

Carper House: AIDS hospice proposed

by Sonja Ungemach

Several months ago, the local community was moved by the candor and courage of a young couple, Richard and Debbie Carper. The Carpers had both been diagnosed with ARC, AIDS-Related Complex. Both had been IV drug users and probably contracted the disease that way. In spite of the social stigma attached to AIDS and ARC, not to mention IV drug use, the Carpers chose to share their story with thousands of people through a local television news interview, and then in a story in the *Register-Guard*.

The consequences were immediate; Debbie lost her job following the TV interview. But Debbie and Richard continued to speak out—in hope that their story would help others avoid a fate similar to theirs. Weeks after the local coverage, they faced a national audience on the Phil Donahue Show, and again on a San Francisco television program on the risk of AIDS to heterosexuals.

Now they are spearheading a local effort to provide support and shelter for AIDS or ARC patients who have no place to live. Carper House is a newly formed non-profit corporation which is seeking to raise funds to purchase a house where homeless persons with AIDS or ARC can find the emotional and social support they need while they cope with their disease.

Richard and Debbie are two of the eight directors of the new corporation. The others are: Dr. John Wilson, a

leading authority on AIDS; Dr. Mark Heerema, infectious disease specialist; UO professor Robert Kime, Ph.D.; Shanti representative Marsh Brownfield; Methadone Clinic Director Mike Connelly; and Lynda Eaton of Health and Human Services.

Besides emotional support, Carper House hopes to provide nutritional meals, health monitoring, personal care assistance, counseling, therapeutic activities programs and spiritual care.

According to Richard Carper, homelessness is a big problem for AIDS and ARC patients who can no longer earn a living or take care of a house for themselves. He says he and Debbie are virtually unemployable since going public, yet as ARC rather than AIDS patients they do not qualify for public disability payments. There are many in the Eugene area in a similar situation. "We could fill it immediately if we had the house," says Richard.

The cost of care is also a problem which Carper House hopes to address. The average cost of AIDS care in hospitals is \$145,000 per person. The Carper House hopes to reduce that to \$35,000 per person by providing a hospice facility. "Most people at Carper House will sign living wills, as I have. I don't want to be hospitalized. I want to die in my own home. Debbie and I are now seeking a place where we feel comfortable to die. We will probably die at Carper

House."

Richard and Debbie's own health continues to be a problem. Richard's condition has recently been re-diagnosed as more serious, entitling him to some disability payments. For Debbie, the hardest part is the emotional trauma, the loss of privacy. Yet, in spite of these considerations, the Carpers are still reaching out to others. They're working to establish a drug addict outreach project, and they're talking to drug treatment centers about the risk to drug users. Their upcoming presentation at Stump Ranch (a local drug treatment facility) will be filmed by the TV program 20/20.

Richard says there are now 14 full blown cases of AIDS in Eugene, about 140 cases of ARC, and perhaps as many as 1400 people infected with the AIDS virus. It is a local problem needing local support.

The first benefit for Carper House is this weekend, Saturday and Sunday, October 10 and 11, from 10 am to 5 pm. It's a car wash at Valley River Chevron, across from Valley River Center, next to Good Guys Stereo.

Carper House is also accepting donations of money, goods and volunteer time. Call 342-4990 or send donations to 1085 West 6th, Eugene, OR 97402.

Of course the best donation would be a house. If you know of a suitable one, or have one to donate, call the above number.

Salvadoran Mireya Lucero: Life in a War Zone

by Scott Harding

The war in El Salvador is coming to Eugene.

Mireya Lucero, a women's peasant organizer from the conflictive areas in Chalatenango, will offer local residents a first-hand account of life under war in El Salvador. As part of a 40-city, four month national tour, Mireya will appear at several events in Eugene.

A benefit brunch with community leaders Sunday, October 11 will feature Mireya as guest speaker. The public is invited; the event will be held from 12 to 3 pm at First Christian Church (1166 Oak). An informal housemeeting with Mireya for members of the women's community is scheduled for 7:30 pm that evening at the First Congregational Church (1050 E. 23rd Ave.). She will also be a guest on the radio news program "Blue Plate Special," Friday, October 9, at 12 pm.

Mireya's visit will highlight the role of women in organizing for peace and justice in rural El Salvador. Largely ignored by the mainstream media, El Salvador has suffered nearly eight years of war at great cost: 70,000 dead, more than 10,000 disappeared and one million displaced persons.

Rural areas and civilians have borne much of the burden of the war during numerous indiscriminate bombings and ground invasions by the Salvadoran military. Many communities have been destroyed or forcibly relocated, displacing thousands of peasants as a result.

Yet thousands of refugees have sought to reclaim their homes and communities through "re-population" efforts. Mireya represents such a community, the re-populated village of



Mireya Lucero

Arcatao, and will testify to the success of such popular movements.

Although only 25, Mireya has a long history of organizing for social justice. While her native province of Chalatenango has been especially devastated by the effects of war and economic deprivation, Mireya has worked to improve the quality of education and working conditions of families in her community. She has also founded projects to provide health care, literacy programs and make child care available to rural areas.

For more information contact CISCAP at 485-1755.

■ LETTERS

AIDS: Deadly, Not Incurable

[Columnist Carolyn Reuben responds to Michael MacRae's letter published in last week's What's Happening (Oct. 1, 1987).]

Dear Michael,

Watching someone we love die and not knowing how to save him is one of the deepest torments of our mortal life.

Some people die no matter what is done for them or what they do for themselves. However, AIDS is not an incurable disease, no matter how many news broadcasters and irresponsible journalists say it is. The human body's immune system has within it everything it needs to fight and protect us from harm, even from the AIDS virus, a fact discovered by reputable scientists this past year.

However, impediments must be removed so the immune system can do its job. Toxic drugs do not a strong body make. Food makes the body strong. Thoughts make the body strong. Exercise makes the body strong. This is not fiction, but measurable fact. For proof, read Stephanie Matthews-Simonton and co-authors' *Getting Well Again* (Bantam, 1978, \$3.95), which documents one of the first programs to involve cancer patients in actively creating a well body with their mind, along with medical treatment, or Bernie Siegel, M.D.'s *Love, Medicine and Miracles* (Harper & Row, 1986, \$15.95) which is a more recent documentation of a surgeon's success using his patients' minds, via imagery, to destroy their cancer rather than his scalpel. There's Louise Hay, who cured herself of vaginal cancer and whose tapes and books (especially *You Can Heal Your Life*, Hay House, \$10), and weekly programs in Los Angeles inspire people with AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. The men described in Laurence Badgley, M.D.'s book *Healing AIDS Naturally* (Human Energy Press, 1986, \$14.95) and in Scott Gregory and Bianca Leonardo's book *Conquering AIDS NOW!* (Tree of Life, 1986, \$15.95) are not fiction. They are alive.

I absolutely support you in demanding accurate information about methods that

help bodies heal. In Los Angeles, there is an entire bookstore devoted to books on Alternative Therapies and Nutrition, with an emphasis on cancer, but applicable to other nutritionally-related diseases. They maintain a 24 hour hot-line for information on such therapies. For \$2, the store will send a doctor directory, patient directory (those willing to describe their treatment), cancer bookhouse list and other information: Cancer Control Society, 2043 N. Berendo, Los Angeles, CA 90027, 213/663-7801.

Laurence Badgley told me only a small minority of the people with AIDS he has seen are willing to make the major changes in their life needed to nurture their immune system back to health. Certainly not everyone who adopts a healthy lifestyle will eliminate the disease. But, there IS hope for people with AIDS, because there is much they can do for themselves, instead of waiting for a pill or an injection to save them. I am sorry you lost your friend. I am sorry so many beloved people have died, and are dying, and will die due to this disease . . . [but] to continue to call AIDS incurable is, in my opinion, malpractice on the part of the medical community and gross public injustice, with devastating medical consequences, on the part of journalists.

While researching an article on alternative therapies for AIDS published in the September, 1986 issue of *East West Journal*, I discovered an underground population of AIDS survivors, unwilling to go public for fear of being crushed by the power of negativity toward the very idea of surviving the disease. Words kill, and words cure. There is an entire field of medicine called psychoneuroimmunology, which studies the inextricable connection between mind and body. Joan Borysenko, Ph.D. of the Harvard Medical School, describes her work in this field in *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind* (Addison-Wesley, 1987, \$14.95).

Let's all choose our words carefully; a disease can be deadly, without being incurable. If you want to see survivors with your own eyes, send me 54 cents postage and I'll send you a copy of the *East West* article. . . .

The answer to healing is to give the body what it needs to do the healing. And, although the peach pie wasn't meant to be a magic bullet, it can represent the fact that natural food, essential for healing, is tasty food, and can be enjoyed by the ill and the worried well alike.

—Carolyn Reuben

No Celebration Schedule

At your suggestion, I am writing this letter to voice my opinion about the omission of the Celebration schedule. It was very disappointing! Not only did I resent having to pay for it, I also resented having to do it via R-G, which I do not care to support. To top it off, the schedule itself was nowhere near the quality and content I always appreciated from *What's Happening*—in fact, it was, simply, boring. You certainly have my vote and plea to get it back where it belongs.

—K.S.



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