

Mark Rosenberg

"I wanted to volunteer but didn't know how to get started," Rosenberg says, echoing what he'd heard from friends.

He knew the cliché about volunteers getting back more than they give, but once he got started delivering meals he realized the old saw is true.

"It's something you just can't buy," Rosenberg says about the feeling that comes from helping others. "You have to do it."

When Rosenberg periodically wakes up in a bad mood, he knows what to do. He heads to the kitchen where meals are prepared for Daily Bread Express.

"It's almost like endorphins," he says. "You just feel so good about yourself, you feel like you've really contributed to and been a part of someone's life."

Also passionate about animals, Rosenberg volunteers with an organization that rescues greyhounds that are retired from racing. Once a month, he is part of a team that bathes the 40 or so dogs that are up for adoption.

Rosenberg uses his love of animals to help break the ice with the people he visits on his delivery route. He says that not all home-bound people want to become close and some simply say thank you.

"But sometimes it ends up with a friendship," he says.



CASCADE AIDS PROJECT

Provides nonmedical services to people whose lives are affected by HIV and AIDS. Needs volunteers for a wide range of programs.

Contact: (503) 223-5907 in Multnomah County, (503) 693-3234 in Washington County, (360) 735-9170 in Clark County

Sidney J. Thompson

Some people volunteer in their own unique way.

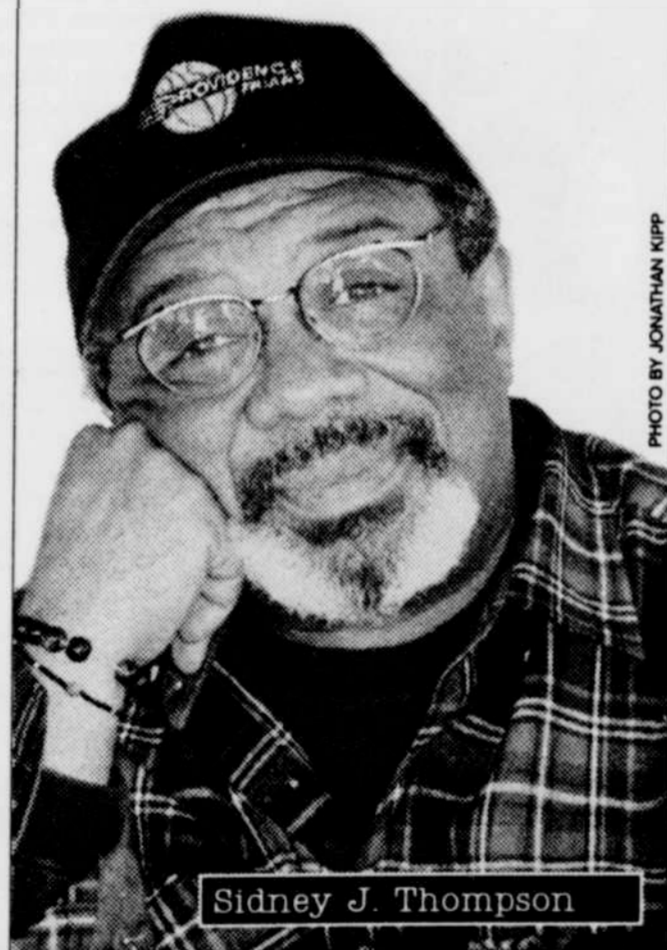
"I've never really gone into an agency and said, 'I am here to volunteer for you,'" Sidney J. Thompson says.

Thompson has informally volunteered for Cascade AIDS Project and Project Quest, among others, but has found his volunteering niche on his own.

"We don't focus on everyone getting help," Thompson, who is HIV positive, says. "There's too much prejudice from one group of people to another! It doesn't matter where it came from or how it happened. It happened."

Thompson's mission is reaching out to people affected by AIDS and HIV, especially the people being neglected by existing services.

"We were overlooking the most important people who have something to do with this," he says. "The parents of those with HIV and AIDS. In some sense they were being ignored."



Sidney J. Thompson

When Thompson felt the African American community was in denial about HIV, he put together a resource packet on his own and distributed it at community events. If Thompson sees someone ill on the street, he'll often make sure that they know about the resources available to them.

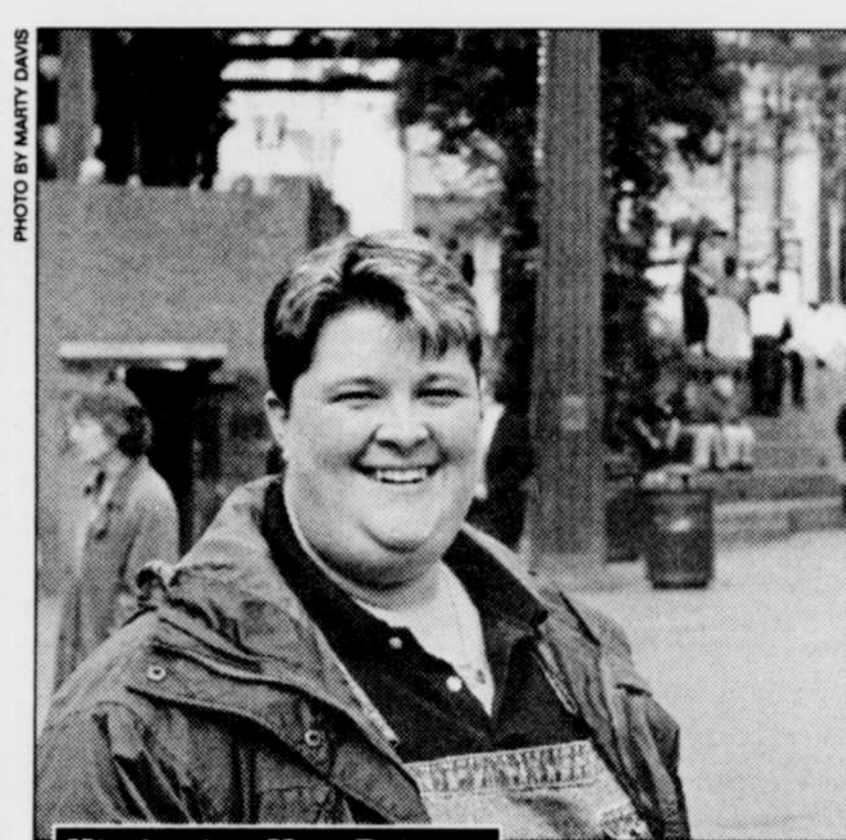
"Sometimes, it is just introducing African Americans to treatments that they aren't familiar or comfortable with," Thompson adds.

He is aware of his limitations in his volunteer work.

"Human beings are work," Thompson chuckles.

But Thompson is usually available to help people in need learn about the places that can assist them.

"That is an act of friendship right there," he says. "For a moment, I was their friend."



Kimberlee Van Patten

produced numerous fund-raising events. Though in her early 30s, Van Patten is considered an elder by ISRC members.

"It kind of happened overnight," she says. "I think it enhanced my natural leadership skills—my ability to lead," Van Patten adds. "It's made me more outgoing."

The past ISRC Emperor explains that she tends to be a behind-the-scenes type. ISRC is dedicated to raising money throughout the year for charities in Oregon that are related to the queer community. Most of the organization's events are drag shows.

In addition, Van Patten is the co-director of Peacock in the Park, the annual picnic fund-raiser for scholarship money.

"I get a huge charge out of Peacock in the Park!" Van Patten says. "Standing back and seeing 4,000 people sitting there, knowing that they are there because I got the toilets there and because I ran around and got the posters done, that is great."

Whether Van Patten is being a leader, producing flyers or lining up 50 portable potties, she thrives on community involvement.

"I really feel empowered by the whole court and Peacock and the committees and the groups that I'm involved with," Van Patten says. "I really feel there's nothing I can't do!"

■ JONATHAN KIPP is a former volunteer at Our House of Portland and now feels inspired to get off the couch more often. This is his debut as a free-lance writer and the first time he's utilized his journalism degree. You can reach him at jkipp@teleport.com.

IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN ROSE COURT

Social organization dedicated to raising money for charities within the queer community. Needs support personnel for events. Contact: (503) 306-0700, ISRC@aol.com, www.rosecourt.org

PEACOCK IN THE PARK

Annual event to raise money for the Audria M. Edwards Scholarship Fund. Needs people to provide security, setup, breakdown and cleanup for events and to procure sponsors. Contact: www.gaypdx.com/peacock

Kimberlee Van Patten

Kimberlee Van Patten grew up in Portland's drag community.

"I wasn't 21 when I started," she admits sheepishly.

As she became familiar with the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court, she began to give her time and energy. Van Patten served on the board of directors and is a past president of ISRC. She's also coordinated coronations and

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