, was handicapped accessible and offered more parking. According to Roden, FFL planned to acquire the building on a lease-purchase basis.

FFL's embattled HOPWA funding in 1999 was granted to a different agency, Family Services of the Mid-South. An ad in *Triangle Journal News* informed potential clients that they might be eligible to receive case management, housing, support groups, counseling, and emergency assistance for food, rent, medicine, and utilities from Family Services.

This shift in services from FFL to another agency caused considerable disruption for both clients and staff according to Charles Howerton, a former

FFL case manager, who eventually left FFL to work for Family Services. Howerton saw this as the start of the most difficult period in FFL's history, saying, "When Family Services took over case management from FFL in 1999, services to the HIV/AIDS community became fragmented." As a result, "People spent an inordinate amount of time running around from agency to agency to get what they needed."

Agency troubles brought another change. By April, the FFL board had decided not to renew Tom Roden's contract. Roden had been director for three years, and agreed to serve until July if needed. According to one news article, "Roden had come under criticism for failing to obtain operating grants which



FFL Food Pantry at the Madison Avenue office.
Photo credit: FFL.

had previously provided funding for the agency and assistance to its clients.”

Around this time efforts to merge FFL and Aloysius Home began. Both agencies had financial and administrative troubles, and in September 1999, Ruth Brown, who since March had been interim executive director of Aloysius Home, was hired by FFL to replace Roden. She would direct both agencies during the merger and consolidation of the FFL and Aloysius Home staffs. Butch Valentine assumed fundraising duties for both agencies and FFL volunteer coordinator John Hill coordinated all volunteers. The merger made FFL the “managing partner.” The two boards also merged.

By October, the merger was official, as Butch Valentine reported in his “Sad to Say, Happy to Hear” column in *Triangle Journal News*. He wrote, “The respective boards of directors are to be congratulated and praised for their open-mindedness, foresight, courage and wisdom. The AIDS community will benefit greatly from this tremendously bold yet sensible move. The official name is Friends For Life Corporation (Aloysius Home-AIDS Resource Center) and will go by the name Friends For Life.”

Justifying the need for the merger, Phil Osment, personnel director for FFL, observed, “We [the agencies] found that we were going for the same dollars and serving the same community. There is a trend nationally to see these services come together.” The new management staff included Ruth Brown, Phil Osment, Kim Moss, director of operations, Michael Tackaberry, director of finance, Dvena Porter, director of nursing, Gracia Steele, director of compliance and education,



FFL' offices at 1384 Madison. Photo credit: FFL.

Butch Valentine, director of fundraising, John Hill, director of volunteer service, and Tom Ruble, property manager.

The main office was now at 1384 Madison. In addition, Aloysius Home had two residential sites—28 N. Claybrook with 14 rooms and a facility on Harrell with eight rooms. Both sites had live-in clients and were full. Osment indicated that the agency was also looking for a daycare facility for non-residents, and that FFL would like to open an indoor recreational center where clients could go and socialize without having to go to bars.

In the midst of these changes, FFL continued to run its various programs serving the needs of more than 400 clients. From April to November 1999, the Food Pantry, under the coordination of Ed Brandon, grew from distributing 687 bags of food per month to 909. In November, the Food Pantry served 297 households and 737 individuals. The bi-monthly Feast for Friends continued and a “Positive Living Under Stress” weekly support group was offered at FFL’s offices by Michael Kiggins, who also ran the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program. The other staff included two case managers, Le Martin and Edelle Thompson, and two HIV/AIDS educators Sonia Jackson and Ernest Donelson II. After years of volunteer service, Butch

Valentine joined the staff in a paid position as director of fundraising. Gracia Steele, director of quality improvement, and Judy Croft, business manager, also joined the FFL team.

After the merger, changes also took place in the board's leadership, the new officers being: Carl Weibel, chair, David Lusk, vice chair, Jan Kaplan, secretary, and Jeff Weesner, treasurer. The other board members included George Mabon, Linda Sowell, Susan Mah, Harriet Stern, Steven Shultz, Bill Andrews, Jerry Chipman, Michael Demster, Dr. Morris Klass, Frank Cooper, John Cannon, Jeanne Dreifus and Joseph Little.

At the end of 1999, FFL named Nancy Fletcher as its volunteer of the year. Nancy's long-time commitment to helping individuals suffering from AIDS earned her the love and admiration of many in the HIV/AIDS community. In the crisis years of the epidemic she was known for taking care of PWAs who were sick and dying from AIDS. Former FFL board member Matthew Presley said, "Nancy has been at the bedsides and at the funerals" of a dozen or more PWAs whom she personally cared for, adding that she was so active that her neighbors must wonder at the number of "good looking men traipsing in and out of her house." She also was a regular volunteer in the kitchen at the Feast for Friends, and a member of the FFL board.

Fundraising—Doing it Our Way

In the midst of all its financial troubles, FFL managed to continue to stage several outstanding fundraising events in 1999. The first of the year was the Second Annual Fabulous February Concert, titled "Doing It Our Way," a tribute to Frank Sinatra. The benefit took place on Saturday, February



John Hill, Butch Valentine and Nancy Fletcher. Fletcher was FFL's 1999 Volunteer of the Year. Photo credit: FFL.

27th at the Skyway Ballroom, at the Peabody Hotel. In a promotional piece addressed "To All You Cats and Chicks," Butch Valentine described plans to salute "Ol' Blue Eyes," which included the 17-piece Memphis Jazz Orchestra backing up local talent,

including Teresa Pate, Gary Johns, James Fox and Gary Lamb. Valentine promised readers, "You'll dig the gig!" And they did. The Sinatra tribute raised \$41,000 for FFL and was so successful FFL was asked to restage the event for broadcast on WKNO-TV on April 7th at Theatre Memphis.

The 12th Annual Auction for AIDS was scheduled on Sunday afternoon, June 27 at the Memphis Botanic Garden. The band for the event was the Jungle Room, a group that dressed in colorful zoot suits and played Manhattan Transfer-style music. The auction netted around \$30,000, one of the largest amounts ever raised, which was made possible by the donation of two

round-trip business class tickets to anywhere in Europe from Carlson Wagonlit Garner Travel. Another plus was the media attention from *The Commercial Appeal*, *RSVP Magazine*, and Channels 3, 5 and 24. A pleased Valentine said in a *TJN* article, "The media is taking our events seriously, and their interest helps to raise AIDS awareness among mainstream Memphians."

That fall the third year of the original Aloysius Home fundraiser, "A Place at the Table" was another record-breaking success, with about \$120,000 raised by participants. And the successes rolled on, with "High Heels, High Hats, High Times VIII" held at Amnesia on Oct. 23. The party's theme this year was the "Sexy, Sensational, Shagadelic Sixties!" Memphis's own Joyce Cobb was the main entertainment draw. "The Day After Brunch" was hosted by Café Society and again went to support the HEARTH AND HOME Emergency Fund.

The year's revelries ended quietly with the World AIDS Day events, including an open house at the new Aloysius Home Shelter Plus Care facility, a HUD-subsidized independent living facility for people with HIV/AIDS located on Claybrook. The open house was an opportunity for service providers and



Aloysius Commons opened as a Shelter Plus Care independent living facility for PWAs late in 1999. Photo credit: FFL.

potential residents to view the newly renovated apartments that would soon be available for residency.

1999 Statistics and Trends

In Shelby County 1999 saw an increase for the first time in several years in the number of new HIV cases—up to

583 from 461 in the previous year. Although increases in cases were seen in all gender and racial groups, black men continued to be more than 50 percent of all cases, and black women also saw a large number of new cases. Heterosexual transmission

continued to increase. Newly reported AIDS cases also saw an increase, rising from 261 new cases in 1998 to 312 new cases in 1999. Reported deaths due to AIDS declined for the fourth year in a row, falling to 42.

Questions About HIV or AIDS?
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278-AIDS



A service of Friends For Life HIV Resources

New Hope and New Challenges for a New Millennium

The rising number of African-Americans contracting HIV/AIDS continued to be a major concern. The trends were reflected nationally in 1999, when blacks made up 13 percent of U. S. population but were 49 percent of AIDS deaths according to the CDC. It was often noted that black churches were a focal point for the black community, and increased funding of \$156 million acquired by the Black Congressional Caucus from the Clinton administration in 1998 allowed the CDC to expand its church-based outreach initiative. In October 1999, the CDC doubled funding for AIDS prevention in minority communities to \$39 million.

Similar concerns locally and a renewed desire to address the issue were reflected in Memphis in 2000 in two new funding awards to FFL. The first, a grant of \$20,000 through the United Way Venture Fund, was made to provide training to African-American churches to carry out HIV-prevention education. Olivet Baptist Church was one of the participants. However, according to some in the HIV/AIDS community, the money did little to actually expand HIV/AIDS education among African-Americans. The second grant of \$10,000 from the Assisi Foundation provided funds to establish an adult literacy program that incorporated HIV educational materials. This effort to improve literacy skills among HIV



positive individuals also provided learning opportunities and life skills training to enhance participants' quality of life. Woody Kimble joined the FFL staff as a literacy tutor for this effort.

In addition to these new funding initiatives, the FFL education staff ran a speaker's bureau, HIV instructor training through the Red Cross, life skills training, health fairs, operated an HIV information hotline, conducted outreach, safer sex workshops, workplace education and distributed brochures, magazines and the

newly re-named *Frontline* newsletter. That the size and overall quality of the newsletter had diminished was perhaps a reflection of the stresses and strains the agency had experienced for the past few years. By May, *Frontline* had a new look, and the agency had adopted a new logo—three overlapping hearts reflecting its new three-part name, Friends For Life Corporation—Aloysius Home and AIDS Resource Center.

In February, as a result of the elevated cost of providing round-the-clock nursing care to clients, FFL made the difficult decision to close its Permanent Supportive Housing facility at 576 Harrell. Clients were relocated to area nursing homes, families, or to the Shelter Plus Care apartment complex on Claybrook. The funding for the Harrell facility was inadequate to cover the costs, and "an operating deficit equal to the grant award" remained even after the closure. The Shelter Plus Care apartment units located on Claybrook, called Aloysius Commons, were housing two

families and five singles by mid-2000, with some vacancies still to be filled. The purpose of the program was to house those with HIV/AIDS who had been homeless, and to provide supportive services to help them achieve independence.

A number of major grants received in the first 10 months of 2000 showed that the agency was getting back on the path to normalcy, and included \$78,351 in Ryan White, Title II funds, \$25,814 from FEMA for Food Pantry Services, \$49,460 from the City of Memphis Emergency Shelter Grant Program for Aloysius Home operations and services, \$35,000 from the Assisi Foundation for a city-wide assessment of HIV/AIDS needs and an agency development plan and \$79,400 from the Tennessee Department of Health for HIV prevention activities.

These funds not only helped support FFL activities and services, but began to set the stage for renewal of the agency's programs. United Way of the Mid-South designated FFL as a 2001 "United Way Funded Agency" following an extensive review process and assessment. Still, there remained serious funding shortfalls, debts and administrative challenges.

In November 2000, executive director Ruth Brown stepped down and Kim Moss took over the management of FFL as interim director. Other staff changes included the addition of Allen Gholston as human resource manager and Edelle Thompson as director of nursing. Over the next few months Moss developed a workable budget and drastically reduced costs by cutting back on non-essential expenses.

After accepting the interim directorship, Moss met with representatives from all of FFL's funders, including the City of Memphis, United Way, Assisi Foundation, and Community Foundation of Greater Memphis to present a plan for salvaging the agency. FFL was deeply in debt and on the brink of closing its doors. The funders supported the proposed restructuring plan, and in carrying it out Moss had to let go about 25 percent of the staff. He also eventually recommended that the board close down the Shelter Plus Care program at Aloysius Commons, 35 N. Claybrook. He had found that many of the clients were addicted to drugs and needed rehabilitation and treatment, not just HIV/AIDS services. The building was later reopened and established as a program for housing families where one or both parents had AIDS.

Special Events in 2000

As in the previous years, the King and Queen of Hearts benefit was held in February, organized and hosted by Jimmy Gray. It was followed a week later by another Fabulous February concert, a tribute titled *Judy Garland...the Rainbow Comes to MemphOz, Tennessee*. The 13th Annual Auction for AIDS was held on Sunday, June 25 at the Memphis Botanic Garden. The Jungle Room band had returned by popular demand "to keep the joint jumping with their incredible talent and zany antics." The auction, with the help of more than 20 committee members, ended up being FFL's most successful, raising a net \$46,000. About 500 people attended to bid on hot items such

as vacation packages to New Orleans. The auction was dedicated to Danny Munns, a long-time supporter of FFL.

The largest fundraiser of the year was A Place at the Table, which in 2000 raised \$125,000 in donations and had 6,000 participants. The dinners took place in private homes throughout September, culminating at Memphis Botanic Gardens with dessert, dancing and people making "Memphis's most diverse party," where "for one night, all the barriers of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, and socio-economics are dropped and people come together for a great cause."

One of the most visible new events of 2000 took place on the advent of World AIDS day. Sixty volunteers at First Baptist Church gathered on Sunday, Nov. 26 on the front lawn of the large church at Poplar and East Parkway to hammer 2,200 white stakes into the rain-softened ground. The markers commemorated those who had died from AIDS in the Memphis area. Butch Valentine spoke at a church service about the marker project, saying "I hope everyone realizes the importance of having First Baptist Church allow us to display these markers at an intersection that is traveled by 70,000 cars daily. They are certainly stepping outside their comfort level and exposing themselves to possible criti-

cism within the religious community, but Rev. Kenneth Corr and the deacons who voted unanimously to do this know this is the right statement to make." The event has continued every year since, and has become a perennial reminder of the ongoing fight against AIDS.

New HIV/AIDS Cases in 2000

New HIV cases in 2000 totaled 579, about the same as in the previous year. The main difference this year was the slight drop in cases among African-American males and an increase among African-American fe-



The Memphis Jazz Orchestra at the 2000 Fabulous February "Judy Garland" benefit. Photo credit: FFL.

males. Together, black men and women made up 85 percent of new HIV cases in Shelby County, a figure greatly disproportionate to the county's 49 percent black population. New AIDS cases numbered 312, about the same as the previous year. However, 255 or 82 percent of these cases were among blacks, with an increase from previous years among black females. The only good news was in the sharp drop in AIDS-related deaths, 18 compared to the previous year's figure of 42. The new drugs were having a beneficial effect and HIV/AIDS, at least in the U.S., was becoming a manageable disease.

Chapter 4

Aloysius Home



Aloysius Home was incorporated in May 1992 by a group of professionals in health and social services who recognized the supportive housing crisis in Memphis for PWAs. Up to this time, most PWAs were cared for by family members, lovers, friends, and by compassionate co-workers and even strangers. Many, however, were alone or abandoned by their families. Essentially homeless at the end of their lives, they were shuttled back and forth between hospitals and whatever emergency housing social service workers were able to find for them.

This desperate situation provided the impetus behind the founding of Aloysius Home. Its mission was "to provide a home for persons living with AIDS where daily needs are met in a loving and caring environment." The agency was named after the 16th century Italian saint who cared for people during the bubonic plague. Start-up funds were donated by the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, Associated Catholic Charities, Prescott Baptist Church, Memphis AIDS Coalition and the Kendall Foundation.

The first meeting of Aloysius Home, Inc., was held in the yellow brick

offices of Associated Catholic Charities (ACC) at 85 North Cleveland on October 21, 1992. The gathering of directors included Brian O'Malley, representing ACC, and a number of individuals who had been professionally and personally involved in the local HIV/AIDS service community, including Dr. Lisa Alex, Don Lilley, Kim Moss, Dr. Daniel Brookoff and others. Attorney Charles Key shepherded the nascent organization through the legalities of becoming a nonprofit and the group elected Freda Martin as its chairman, Kathy Boksa as vice-chairman, Charles Key secretary and the Rev. Stephen Stine as treasurer. Committees were set up to handle fundraising and other matters, and a site committee immediately began looking for potential sites for the home.

For the next six months the board looked at various available buildings and worked on getting renovation estimates. Finding a site was seen as the key step to getting project funding. In May 1993, Diana Clark, an intern with ACC, was hired as a part-time coordinator for Aloysius Home. By this time the corporation had about \$39,000 in grant pledges, including \$20,000 from United Way. Also about this time, the Regional

AIDS Consortium was formed to apply for federal HOPWA funds through the state. The funds initially approved for West Tennessee totaled \$160,000 and were earmarked for emergency rent, medication and mortgage assistance, case managers for FFL and Midtown Mental Health Center, brochures, and a toll-free telephone number for rural clients. The Memphis/Shelby County HIV/AIDS Care Consortium had also been set up to apply for and distribute Ryan White funds, administered through United Way.

Purchase of 28 N. Claybrook

In June Aloysius Home received its 501(c) (3) status and the board gave authorization to negotiate a purchase price for 28 North Claybrook, a building that had formerly been used as a residential facility by Teen Challenge. The negotiated price was \$145,000 with expected renovation costs of about \$25,000. Brian O'Malley chaired the facility planning committee. The board obtained financing, and the Plough Foundation granted \$10,000 towards the project. In September, the purchase of the building was approved. By this time Aloysius Home had grant receivables totaling \$119,440, including \$96,560 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the city's Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD), as well as funds from local foundations, United Way, and churches.

The board was also drafting an admission policy and was wrestling with the rising costs of renovation and the need to obtain a special use zoning permit. Because of licensing challenges, the board decided that Aloysius Home should be classified as a transitional group home rather than hospice, and that the facility would not offer medical treatment. Publicity about Aloysius Home was another concern as the board did not want the location of the facility to be known because of the possibility of hostile reactions by some. However, a *Commercial Appeal* article revealed the location and the anticipated opening date in March 1994.

In March, a shockingly high renovation bid of \$96,000 was submitted to the board, and at its April meeting the board approved limiting the occupancy of Aloysius Home to eight residents, so as to qualify as a "single family dwelling," which, it was hoped, would keep renovation costs down. Fundraising was also proving to be difficult, and by May, less than half of the annual budget of \$142,000 had been



Aloysius Home, at 28 North Claybrook. Photo credit: FFL.

raised.

In June, Dr. Jim Shaw was hired as executive director. The CDBG grant from the city was revised to pay for half of the executive director's salary. A few months later, Brian O'Malley resigned from the board and afterwards, the relationship with Associated Catholic Charities appears to have faded.

By fall, Dr. Shaw reported to the Aloysius Home board that \$85,000 would be needed to complete renovations at 28 N. Claybrook, and that if the facility didn't open by the end of the year \$100,000 in funding commitments could be lost. Shaw blamed code issues for the delay in opening and the board subsequently voted to authorize funding for renovations to open an adult daycare program for PWAs, and to continue with renovating part of the building for transitional housing. It was hoped that licensure could be obtained from the State Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and in the meantime, daycare services were scheduled to begin Jan. 10, 1995.

In 1995, Charles Key assumed the board chair, and Dan Brookoff became vice chair. Work on the building proceeded at a slow pace and at the April board meeting renovation costs were now reported to be up to \$200,000, half of which was expected from the Assisi Foundation, with \$50,000 from Ryan White, and \$30,000 from HUD Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds administered by the city Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Lack of fundraising by the board was cited as a serious problem, and Aloysius Home was also beginning to experience some problems with its grants. HCD was slow in making reimbursements for Aloysius Home's out-of-pocket expenditures, which had to be approved before funds could be reimbursed. Then, after a monitoring visit in April, HCD advised Aloysius Home that its ESG grant funds would be taken back since its five regular daycare clients were technically not homeless as required by ESG regulations.

Despite the rising renovation costs and other difficulties, private sector support for Aloysius Home continued to be forthcoming, an indication that the need for housing for PWAs was recognized. The Assisi Foundation offered \$300,000 for renovations, operating costs and to help pay the mortgage at 28 N. Claybrook, and the Plough Foundation offered \$50,000 to replace Ryan White funds that had been awarded, then denied, and which were on appeal. St. Joseph Hospital also offered to let Aloysius Home lease its former convent building at 273 N. Parkway for the Aloysius Home residential and day program through the end of 1995. By this time Aloysius Home was operating its day program at Holy Trinity Community Church three days a week and averaged seven clients per day. The cost for rehabilitation of Claybrook kept rising and was now up to \$270,000. Dr. Shaw subsequently met with concerned representatives of the Assisi and Plough foundations about the renovation costs.



From June 1995 to the end of the year Aloysius Home worked to open a residential facility in the former St. Joseph convent on North Parkway. Dr. Dan Brookoff worked on a partnership with Baptist and Methodist hospitals to provide staffing and in August the Aloysius Home board authorized Dr. Shaw to start residential services. In the meantime, Aloysius Home had received a large HUD Supportive Housing Program grant of \$761,671, but in December, HCD advised Shaw that the grant had been had been challenged by the HUD Knoxville office and that there were issues to be worked out.

Supportive Housing Begins

By early 1996 Aloysius Home had secured a 12-month lease with St. Joseph Hospital to operate a supportive housing program at 273 N. Parkway on an interim license from the state Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Dr. Dan Brookoff was Aloysius Home's new chair and donated his time as medical director for the Parkway facility, which had seven full-time and four part-time employees. The nine PWAs living at North Parkway had a variety of developmental, social and psychological problems and at the March board meeting Dr. Brookoff described the patient care as "intense." At this meeting, the board also approved hiring Kevin Lee as a grant administrator for the agency.

Renovations at Claybrook were scheduled to be completed by June, but how the facility was to be licensed was still unclear. In June, Thomas Boggs, the

owner of Huey's, helped lay out and furnish the kitchen in the building and he subsequently joined the board. Friends For Life also helped pay to furnish a resident's room and a few months later donated a van to help with client transportation. By September 1996 Aloysius Home had 13 full-time and two part-time employees, and there were 10 residents living at North Parkway and four at Claybrook under what may have been a temporary license. The residents were all men except for one, and 70 percent were African-American. Although Claybrook was now occupied, there was an ongoing dispute with the contractor.

By the end of 1996, Aloysius Home had received grant awards in excess of \$2.5 million, including \$2,367,000 in Supportive Housing funds, \$103,000 in Ryan White funding, \$300,000 from the Assisi Foundation and \$29,000 from the Plough Foundation. An additional \$173,130 had been raised from other private and business sources.

Nevertheless, at its February 1997 annual meeting and retreat the board was faced with a number of complex and troublesome issues, including tense relations with government agencies, barriers to licensure, staff management concerns, and poorly functioning committees. The staff had mushroomed to 15 full-time and five part-time employees. The renovation of Claybrook was still incomplete, and Aloysius Home was told it could not continue to operate the facility under its current license. Inspections and other government red tape were taking up much of Dr. Shaw's time. In March, Shaw told the board that a consultant paid by HUD would help the

agency address its vexing licensing and operations issues. But licensure for Claybrook continued to be a stumbling block and it looked as if special legislation would be needed to allow the facility to operate. A disgruntled former employee was also badmouthing the organization, claiming fiscal mismanagement.

A new board and officers were elected in early 1997, including Dan Brookoff as chair, Jeanne Dreifus, vice-chair, Ruth Brown, secretary and Thomas Boggs, treasurer. Danny Aldridge, a resident of Aloysius Home, was also elected to the board. Plans for Aloysius Home's first major fundraiser were being made. Conceived and organized by board members Kay Carey and Nancy Willis, "A Place at the Table" was a series of dinners held at private homes for friends, ending in dessert, champagne, entertainment and dancing at the Memphis Botanic Garden. The event was set for September 20, 1997, and more than 60 private parties were held. Thomas Boggs helped garner donations of 1,400 desserts from area restaurants for the grand finale, and \$90,000 was raised, making "A Place at the Table" a tremendous fundraising success.



Agency Troubles

In the fall of 1997 troubling delays in the Claybrook facility's renovations continued, and Aloysius Home was denied HOPWA funds it had requested. A *Triangle Journal News* article titled "Aloysius Home Shut Out of AIDS Housing Funds" said that Aloysius Home was given \$50,000 in funds for its adult daycare program, but received no funds for building acquisition, which is what had been requested. The reason given for the denial was that HOPWA discouraged "brick and mortar allocations," and instead encouraged supporting PWAs in existing housing.

Another challenge arose at the end of the year when St. Joseph Hospital was sold to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. St. Jude subsequently leased the St. Joseph property to Baptist Hospital, which would be Aloysius Home's new landlord. Fortunately, St. Joseph's involvement and support for Aloysius Home's mission continued for several more years through the involvement of its CEO Joan Carlson and Sister Jane Marie Klein.

By this time Aloysius Home was housing 23 PWAs. Two clients eventually died from AIDS, and several others were expelled from the program for drug use. Resident difficulties included substance abuse, theft and major and minor altercations. In January 1997 one resident was evicted for attempting to assault another with a butcher knife.

Efforts finally were under way to

get licensure for the Claybrook facility through the state legislature with help from Senator Steve Cohen. The expected resident stay at Claybrook was now a month to two years. The facility also housed an adult wellness program that provided daycare with two hot meals and other services. Executive director Shaw and the board were also planning to start a new facility funded by the HUD Shelter Plus Care program for PWAs who could live independently but needed occasional support services and rental assistance. Aloysius Home subsequently was awarded a Shelter Plus Care grant of \$721,000 to construct a new building adjacent to 28 North Claybrook.

In late February, five residents moved into Claybrook even though construction on the parking lot and exterior areas was still incomplete. Tension between Aloysius Home and its funders continued. The Assisi Foundation insisted that a strategic plan be developed for the agency, and a committee subsequently began working on a plan. An executive committee of the board then met with representatives from HCD, who demanded that Aloysius Home obtain an independent agency review before it released the latest Shelter Plus Care grant. Burt Waller was subsequently hired as a review consultant and began work in June, with another independent consultant, Kim Moss, assisting him. Moss later said that his investigations at North Parkway showed that in fact, care at the facility was substandard.

In August, Burt Waller presented his report to the board of Aloysius Home detailing a number of serious problems within the agency. As a result, the board

chair, Dr. Dan Brookoff, resigned and Joan Carlson, CEO of St. Joseph Hospital, assumed the chair. Dr. Shaw also resigned and subsequently Aloysius Home board member Ruth Brown was appointed interim executive director. Brown's background was in nursing and hospital management and she had formerly worked as an administrator at the Regional Medical Center.

By September 1998, Ruth Brown had instituted staffing changes at Aloysius Home and had contracted with Kim Moss to complete the strategic plan. The staff and board considered the issue of whether Aloysius Home should continue to stay at North Parkway after St. Joseph Hospital's planned closure in November. The facility had many problems and would be costly to renovate and the board considered instead moving residents to a building at 35 N. Claybrook. The new board chair, Joan Carlson, said that the Sisters of St. Francis, former owners of St. Joseph, were willing to help Aloysius Home find a new place for the remaining North Parkway residents. Eventually the permanent housing moved to 576 Harrell where it operated until it was closed in 2000.

With the finances of the agency dangerously low, some good news arrived from Senator Steve Cohen, who presented a \$10,000 check to Aloysius Home. Funds raised from the second "A Place at the Table" also helped make ends meet.



Towards a Merger

During the first half of 1999 the staffs, officers and boards of Aloysius Home and Friends For Life began a series of meetings and dialogues which would eventually result in the merger of the two agencies. After Tom Roden left Friends For Life in April 1999, the rationale for merging the two agencies became more compelling, though the challenges of doing so were equally apparent. According to Dr. Morris Klass, then a board member of Aloysius Home, the president of FFL, Dr. Marshall Koonce, and Joan Carlson, chair of Aloysius Home, decided to attempt it, though there were some complicated legal issues that had to be resolved. Thomas Boggs recalled that he involved Scott Ledbetter to help accomplish the merger, and Boggs, Jeanne Dreifus and others credited Ruth Brown for making the merger work.

Bill Andrews was on the FFL board at this time and he recalled that the financial problems of Aloysius Home at one point nearly ended the merger attempt. Jeanne Dreifus remembered being involved in negotiations with city officials during the merger, which she commented was "not well planned, but was something that was recognized as more or less essential for the survival of both agencies." She was in favor of the merger, but recognized that "it was a marriage of night and day" and that "it was going to take time for the two boards and staffs to understand each other's service worlds." She observed that Aloysius Home had some major projects under way. By that time they

had purchased a 16-unit apartment building across the street from 28 N. Claybrook using Shelter Plus Care funds to house PWA families, and were planning to provide services to those clients as well.

Then, on June 21, 1999, the feast day of St. Aloysius of Gonzaga, Aloysius Home announced the receipt of an \$860,000 grant from the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, and broke ground on a new facility adjoining 28 N. Claybrook. The new building was to provide 22 beds for permanent supportive housing for single persons and families. Construction was expected to begin in August and the facility was to open a year later, in the fall of 2000. Sister Jane Marie Klein from the Sisters of St. Francis presented a check for \$430,000 during the groundbreaking ceremony as the first installment of the gift earmarked for construction of the facility. Following the merger, the project was put on hold, and ultimately, it was abandoned.

In July 1999, the merger went forward another step when Ruth Brown was hired to replace Tom Roden at FFL and became the director of both agencies. The union of the two organizations was essentially complete by early 2000, and the combined entity was officially named Friends For Life Corporation—Aloysius Home and AIDS Resource Center. Later in the year Brown resigned, and in October 2000, Kim Moss was hired as interim director. Moss spent the remainder of 2000 ferreting out and coming to grips with the agency's numerous organizational and budget problems.

Chapter 5

2001 to 2005: A Different Path



2002 marker display at First Baptist Church at the corner of Poplar and East Parkway. Photo credit: Karen Pulfer Focht/*The Commercial Appeal*.

In April 2001 at its annual meeting the board of FFL elected new officers, including George Mabon as chair, Frank Cooper vice chair, Susan Mah secretary and Carl Weibel treasurer. The other board members were John Cannon, Jerry Chipman, Kym Clark, Michael Harwood, Jan Kaplan, Dr. Morris Klass, Joseph Little, David Lusk, Venita Martin, Sharon Moore-Edwards, Linda Sowell and Harriet Stern.

At that same meeting, the board members took steps to make interim director Kim Moss FFL's new executive director. The new chair, George Mabon, remarked, "The board is very proud to have an individual with the kind of talent, experience, vision and passion that Kim has to offer."

Moss's background as a minister and his 14 years in the mental health field at Midtown Mental Health Center, followed by several years working as a nonprofit consultant, gave him extensive experience working with people who were homeless, mentally ill, and chemi-

cally dependent, as well as those with HIV/AIDS. Moss had worked closely for many years with FFL and Aloysius Home, as well as other social service agencies and public and private sector funders, making him familiar with both the landscape in which FFL had to operate and the challenges it would face. Subsequent press releases announced the appointment of Moss. All ended stating FFL's mission, "to enhance the quality of life for men, women and children affected by HIV/AIDS through education, prevention, advocacy and the provision of health, housing and human services."

During 2001 Moss worked to uncover and resolve the agency's financial problems and bring the merged Aloysius Home and FFL into the light as a newly constituted entity. When he was hired, the agency had debts of more than \$600,000. There was no prepared budget, and staffing and operating costs exceeded available funds. One quarter of the staff had to be laid off, a wrenching process. Moss later wrote, "I basically

let everybody go that was not paid for by a grant. It almost killed me." As for what sustained him during this period, he wrote that as a person with AIDS, "it really was personally important to me that this agency survive. And I believed I could do it."

As a result of a determined effort by its staff and board, in 2001 FFL began to reemerge as the primary HIV/AIDS service agency in the Mid-South. New initiatives were launched and publicity about FFL once more became visible in the local media. Partnerships were re-forged with other social service agencies, churches and the business community, while old and new fundraising opportunities were maintained or pursued. FFL began to transform itself from an agency struggling to meet the needs of PWAs into one that provided services with the goal of empowering clients to achieve personal wellness and a higher quality of life.

Staff changes also took place, including the addition of Angela Lamb as director of volunteer services. Other new staff members included Len Piechowski director of the Positive Living Center, Gracia Steele, director of housing, Patricia Pair, director of marketing and Brian Daubert executive assistant.

FFL continued outreach efforts at events such as the 2001 Cooper-Young Festival, where free OraSure HIV testing was offered. OraSure was the new, non-invasive, "painless and bloodless" oral swab testing method that tested sa-

The PLC has enabled me to embrace my HIV—I am not alone and I have lots of options. The alternatives (Reiki, healing touch, energy work) are something I have come to value, desire and more and more appreciate. There would be a great void if any of these things were deleted.

—Anonymous PLC client.



liva for the HIV antibody. The FFL Food Pantry was serving more than 800 individuals per month at the end of 2001. *Frontline*, the FFL newsletter, got a new look and for most of 2001-2002 was sponsored by Agouron Pharmaceuticals. Volunteers continued to be an integral part of the agency and played a major role in sustaining Feast for Friends and staffing the Food Pantry.

Still, with its case management services cut back due to staff layoffs, Moss felt that FFL didn't have much left in the way of programs to serve PWAs. He subsequently developed the idea of the Positive Living Center (PLC), a concept based in his own experiences in learning to live with AIDS. The center was started with a \$25,000 United Way Venture Fund grant, and its opening, Moss said, "built some renewed excitement and positive energy" for the agency at a critical time. The PLC was a place "to maximize the opportunities for persons living with HIV/AIDS [and] provide holistic therapeutic activities designed to assist [them] in achieving the highest quality of life possible." The cen-

ter had professional staff and volunteers to provide free services to eligible HIV-positive participants. It has since received national recognition by the Centers for Disease Control as one of the few holistic programs of its kind in the United States.

Located at First Congregational Church at 1000 Cooper, the PLC included a drop-in room for socializing and games, a resource center with information and materials about HIV/AIDS, computers with Internet access, and a meditation room where aromatherapy, massage chairs, an aquarium and music system were available. Cooking, nutrition and meditation classes, art and music therapy and other services were also offered.

A few months after the PLC's grand opening in mid-September, it presented THE FACES OF AIDS, an exhibition of photos documenting the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Midwestern United States.

At the end of 2001, FFL was awarded a \$26,000 Philip Morris Positive Helpings grant to support food pantry services and improved nutrition for PWAs. FFL's nutritional services now included the Food Pantry, home-delivered meals through a partnership with MIFA, and Feast for Friends.

2001 Fundraisers

Former FFL chair Dr. Marshall Koonce and Jeff and Karen Weesner sponsored a Playhouse on the Square production of the hit show *Pageant* in January 2001 to benefit FFL, and in memory of Jerry Koonce III. This was followed by another Fabulous February concert, "Ella Fitzgerald...A Little Scat and Some of That," held at the New Daisy Theatre on Beale Street. The 14th annual auction, now called The Swingin' Summer Auction Party, in June 2001 raised more than \$49,000. The auction had the familiar cast of local celebrities and vol-



Promotional piece for FFL's 2001 Fabulous February Concert featuring Ella Fitzgerald.

unteers, including Kym Clark and Tom Prestigiacomio. One of the hottest auction items was breakfast in bed served by Kym Clark.



Tom Prestigiacomio (left) and Kym Clark (center) liven up FFL's 2001 Swingin' Summer Auction party. Photo credit: FFL.

World AIDS Day 2001

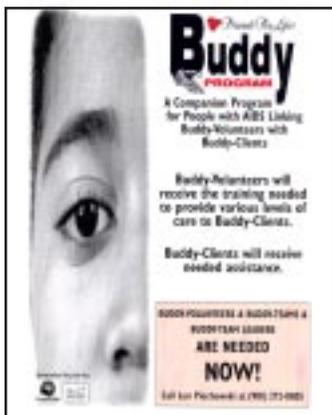
Memphians were reminded of World AIDS Day again in late November as 2,311 white and red markers placed on the green lawn of First Baptist Church commemorated the children, women and men who had died from AIDS in Shelby County. This year the project was expanded across Poplar to the Greater Lewis Missionary Baptist Church, an African-American congregation which joined in raising the markers. While the death rate from AIDS in Shelby County slowed due to new and effective medications, there was still an AIDS death every three and one-half days. Worldwide, AIDS was taking a staggering toll—7,000 lives lost every day. An estimated 21.8 million deaths had occurred worldwide since the beginning of the epidemic. HIV/AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death in the world.

The guest speaker at the local observance of World AIDS Day was Dr. Jimmy R. Allen, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, whose daughter had died of AIDS. Many of the churches now participating in World AIDS Day in Memphis were African-American.



2002—Coming Full Circle

In early 2002 FFL reinstated the buddy program which had fallen by the wayside during the agency's previous troubles. The impetus for reviving the program was the hospitalization of Butch Valentine over the New Year's holiday. Valentine recovered with help from friends and family, but he realized that others were not as fortunate as he in having a close support network. He raised his concern at the Southwest Tennessee HIV/AIDS Care Consortium meeting, a group which included FFL, United Way of the Mid-South, the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, the HIV Consortium, The MED's Adult Special Care Center, Loving Arms, Whitehaven-



FFL Buddy Program brochure.

Southwest Mental Health Center and other agencies. The Consortium recommended that FFL re-establish a companion program for persons with AIDS. Accepting the challenge, FFL announced plans to begin the service in April 2002. Len Piechowski was reassigned from the Positive Living Center to initiate the program.

With Piechowski now overseeing the Buddy Program, a new staff member, Anita Bradford, was hired to run the Positive Living Center. Bradford was a certified HIV instructor and licensed alcohol and drug counselor. Executive Director Kim Moss said, "Because of the emphasis we want to have on dealing with addictions at the PLC, [Bradford]

seemed more than the perfect person for the job." The emphasis on a healthy, drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle was now strongly promoted as an essential component of managing HIV/AIDS, as the disease itself and the medications to control it necessitated avoidance of illicit drugs and alcohol to maximize the effectiveness of treatment medications.

At its annual meeting in April 2002, six new members joined the FFL board, including: Rev. John Gilmore, Dr. Robert Howerton, Estella Mayhue-Greer, Jeanne Richardson, Geneva Reid, Nancy Fletcher, and Dr. Hunter Rittenberry. The 2002 officers were George Mabon, chair; Linda Sowell, vice chair; Frank Cooper, secretary; and Susan Mah, treasurer. Other board members continuing to serve included Jan Kaplan, Dr. Morris Klass, Joseph Little, Venita Martin, and Sharon Moore-Edwards. Carl Weibel, chair of the FFL board from 1998 to 2001, died early in April 2002. He was described by Dr. Marshall Koonce as "a voice of quiet, studied reason that helped the agency to survive and grow" during some of its most turbulent years.

May brought the exciting announcement that Friends For Life had been granted \$813,000 in HOPWA and \$287,000 in Ryan White Title II funds to be used for housing and other services over the next two years. Remarkably, less than two years after beginning to dismantle the last of its housing programs, FFL had come full circle and regained its role in providing housing, transportation, nutritional and other essential services to PWAs. Executive director Kim Moss reminded the community, "Grant awards such as these are

significant. However, such grants do not provide all of the costs associated with the programs and the services. Therefore, our fundraising efforts remain a necessity to cover the costs not funded by these grants."

Spring brought another change to an FFL program following changes in government funding priorities for PWAs. FFL's transitional housing program was discontinued in favor of providing permanent housing for families where one or both parents had HIV/AIDS. The cost was also an issue—the transitional housing program required more than \$500,000 per year to house 11 people. The renovation of the building at 28 N. Claybrook using HOPWA funds would convert the second floor into permanent housing and the ground floor into a kitchen, classrooms and offices for the agency.

About this time, former nutritional coordinator Ed Brandon was put in charge of a new adherence program housed at 28 N. Claybrook. The program addressed medication compliance, "providing information about how to manage side effects, education about medication and the effects of the HIV/AIDS medicine on one's body." Adherence to proper diet through meal planning, cooking and nutrition was part of the program, and participants earned "brownie points" that could be redeemed for cookware.

Brandon and other staff members also focused on "educating people on what they need to know—learning the names of the drugs they are taking—and networking with health providers and clinics to motivate clients to adhere." FFL brought in drug representatives and

The Positive Living Center provides me and other clients with an outlet for our personal concerns. In addition to being able to discuss health issues, we are able to be in an understanding and accepting environment. Just being able to talk about things relieves stress and improves overall physical and mental health. I most enjoy support groups. Here we have the opportunity to hear someone else's story and take the focus off ourselves for a while.

—Joseph, a PLC client.



Participants at 2002 PLC retreat "Healing in the New Millennium." Photo credit: FFL.

physicians to talk about different concerns such as the need to take supplemental testosterone for men, and issues specific to women.

Another new FFL program was Prevention for Positives, a program aimed at teaching HIV-positive individuals the importance of disclosing their HIV status, how to avoid high-risk sexual behavior and re-infection by another strain of the virus. The Positive Living Center, Buddy Program and van transportation to medical and social service appointments were other ongoing services being implemented with the aim of helping those with the disease "gain the skills to manage their illness and, at the same time, enjoy a high quality of life," said Moss.

Good news arrived at FFL in July when it was announced that the agency would receive an increase in United Way funding. The increase of nearly 72 percent, to \$64,686, was the result of a review committee's favorable impression of FFL's programs. According to the re-

viewers, "program models are clear and concise with meaningful and measurable outcomes." United Way also commended FFL for "its creative and productive fundraising efforts."

Striving to offer cutting edge medical breakthroughs and technologies, FFL again offered free HIV/AIDS testing using the OraSure method at the 2002 Cooper-Young Festival. FFL also began to offer free OraSure tests at FFL on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 2, and at the Positive Living Center. Another outreach initiative that fall was a poster campaign which solicited candidates "to live their fantasy as a model." The posters were to be used for an aggressive HIV/AIDS Prevention/Education Poster Campaign, which used the slogan "Play Safe." Another outreach effort was the Positive Living Center's retreat, "Healing in the New Millennium" attended by 30 clients and caregivers.

In October, the death of Ruth Brown was announced. Brown had served on the board of Aloysius Home

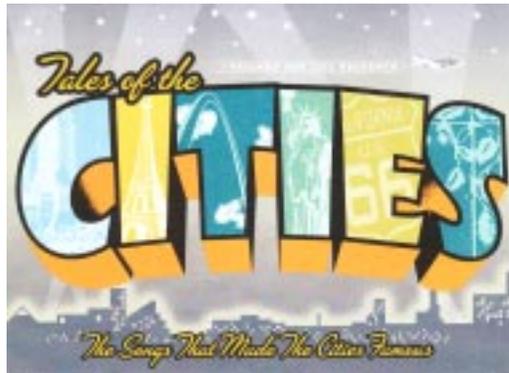
before becoming its interim director, and was interim director of the merged agencies until November 2000. Brown served the HIV/AIDS community for many years as a nurse manager in The MED's Adult Special Care Center and as a member of the Southeast Tennessee HIV/AIDS Care Consortium.

FFL's statistics on those it served the previous fiscal year were published in December 2002 and showed that the agency was active and growing in the services and numbers of clients served. In Education/HIV Prevention 3,008 individuals were served through individual interventions, 3,920 through group intervention, and 7,690 through outreach programs. The Food Pantry served 12,455 people with 14,843 grocery bags and 4,676 with non-medical supply bags. Feast for Friends had served 1,219 people during the year. At the Positive Living Center, 249 new persons with or affected by HIV/AIDS were served and 838 FFL clients received transportation assistance during the year. Since its re-establishment in April, the Buddy Program had served 13 buddy clients through 270 volunteer hours. Overall, 789 active volunteers donated 6,524 hours to the agency during the year.

2002 Special Events



The theme of the fifth annual Fabulous February Concert was "Tales of the Cities...The Songs that Made the Cities Famous." The line up of performers included many from previous years as well as the Memphis Jazz Orchestra and Tom Prestigiacommo as the emcee for the evening at the New Daisy Theatre. The fun continued after the concert



FFL Tales of the Cities promotional piece."

with a reception at Alfred's which included music for dancing by the Carl Wolfe Quartet and a silent auction chaired by Leslie Spear. For the fifth year, Craig Simrell sponsored the concert, Impact Marketing and Kathy and Kelly Fish co-spon-

sored the reception. The Hilton Hotels Corporation sponsored the Executive Director's table.

Other important events in February included Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on February 7. This day was presented as an opportunity for black community-based groups to mobilize against the AIDS pandemic and to encourage African-Americans to be tested. Ernest Donelson, FFL's HIV educator, helped organize the day's events and with other AIDS educators continued to seek ways to reach those at risk within the African-American community. According to FFL board member Cleora Tucker, "Not permeating the African-American community is due partly to perceptions of the disease, and denial that [HIV/AIDS] af-

fects African-Americans disproportionately. It is also due to underlying fear and denial of the disease itself. Mistrust of the system is another factor—there is a long history of African-Americans being misused by the medical establishment.”

The 15th anniversary of the Annual AIDS Auction gave Butch Valentine an opportunity to recall the first auction held in 1986 at George’s, a nightclub on Marshall, where about 100 people gathered to raise \$5,000. “The first auction was held during a time of fear and darkness when only a few individuals and businesses were willing to support an AIDS fundraising event,” Valentine said. Since that time the event has become a vehicle for building community-wide support for FFL.

The 2002 auction at the Memphis Botanic Garden on June 23 once more welcomed Kym Clark “to camp it up and vamp it up” in her role as honorary auction chair. Once more, the auction broke all previous records—netting the agency \$63,000. Valentine noted that the effort to mobilize this kind of event was “massive” and credited Angela Lamb, FFL’s volunteer coordinator, and the volunteers, donors and bidders for their part in making the event the best to date in FFL’s history.

In July, at the 10th anniversary of the Feast for Friends, Darrell Bowers’ dream and his mother Martha’s commitment to continue the program

were acknowledged. Two months later, “A Place at the Table” raised \$66,000 for the agency. The end of the year once again was marked by World Aids Day which was celebrated at Temple Israel on the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, the festival of light and rededication.



2002 Statistics

At the 14th International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, the Centers for Disease Control reported that an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 Americans infected with HIV were undiagnosed and untreated. Without knowledge of their HIV status, thousands were continuing to spread the disease. UN AIDS Director Peter Piot remarked, “We are only at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic ... Collectively, we have grossly, grossly underestimated how bad this was going to be ... It is by far the biggest epidemic that humanity has known in absolute terms.”

In Shelby County, by March 2002, there had been a reported 5,400 cases of HIV and 3,368 cases of AIDS. Of these, 55 percent of HIV and 52 percent of AIDS cases were among black men, 26 percent of HIV cases and 17 percent of AIDS cases were among black women, and 16 percent of HIV cases and 28 percent of AIDS cases were among white men. The largest category of exposure continued to be men having sex with men.

A Major Gift

During the holiday season, FFL was quietly given one of the most significant gifts it had ever received. The co-owners of a building at 43 N. Cleveland, Ralph R. "Ronney" Snell of Eads, Tennessee, and Bill Bruce of Smithville, had decided to donate their building to a deserving nonprofit located within the area.

One day Mr. Snell was driving near his building and noticed a frail man struggling with a bag of groceries as he walked down the street. Snell offered the man a ride and helped him carry his groceries to his apartment. As he did so, the man told him that he had AIDS. His family had abandoned him, and he was just returning from the FFL Food Pantry. The man's story touched the businessman's heart, and he decided that this was a sign that Friends For Life should receive the building.

On January 17, 2003, the two generous owners signed the deed to the large and vacant building over to FFL. The building was ideally located on Cleveland near FFL's existing housing complex and offices on Claybrook. With about 16,000 square feet, the building was large enough to combine



Left photo (from left to right): Carrene Snell, Barbara Swearngen Holt and Rita Bruce. Right photo: Kim Moss, Bill Bruce, Ralph Snell and George Mabon. Photo credits: *Family and Friends*.

Friends For Life

Kindness of strangers results in donation of 3-story building to HIV/AIDS agency

Friends For Life Corporation (FFL) was the recipient of a great Christmas gift last month. Ralph R. "Ronney" Snell of Eads, Tenn., and Bill Bruce of Smithville, Tenn., donated a 3-story building they acquired at 43 North Cleveland to the Marshall and the South HIV/AIDS organization.

"This is the most significant gift Friends For Life has ever received," said FFL Executive Director Kim Moss. "The donation of a building we will soon call home."

Snell and Bruce decided to donate their building instead of selling it. With that in mind, they set about determining which Memphis area agency to donate it to. After talking to several agencies in town, the two men were advised to contact FFL, an agency neither Snell nor Bruce knew much about. This being the case, they began first

plans, but presently underway, to secure an architect to draw up plans for the needed renovation. Once the necessary remodeling is complete, FFL will move from its present location at 1383 Bluffman Avenue.



"The first goal of our recently completed strategic plan, with assistance from Shanon Burtis, a local strategic planning expert, was to secure a building to house all our programs," Moss said. "And, just like that, because of the generosity of Snell and Bruce, this goal has already been accomplished," she said. "Friends For Life will eventually alter Friends For Life to become a one-stop shop agency. This will allow clients to receive a continuum of services all under one roof."

Friends For Life Corporation was founded in 1985, to provide advice, education and assistance to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and AIDS.

News story on donation of 43 N. Cleveland. *Family and Friends*.

all of FFL's supportive services within one building. The Positive Living Center, which had been located at First Congregational Church, could be accommodated in new building, as well as an expanded Food Pantry—with room left to grow! Thanks to Ronney Snell and Bill Bruce, FFL for the first time in its history, had a building from which it could adequately serve its clients, and grow to meet their needs. Also late in 2002, the death of Dr. Marshall Koonce was announced. Dr. Koonce was a FFL board member from 1992 to 1999, and served as board president from 1995 to 1999. His generosity to FFL over the years and his dedication and service to the community were remarkable.





FFL's new home at 43 N. Cleveland, the generous gift of Ralph Snell and Bill Bruce, shown here after the building was renovated. Photo credit: FFL.

Planning for the Future

In 2003 FFL began work on a new strategic plan with assistance from Madan Burla, a local strategic planning expert. During this process, FFL's board and staff identified eight strategic initiatives that would guide the agency from 2003 to 2006. One of these initiatives was for FFL to become a "one-stop shop" agency where clients could receive a "complete continuum of services ... under one roof." In line with this goal, the agency added a referral process to Memphis Area Legal Services, and negotiated with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) to house a DHS worker on-site at its offices to assist clients with TennCare health insurance certifications.

Another new initiative was the creation of the Center for Positive Choices in the ground floor of 28 North Claybrook, formerly the location of the Aloysius Home Transitional Housing Program. The Center for Positive Choices included several programs, including Positively Sober, an alcohol and

drug abuse treatment program offered in collaboration with Family Services of the Mid-South; Memphis Black SGL Cultural and Resource Center, a street and outreach program; Prevention for Positives; The Haven—a cultural/community center for African-Americans;

Black Gay Youth—a program targeting at-risk African-American youth through peer education, outreach and OraSure HIV testing; and Day by Day, a daily living skills program.

In 2003 staff and volunteers at FFL received several awards and recognition for their past and present work. Feast for Friends volunteers received a Spirit of Giving Award from Volunteer Memphis. FFL's HIV education specialist Ernest Donelson received the Light of Hope Award from the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department. In addition, Donelson was selected by the Centers for Disease Control to attend an all-expense-paid training at the 2003 CDC Institute for HIV Prevention Leadership.

To add to a growing list of accomplishments and good fortune, in June, FFL was notified that it had been designated as a United Way partner. The designation was given by United Way for FFL's outstanding fiscal and program management. FFL was among only four out of 130 funded agencies to receive the designation in 2003. Along with this

announcement, FFL was informed that it would receive \$95,653 in funding from United Way, part of which could be used for program administration and for other expenses not covered by grants. Executive Director Kim Moss was credited as having helped the agency experience "tremendous positive growth," and the agency was credited for its professionalism and for the national recognition it had gained through new and innovative programs such as the Positive Living Center, Prevention for Positives, and Wellness University, a community-wide adherence program to coordinate the medical treatment and supportive services of persons with HIV/AIDS.

With the gift of the new building FFL began a \$1.3 million capital campaign to renovate it and two other buildings. Soon after the campaign began, in late May, FFL received a grant of \$225,000 from the Plough Foundation for the purpose of renovating the Shelter Plus Care apartment building located on Claybrook. Moss said that the grant would allow FFL "to further its mission of providing stable housing to formerly homeless people with HIV/AIDS."

Soon after, the City of Memphis gave a grant of \$100,000 to be used in the new building at 43 N. Cleveland. This and other grants received by FFL were no "fluke or happenchance," said Moss, but were the result of deliberate planning at the agency and "studies that project the growth of HIV/AIDS in the community and what will be required to meet this need." As good management and planning began to guide decision making, the agency was becoming proactive in its approach to clients' and

its own organizational needs.

Another significant milestone was accomplished in May 2003; FFL became totally debt-free. In October 2000 FFL was burdened with more than \$600,000 in debt. "Restructuring programs and budgets, close fiscal management, and a generous financial gift from the Sisters of St. Francis Health Services all helped retire the debt," said Moss. Funding from the Sisters of St. Francis had originally been granted to Aloysius Home in 1999 for a construction project which was later abandoned. In 2003, Sister Jane Marie Klein approved redirecting the funds to help pay off FFL's debts.

As a result of these accomplishments the agency was able to hire Don Akey as its new client services director together with five new outreach case managers. Butch Valentine was given the position of director of fundraising with responsibility for overseeing the agency's capital campaign.

Changes also took place on FFL's board of directors in mid-2003. Linda Sowell took over as board chair from George Mabon who remained on the board as chair emeritus. Estella Mayhue-Greer became vice chair, Frank Cooper treasurer, and Geneva Reid secretary. Other new board members were Dana Bonham, William Bruce Jr., Wesley Emerson, Jeffrey Fleishmann, Debbie Hummel, Paul Kelly, Gary Milton, Suzanne New and Penina Sims. Nancy Fletcher, Rev. John Gilmore, Dr. Morris Klass, Venita Martin, Jeanne Richardson and Dr. Hunter Rittenberry returned to the board for another term.

During 2003, FFL was one of nine local agencies accepted into the Program

for Nonprofit Excellence (PNE). Offered through The Grant Center, a nonprofit development organization, the PNE provided board and staff training, which according to Moss, helped turn the board into a “much more effective arm of our agency.” With the help of PNE consultant Bridget Ciaramitaro, a strong staff management team was created. This, Moss said, “has helped take the sole responsibility and decision making off my shoulders, [and] has empowered other managers to make informed and sound decisions.” Before this stage, the agency had consistently outgrown its capacity. Now the readiness of the organization was considered in developing plans and programs, and Moss now believes that “we’re building true capacity and becoming rock solid.”

As for diversifying the agency and making it more representative of the larger community, board member Cleora Fears-Tucker observed, “There are still some opportunities to improve the image of the organization. It is still seen as a group of gay white people by those who don’t know the community that is served. I think in some way we perpetuate this image ... that is one reason for recruiting more African-Americans on the board since the majority of those served are low-income African-Americans. The environment in which the agency was operating changed, but not our image. The staff is more diverse, there are more African-Americans and heterosexuals among the staff, but the volunteer base is still from the gay community and tends to be people affected or indirectly

assisted by the organization. The gay white community has given the most financially and emotionally and is [still] the most connected to the organization.”

Wellness University

Wellness University was launched in 2003 as an outgrowth of earlier medical treatment, adherence and nutrition classes offered by FFL. The concept was expanded to address the educational and social needs of PWAs. Anita Bradford, the Wellness University Director said, “There was an immediate need for clients to get their

GEDs, as many of them never finished high school.” GED classes were held for 20 weeks and counselors from Southwest Tennessee Community College also provided career counseling to enrollees. Volunteers, such as long-time FFL Board member Dr. Morris Klass, provided nutrition and life skills classes, which are



Anita Bradford and Kim Moss with awards given to FFL for Wellness University. Photo credit: FFL.

an important part of the program's purpose to teach clients how to manage HIV. Other partners in Wellness University included The MED's Adult Special Care Center, Methodist Teaching Practice, Family Services of the Mid-South, Loving Arms, Hope House, and a number of pharmaceutical companies. The program included four main courses: HIV and AIDS 101, Maintaining Responsibility, Staying Healthy and Living Day by Day.

Wellness University held its first graduating class ceremony at the end of 2003. The graduates received a \$25 gift certificate from Wal-Mart and celebrated their accomplishment by going on a shopping trip. Since then, Wellness University has proven to be so successful that FFL is copyrighting the program. The program illustrates the fact that "HIV is only one component of what we do," said Kim Moss. Through Wellness University and FFL's other programs, "we are helping people get a taste of empowerment—and they like it!"

2003 Special Events

At Wellness University I learned a lot of things that the doctor did not tell me. It has had a great impact on my life. I have something to look forward to—I look forward to going to the classes. I am going to go back to school to learn how to read.
—Vera, a Wellness University participant.

FFL's budget had grown to around \$1.9 million in 2003, but much of the funding was government grants earmarked for specific programs, so the agency still depended on special events to help cover operating expenses. Special events in 2003 continued some of the old favorites, including the 12th Annual King and Queen of Hearts at the Madison Flame

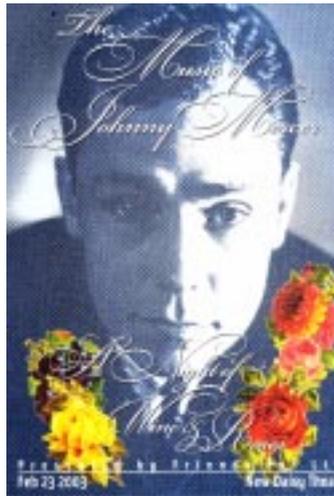
and the 6th annual Fabulous February Concert featuring the music of Johnny Mercer and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Marshall Koonce. There was also The Swingin' Summer Auction Party, A Place at the Table and a new event, the Brunch with Friends.

In 2003, FFL added a new fundraising week in late October. The agency had dropped the "High Heels, High Hats" Halloween party from its calendar for several years. A three-day

fundraising extravaganza was planned to take its place with three events, "The Diva and the Dude," "A Night In Red MasquerAIDS Ball," and "A Cabaret at the Café," individually and collectively offering "flair, fun and food," a little something for everyone's taste.

Then, on Dec. 1, 2003, World AIDS Day was again made visible at Poplar and East Parkway by the First Baptist/Greater St. Lewis marker project. As the year ended, 2,826 markers designating all of those who had died from AIDS in Shelby County were displayed on the two churches' lawns.

2004—Meeting the Challenges



FFL 2003 Fabulous February Concert promotional piece.

Ahead

January 2004 began with a significant grant award to FFL from United Way's Ryan White Title II Grant Review Committee. A total of \$868,000 was awarded for 2004-2005 to support client services related to medical care, adherence, transportation and the Food Pantry. "The amount of this award is overwhelming," said Kim Moss. "This is just another example of the confidence the United Way has in Friends For Life and its mission to help people with HIV/AIDS live well." Unfortunately, news that the amount of the grant was cut was received a few weeks later, the result of two new cities' becoming eligible for the same pot of funds. As a consequence, six planned staff positions had to be eliminated from the grant. Fortunately, some of the positions were eventually funded from other grants and others were filled by volunteers.

In addition to Ryan White funds, the agency also received a \$5,000 grant from Altria Group, Inc. in early 2004 to purchase food for the Food Pantry. Other exciting news included the launching of a new FFL Web site, thanks to Kevin Reed who volunteered his time to reconstruct the former site. A Friends For Life coffee shop was also established, funded in part by the Mid-South AIDS fund, and five new staff members joined FFL, including William McCrary as

director of program management.

In the spring, board elections were held and Linda Sowell turned the gavel over to Frank Cooper. Cooper's involvement with FFL went back to 1985 when he was the owner of George's, the site of the first ATEAC auction. Cooper said that his goals as chairman were to see the new building renovated and operational, and also to "see FFL grow to reach more people and bring more Hispanic and African-American people into the agency." The other board officers included Estella Mayhue-Greer vice-chair, Jeffrey Fleishmann treasurer,

Gary Milton secretary and Linda Sowell chair emeritus.

FFL launched its new "Play Safe" poster campaign in June. It included more than 20 different 11-by-17-inch color posters created specifically for FFL to target different segments of the community, from gay males, African-American and white, to young adults, women and men. Several different messages were articulated such as "Stay Fabulous! Play Safe!" and "Take Out An Insurance Policy on Your Life...Use Condoms...Play Safe." The posters were put up in area bars and were rotated on a regular basis.

Also in 2004, in order to encourage its clients to make regular doctor's appointments, FFL formed an alliance with the MED's Adult Special Care Center (ASCC), which placed a



Promotional piece for the 2003 MasquerAIDS Ball. FFL.



Wellness University's lifeskills and other classes are offered at 43 N. Cleveland. Photo credit: FFL.



case manager on site at FFL during Food Pantry hours. The ASCC case manager's role was to talk with clients and, using a remote computer connection to the ASCC appointment book, schedule needed medical appointments for those coming into the Food Pantry. Clients could only access the Food Pantry if they were current with their appointments and treatment plans. According to Becky Bayless at the ASCC, the program was "extremely successful" and in two months re-engaged 75 percent of noncompliant patients with medical care. Altogether, as many as 375 persons were reengaged in care through this program. This approach illustrates what Kim Moss described as FFL's "compassion with consequences" approach to service provision, which encourages and supports responsible client behavior while at the same time treating clients with respect.

Another FFL offering in 2004 was Vitamin Relief USA, a national program that provided daily multi-vitamins free to children who utilized FFL's food pantry.

Special Events 2004

The line up of events in 2004 appeared much like those in previous years, and they were equally well attended and successful. The 7th Annual Fabulous February Concert was "An Unforgettable Tribute to Music's Royalty," which featured the music of Nat King Cole, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. The 17th Annual Auction Against AIDS in June was again held at the Memphis Botanic Garden with entertainment by Jackie Johnson and the Volley Girlz.

The call for participants in "A Place at the Table" was launched in late August and the finale was set for Sept. 18. The "three Ds" of the event were again "dinner, donation, and dessert," and hosts and guests converged at the Memphis Botanic Garden for a convivial evening of entertainment provided by The Bouffants and Teresa Pate.



2004 Statistics

Despite nearly 20 years of education and outreach, the number of those infected by HIV continued to rise. Statistics released by the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department for the year leading up to June 30, 2004, identified 6,357 men and women in Shelby County infected with HIV and 3,984 with AIDS. Of these, 81 percent of those with HIV and 74 percent of those diagnosed with AIDS were African-American.

2005—Twenty Years Strong!

Friends For Life turned 20 in 2005. Numerically, symbolically, and in terms of its organizational history and growth, this year marked a passage for the agency which struggled for so many years to grow up, achieve public recognition and establish an organizational foundation that would allow it to achieve to its fullest capacity.

The year brought as many changes as previous years had, both programmatically and otherwise. Renovation of the building at 43 N. Cleveland was under way for the first nine months of the year. The move into the building was made in mid-September. The ground floor is devoted to a spacious reception area, client services, interview rooms, the Positive Living Drop-In Center, Wellness University Training Rooms and rooms for relaxation, massage chairs and other positive purposes.

My physical and mental health have been heightened by going to the Positive Living Center.

—Donnie, a PLC client.



The second floor has staff offices and meeting rooms, and the basement level will eventually house the FFL Food Patry operations. FFL has also announced plans to launch its new volunteer-supported HIV/AIDS Hotline to meet the needs of local callers seeking information on HIV/AIDS.

A number of notable staff changes occurred in 2005. Butch Valentine left FFL in March 2005 after nearly ten years of working at the agency, first as a volunteer and then as a staff member, planning and conducting special events and promotions. During his years at FFL he helped raise tens of thousands of dollars to support agency operations and services and helped raise public awareness and appreciation for the important work that FFL does for PWAs and the greater Mid-South community.

In 2005 Gina Fortner joined FFL's management team as deputy director and John Folding joined as events planner. Another new staff member, Sandra Palazolo, became FFL's director of development. Palazolo had served on the FFL board from 1992 to 1995 and had been a long-time volunteer for the Annual Auction Against AIDS. Her new role, according to Kim

Moss, will be to focus on long-term giving, capital campaigns, planned giving and development. Board changes in 2005 included the departure of Jeffrey Fleishmann and additions of Sheila Whalum, Gloria Roberts and Molitor Ford to the board. Estella Mayhue-Greer became board chair, Jeanne Richardson vice chair, Kathy Fish treasurer, Chad Pendleton sec-



Friends at a Feast For Friends dinner in 2005. Photo credit: FFL.

retary and Frank Cooper chair emeritus. As the agency nears the end of its two-year involvement with the Program for Nonprofit Excellence (PNE), Kim Moss credits PNE with helping the board and staff grow and take a more responsible and proactive role in managing the agency's affairs.

Client demand during the first half of 2005 showed a continued need in the community for HIV/AIDS services. During that six-month period FFL received 309 new clients and served 1,151 persons affected by HIV/AIDS. A total of 4,202 food pantry bags were distributed and clients were driven 21,055 miles to medical and social service appointments. The agency offered a dozen different kinds of support groups including those for men, women, persons newly diagnosed, and those with spiri-

tual needs. Kim Moss observed, "While it is tremendous to expand our services to meet the increased demand, it is frustrating that HIV infections continue."

Some of the accolades received by FFL in 2005 included that of the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), which recognized FFL for its excellent track record for counseling and testing for HIV, and particularly for the high rate of people returning for test results. In addition, Kim Moss was asked to give a presentation on Wellness University at the U.S. Conference on AIDS in Houston, Texas, and FFL received a Distinguished Award of Excellence for Wellness University from the City of Memphis's Division of Housing and Community Development.

Special events continued throughout 2005, including the bi-monthly Feast for Friends, and the Fabulous February Concert, Sizzling Summer AIDS Auction, Fall Brunch with Friends, and A Place at the Table, bringing clients, supporters and friends, new and old, together for fellowship, fun and to support the agency. The annual World AIDS Day events, listed on FFL's Web site, took

place all over the city of Memphis.

What the Future Holds

On December 2, 2005, Friends For Life held an open house at its new offices at 43 N. Cleveland Street. Well-wishers, former and current clients, volunteers, board members and supporters were welcomed by the FFL staff and marveled at the spacious and tastefully decorated building. To many, FFL's new home seemed to be a miracle symbolizing the hope, struggles, commitment and progress of 20 years.

Moving into the future, FFL's plans for 2006 include expansion of HOPWA services into four north Mississippi counties in January, and the addition of 35 rent-assisted housing units for persons with HIV/AIDS. Another exciting development that occurred early in 2006 was the location of a small Walgreens pharmacy to serve FFL clients within FFL's building at 43 N. Cleveland. According to Kim Moss, the FFL Food Pantry was a "magnet" for new and returning clients which created a captive audience that could be served by and could enjoy the convenience of the new on-site pharmacy.

As for what FFL will accomplish next, Moss said getting the debt on the new building paid off, opening a thrift store to serve clients and generate income, and establishing



A group of friends in 2005. Photo credit: FFL.

new program evaluation components are some of the things that the agency will work to accomplish within the next few years. In the long term, the agency is working towards financial stability and sustainability so that it can meet the needs of FFL clients for many more years to come.

From its small, courageous beginning in January 1985 at the Coach House Motel just around the corner on Union Avenue from its present location, up to the present day, FFL has meant caring, friendship and life to thousands of people with HIV and AIDS in Memphis and the surrounding region. As long as HIV and AIDS affect our lives, FFL will continue to have this meaning and purpose.



In The Words of Our Friends

I am 26 years old, the single mother of a 2-year-old daughter, who has been infected with HIV since 2001. Since discovering my diagnosis, life and the pursuit of it has been difficult to say the least, but I've been headstrong and determined to strive to make a better existence for myself as well as my daughter. My living arrangements have varied from living with family to living in women's shelters. But that all changed in October 2003 when I began to reside at Friends for Life Aloysius Home. I finally found my ground with the numerous support groups as well as other people who were infected with the virus. I could in some ways feel that I was not alone and that my life had substance and meaning. I can say that Friends for Life has given me the foundation in my life to desire for myself dignity, love and security which all people would like to possess.—Tarsha, Aloysius Home client.

I found out that I had HIV in 2000. I thought it was death. The doctor wouldn't treat me for HIV because I was drinking and smoking pot. I just didn't care. Then in March 2002 I went in A & D treatment and I started taking meds at the VA Hospital for HIV. They got me to go to The MED for meetings with Don Akey. I talked to Mr. Akey and said I wanted to move to a safe place. So we talked and within a week I was moving in. I was so pleased to find people that were so kind, helpful and willing to do almost anything for you. Whatever my needs were they were there for me ... they made me feel good about myself. My outlook on life changed. I really do want to live again. I can walk around with my head up high because I know that I have a family, people that care. I go to classes they have and I am learning about A & D, AIDS, coping skills, joys, anything I need is here. Which I call home, Aloysius Home, Friends for Life.—Willie, FFL client, 2004.

I'm a 41-year-old African-American male. I have been HIV positive for two years. Since I have been a student of Wellness University I have learned a great deal of knowledge about this disease and all the medications that help my body's immune system to fight this disease. Since I have been receiving food from the food pantry, transportation, counseling, housing and most of all, true friendship, I have been very blessed and my hope for living a long life has been finally fulfilled. Thank you, Friends for Life.—Anthony, 2004.

I am a 27-year-old single mother of one. I have been HIV positive for 9 years. During these years Friends for Live has been a great support. I look in my cabinets, I have food. I can make a meal. I just want to say and write thank you to all who donate. Thank you to all who give their time. Thank you from all those that depend on you all so much.—Felecia, a Food Pantry Client.

My buddy volunteer is always available to talk and listen. Larry is being a real friend to me, and we spend lots of time together. Since joining the buddy program I don't feel lonely or isolated. I feel like I can depend on my buddies for mental, emotional, and social support. I don't know what I would have done without Friends for Life or the Buddy Program.—Tyrone, 2003.

I have gained knowledge about finance to relationships and everything in between. I have gained courage to live and the life skills to achieve a healthy life style.—Randy, a 2004 Wellness University participant.

Appendix

A Short History of AIDS and an AIDS Timeline

HIV, the virus which gives rise to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), is a lentivirus or “slow virus,” which attacks the immune system, and is part of a larger group of viruses known as retroviruses. HIV seems to have spread from chimpanzees to people at some point during the first part of the 20th century. Once it was in humans, on the African continent, the virus spread mostly through heterosexual contact. In North America and Europe, young men involved in the gay sexual revolution in the late 1970s and early 1980s were the ones who were initially infected, and subsequently carried the virus across these continents and into other countries. It wasn’t until 1993 that scientists found that HIV hides in the lymph system and tissues of the body and can remain in the body for up to 10 years, quietly seeding the destruction of the immune system. During this time the infected individual can look and feel perfectly healthy, and may have no idea that they are carrying a deadly virus.

Besides sexual contact, another path through which HIV spread in the late 20th century was blood transfusions. The international blood industry had developed by the 1970s to meet the demand for blood products to serve both hemophiliacs and the medical needs of the public. In countries such as the U.S., donors were sometimes

paid to give blood, a practice that attracted intravenous drug users desperate for cash. Some of these drug users had contracted HIV/AIDS as a result of sharing needles. Civic-minded gays in large cities like New York and San Francisco also gave blood, many unaware that they were infected with HIV. The blood industry, government agencies and those in the medical field were also at first completely unaware that HIV could be spread through blood donations.

When evidence first appeared to suggest this fact in 1983, there was strong resistance against screening blood for the presence of HIV due to its cost and fears among some gay rights supporters that gays might be made into scapegoats for the epidemic. While these issues were being debated, contaminated blood continued to be shipped worldwide, and many of those who received infected donations became HIV positive. Hemophiliacs who used the blood clotting product called Factor VIII were particularly vulnerable since Factor VIII was produced from the blood of hundreds of individual donors. A single HIV+ blood donation could contaminate a huge batch of Factor VIII, putting thousands at risk.

Intravenous drug use had increased in the 1970s, partly due to the growing availability of heroin from Asia. This, together with the



development of disposable plastic syringes and the establishment of "shooting galleries" where people could buy drugs and get needles was another route through which the virus was passed to drug users, then to their sexual partners and unborn children. In the early 1980s, Dr. Ayre Rubinstein, a New York immunologist who was possibly the first to diagnose AIDS in babies and young children, was long ignored by many in the medical establishment, who believed that AIDS was just a "gay disease" and not one that could affect heterosexual men, women and children (Shilts xiv).

Much of the fear and misunderstanding about AIDS in the United States came from Americans who opposed the lifestyle and sexual practices of gays. Distaste for gay promiscuity, combined with conservative religious and social values, made some who might otherwise have been concerned about the suffering and death of people with AIDS apparently indifferent to their plight. The relentless spread of the disease during the early 1980s was also largely ignored by the mainstream media except for occasional stories that sparked fears that HIV might be spread through normal social or heterosexual contact. Today we know that HIV is not an airborne, water-borne or food-borne virus, but the stigma of the disease continues to exist in part because of its

transmissibility via sex.

Emergence of AIDS into a Global Pandemic

Medical recognition of the disease we now know as AIDS occurred in the spring of 1981 when unusual cases of an aggressive form of Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS), a rare and usually benign cancer, and of a rare lung infection, Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), were observed by doctors in young gays in New York City and in California. The increase in PCP was noted also at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta by a drug technician, Sandra Ford, who reported an unusually high number

of requests for the drug pentamidine, used in the treatment of PCP. In June 1981, the CDC published a report about the occurrence of PCP in five men in Los Angeles, a report that marked the official beginning of awareness of the yet-unnamed condition among a small number of people within the medical community.

As 1982 began, the disease still did not have a commonly accepted name. Some newspapers called it GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency) and others used the term "gay cancer." By June, a report of a series of linked cases among gay men in southern California suggested that the disease might be sexually transmitted. A month later, in



early July, 452 cases had been reported to the CDC from 23 states. Soon afterwards, reports of the disease among Haitians and hemophiliacs began to cause concern. The term "AIDS," an acronym of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, was in use by August of 1982. The term reflected the realizations that the condition was acquired rather than inherited, that it led to an immune deficiency, and that it was a "syndrome" with a variety of manifestations, rather than a single disease.

Fear and uncertainty about how AIDS spread grew as the numbers of those affected swelled. In response to the growing awareness and fear, the first grassroots organizations to address the disease sprang up, including the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF), AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), and the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York City. These groups began to provide support services to those who were affected by the disease as well as safer sex materials for gay men.

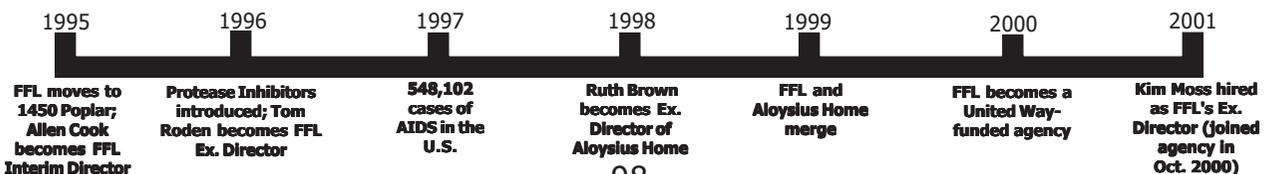
Despite the growing evidence that there was a frightening new disease facing the world, the public health response to AIDS in the United States and around the globe was characterized by inadequate funding, agency rivalries, and public and media indifference. At the World Health Organization (WHO) meeting in October 1983, 2,803 AIDS cases were reported from the United States. In November, the WHO officially began global surveillance of

AIDS. By the end of the year, reported AIDS cases within the United States had risen to 3,064. Out of these cases 1,292 people had died.

Throughout 1984, the CDC continued to pursue identification of the cause of AIDS through a study of the sexual contacts of homosexual men in Los Angeles and New York. In April, the CDC reported that the cause of AIDS, a virus called LAV, had been identified by French researchers at the Pasteur Institute. A day later, U. S. Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler announced that Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute had isolated the virus which caused AIDS, and that the virus's name was HTLV-III. The two conflicting announcements unleashed a year-long battle between scientists and officials seeking credit for discovering the virus, and ultimately hoping to profit from commercial products to stop its spread.

Meanwhile, in San Francisco, public health concerns about the sexual transmission of AIDS led to the closing of commercial bath houses, a move some saw as an attack on gay civil rights. As 1984 ended, there were 7,699 reported AIDS cases and a total of 3,665 known AIDS deaths in the United States.

In the spring of 1985 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed the first commercial blood test for AIDS, one which could reveal the presence of antibodies to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the blood. At the same time, the FDA an-



nounced that anyone who had antibodies would no longer be allowed to donate blood. Concern about the safety of the blood supply was only one of the many issues that preoccupied officials and worried gay rights groups that year. The debate over confidential versus anonymous testing, the need for counseling, and questions of how to prevent discrimination in employment, insurance and other areas was heated and would continue for many years. In April 1985, more than 2,000 people attended the first International Conference on AIDS, held in Atlanta. Three main topics of discussion were the new blood test, the situation with regard to AIDS internationally, and the possible extent of heterosexual transmission.

In 1985 AIDS took on both a public and a more tender face, when Ryan White, a 13-year-old hemophiliac with AIDS, was barred from his school, and was forced to move with his family in order to attend another school. The Reagan administration, then in its second term, had up to this time consistently tried to block additional funding for research, prevention, and treatment of the disease. On September 17, President Reagan publicly mentioned AIDS for the first time. A few weeks later, on October 3, 1985, his friend, movie star Rock Hudson, died of AIDS. Hudson was the first major public figure known to have died of AIDS. His death was covered by all the major media and brought the AIDS crisis national and

international attention for the first time (Shilts 585).

By the end of 1985, 15,948 cases of AIDS had been reported in the United States, more than double the number for the previous year. Worldwide during that year 20,303 cases of AIDS were reported to the WHO and the first reported cases of transmission from mother to child through breast milk were identified.

The relentless spread of HIV and AIDS continues. According to United Nations estimates, there were 37.2 million adults and 2.2 million children in the world living with HIV at the end of 2004. During that year, 4.9 million people were newly infected by the virus. Worldwide, HIV is a disease that mainly affects the young. About half of all people infected with HIV get it before the age of 25 and die from AIDS within ten years. Increasingly, more and more of its victims are women and children. The disease is devastating entire families, kinship networks and economies in third world countries that can barely afford to feed, much less provide healthcare to, their largely impoverished citizens. The future for many of those affected by the disease appears bleak, and is only made hopeful by the courage of those who are affected, by the determination to find new scientific treatments, and by growing world awareness and efforts by thousands of dedicated individuals and organizations around the globe to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS.



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