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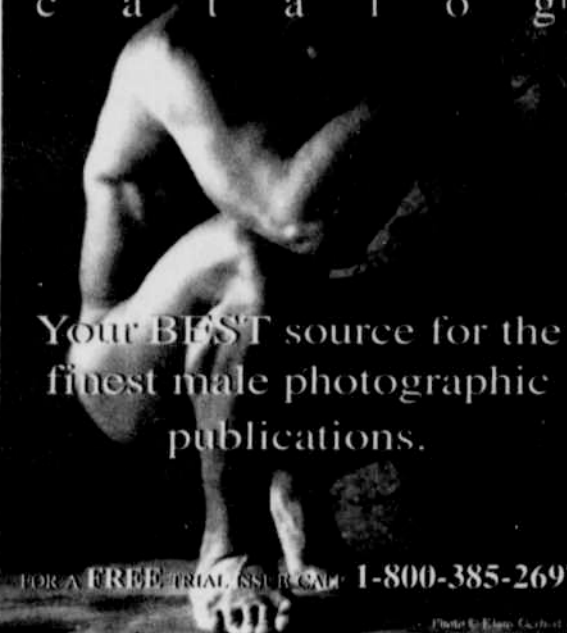
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# local news

## Friends help friends

*The Friends of People With AIDS Foundation seeks walkers and their canine companions for a pledge walk*

by Inga Sorensen



Darcelle XV and her best four-legged friend host the Best Friends Walk for Friends

**D**o you know what happens to people in Oregon who die and don't have the money to have their remains disposed of?" asks an incredulous Corey Baker. "Their bodies are offered to medical schools as cadavers. That just seems terrible to me."

So the 61-year-old retired state employee set out to ensure that at least a few people didn't suffer that indignity. "Over the past three years we've probably helped close to 100 people [who have died of AIDS complications] get cremated. Their loved ones get the urns for free.... It just seems so much more dignified and peaceful."

He adds: "Eleven years ago I suffered a heart attack. Doctors told me I had 72 hours to live, and look, I'm still here today. That experience prompted me to take a closer look at my life. What I decided was that I wanted to help those in need."

And that's what he's been doing ever since. Five years ago Baker founded the Friends of People With AIDS Foundation, a nonprofit organization that assists people living with HIV and AIDS with their everyday and emergency needs.

"We have a travel fund which is designed to help family and friends visit a loved one during [his or her] final days," says Baker. "I would estimate we've helped bring 200 people here to visit their loved ones who were dying of AIDS."

The Friends of People With AIDS Foundation also has a cremation fund to pay for cremation services for people who have died of AIDS complications; an emergency food fund, which provides emergency food baskets to those in need; and an entertainment fund, which allows the foundation to sponsor an annual Thanksgiving dinner for people with HIV and AIDS. Money from that fund is also used to purchase Easter baskets and

Christmas toys for children.

Additionally, the foundation has created a fund specifically geared toward the care of pets. "If a person gets sick, they often can't take care of their pets. We use the funds to board pets when someone is in the hospital, or to get animals the shots and food they need. That can get very expensive for someone who is living with AIDS and living on a very limited budget," he says.

According to Baker, the foundation has about \$30,000 in the bank. "We haven't applied for [federal AIDS funding] because they put all sorts of stipulations on how the money can be spent," he says. "And we didn't want to re-invent the wheel—there are a lot of agencies doing great work out there already—so we thought it was important to be flexible enough to fill the voids."

The group holds two major annual fund-raisers: a dinner auction in October and a Benefit Dog Walk in July. This year's Dog Walk will be held July 29 at Laurelhurst Park in Southeast Portland. Participants collect pledges and then bring out their four-pawed friends for the walk.

Interested parties may register now through the day of the walk. The "Best Friends Walk for Friends" event will be hosted by Darcelle XV, and will feature booths and prizes. Registration is at 9 am; the walk begins at 10 am.

Registration and pledge forms are currently available at: Man's Best Friend, 3445 SE Hawthorne Blvd.; Beauty For The Beast, 3832 NE Sandy Blvd.; Chez José East, 2200 NE Broadway; Pet Set, 1411 SW 14th Ave.; Jelly Bean, 721 SW 10th Ave.; Chez José West, 8502 SW Terwilliger; and 310 Hair Design, 209 SW Ninth Ave. For further information or to volunteer, call Baker at 245-7428.

### CAP seeks volunteers

The Cascade AIDS hotline is looking for volunteers to help staff the phones and gather resource information for its database. In addition to running the Oregon AIDS Hotline, CAP has added a new service known as the Gay Resource Connection, which provides callers with information about gay and lesbian events, activities, services

and organizations in their area. The Gay Resource Connection is a toll-free number listed in the white pages in all phone books in Oregon.

Hotline operators handle calls to both lines, and volunteers are asked to commit to one shift per week for a minimum of six months after completing training. The next training will take place over four days, July 22 and 23, and July 29 and 30. Call the hotline at 223-2437 for more information.