



PHOTO COURTESY OUR HOUSE OF PORTLAND

Joanne Barham and Ben Estes are two of Our House's many longtime volunteers

During its 15 years of operation, Our House has seen an immense change in society's views of those with AIDS. However, much remains to be learned.

"I am still surprised about the level of ignorance with some people," Siebert says. "I had one volunteer who came in, signed up and then had to bow out because her husband felt like she would not be safe."

Benson adds, "As people are living longer with HIV, people are getting used to it." As a

result, she notes, some are not being as careful as they once were.

"There are a lot of misconceptions concerning transmission and the like," Bryant adds. "I can say before I came to Our House, I was one of the misinformed."

Finally, Sellers and Siebert say that there is always a need for more volunteers and that there is a place for everyone. It doesn't matter if you just want to help peel potatoes on Friday nights or if you want to take residents to

appointments or on other errands. Perhaps you like to play cards and would not mind spending one evening a week doing just that with residents. Or maybe you are one of those who truly would value the experience of caring for people in their final days.

"It is important," Benson says. "There needs to be more places like Our House. There is going to be a real need for it. And there is always going to be a real need for volunteers."

"Volunteers," Siebert says, "are a big part of the family." **J**

OUR HOUSE OF PORTLAND will celebrate its 15th Anniversary Open House from 2 to 5 p.m. March 16 at 2727 S.E. Alder St.

The program begins at 3 p.m. with Heartfelt Awards and Remembrance. Food and refreshments will be provided. To volunteer call Kathryn Siebert at 503-234-0175.

TOM STEVENSON is a Portland free-lance writer and a full-time Portland State University student who can be reached at ruraltom@yahoo.com.

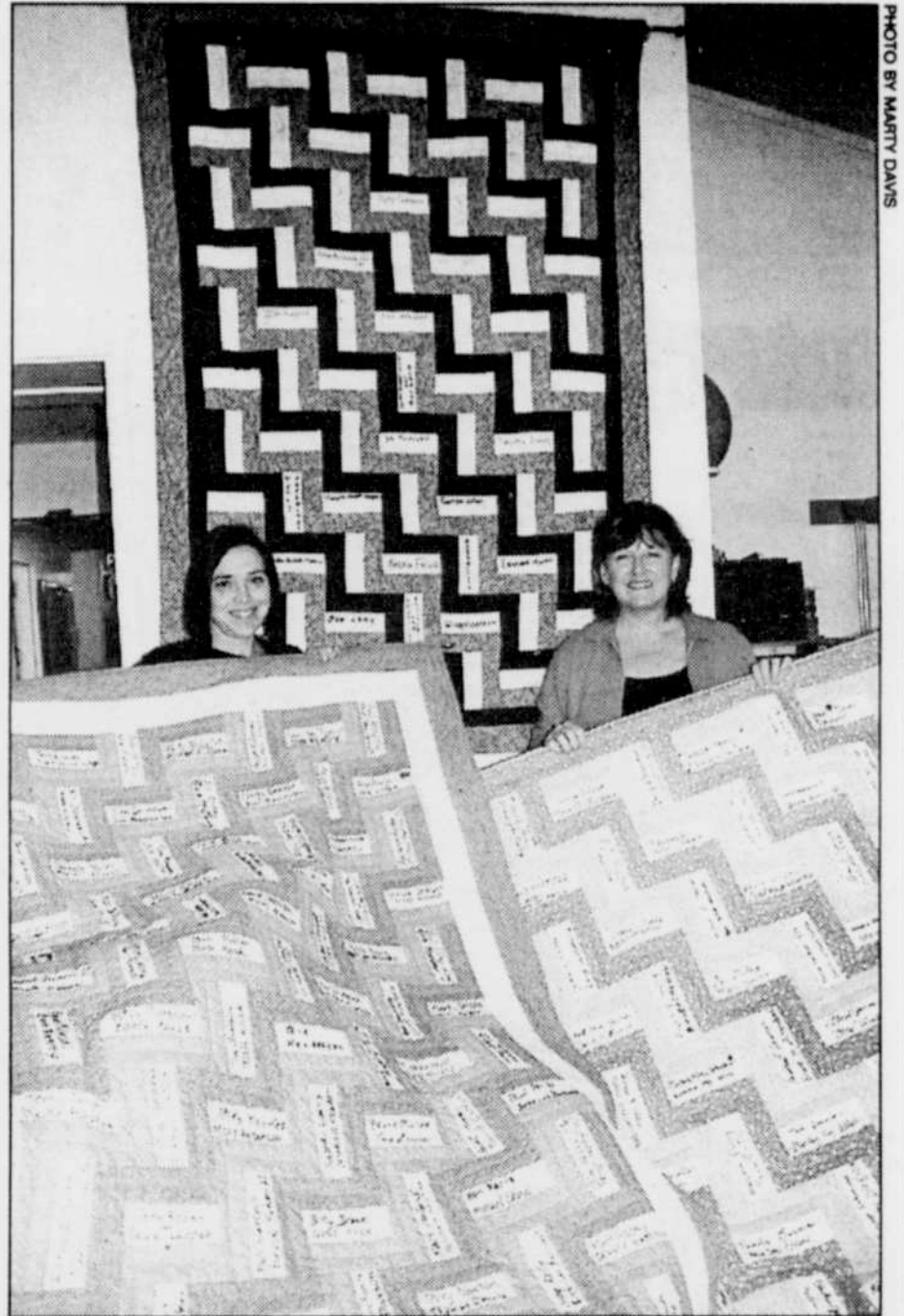


PHOTO BY MATTY DAVIS

Kathryn Siebert (left) and Nancy Sellers display three quilts memorializing those who have died at Our House

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Our House residents Lonnie (bottom left) and Jim (top right) with Equity Group's Ernest Cooper (top left) and Rose City Mortgage Specialist Chris Mee (bottom right).

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