

SOLID FOUNDATION

Nonprofit organization offers assistance to friends in need
by Jim Radosta

The Friends of People with AIDS Foundation, which aims to meet the needs that other social service agencies can't, already has seen an increase in need because of the state's poor economy.

The 13-year-old nonprofit organization offers assistance to those with HIV, including 72-hour food boxes, emergency travel and lodging, entertainment, pet care, clothing, household goods such as cleaning supplies, personal care items such as toothpaste and toilet paper, small appliances, medical equipment and cremations. It also provides people with a pair of new shoes and a new winter coat every year.

"The demand is more all the time, especially now with the state cut-backs," vice chairman Kevin Friends says. "We're starting to see an increase in what people are asking for."

Friends started out as a foundation client, later became a volunteer and finally was asked to serve on the board. He recently turned to the nonprofit for financial assistance in purchasing new glasses. "Cascade AIDS Project used to help with things like that, but since their funding has been cut, people are asking us for other things."

Friends says the Oregon Bears and the gay



Foundation vice chairman Kevin Friends started out as a client

bar Fox & Hounds have been generous in their support of the foundation. He also gives much credit to the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court for helping with wrapping and delivery during the holiday toy drive, which provides \$50 in gifts to more than 100 children affected by HIV/AIDS.

A similar charitable effort is planned for this Easter. Donors can bring baskets and candy to C.C. Slaughters, 219 N.W. Davis St., at 7 p.m. April 2.

Tod's Corner—a free clothing, household goods and personal care items store run by the foundation—recently moved into a larger space, which should help volunteers respond to the greater demand for services. The location, 3315 S.E. Harrison St. in Milwaukie, is being donated by the Sisters of Providence. Supporters can check out the new digs during an open house from 3 to 7 p.m. March 21.

"It's much larger; it's very nice," Friends says. "We're just really thankful."

The foundation's underlying purpose is "to improve the quality of life for people living with AIDS." And with the dedication of people like Friends and client services administrator Jan Rosell, the nonprofit will be able to achieve that goal more easily.

"It was looking pretty bleak for us for a while," he says. "We were down to about \$5,000 in our savings account, and it was looking pretty bad." ☐

To make a donation call 503-283-8535 or fax 503-289-9440.

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

Survivors Advocating for an Effective System envisions a reconciliatory response to crime
by Jim Radosta

Survivors Advocating for an Effective System, a queer-run nonprofit formed in 1999, is keeping a close eye on the economy because it anticipates state budget cuts will have a detrimental impact on its vision of a criminal justice system that works to restore victims, offenders and communities. Executive director Arwen Bird and outreach director David M. Baker, both bisexual, push their message through public speaking, art programs, victim offender mediation and attending community events such as the March 15 peace rally.

"Sometimes crime victims are...put on a pedestal as a reason that we should be enacting this kind of vengeance," Bird says. "We're survivors of crime who say: 'Don't do this in our name. This is not going to bring us healing.'"

Bird was paralyzed by a drunken driver in 1993. Her new perspective as a crime survivor led her to become "increasingly frustrated that there was not a voice for crime survivors who advocated more reconciliation than vengeance."

Bird says crime victims currently are offered only punishment of the offender as healing. "Mandatory sentencing or the death penalty is supposed to create healing for victims, when in fact it really doesn't address the consequences of crime."

Offenders, Bird adds, should be offered drug and alcohol treatment as well as skills to help them become productive members of society. Communities, meanwhile, need programs in place to ensure a proactive response to crime rather than feeling constantly embattled.

Bird says President Bush's pre-emptive war on Iraq is a perfect example of why a retributive criminal justice system is bound for failure.

"Much of his language is based in this biblical retribution-and-vengeance, fire-and-brimstone rhetoric, which in our minds and in our eyes is not productive," she says. "It doesn't bring healing for the people who have



Arwen Bird's experience as a crime survivor 10 years ago led her to question our retributive criminal justice system

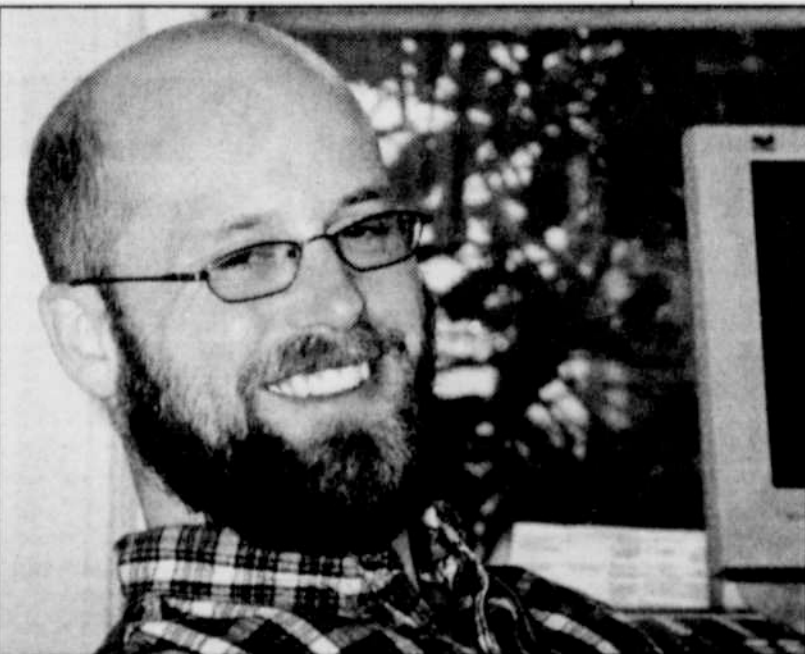
been victimized and, in fact, creates more victims.... It's a very short-sighted view of the world."

Bird believes the right terminology is important to convince people to change their way of thinking. That's why she prefers the term "survivor" to "victim."

"Being a survivor acknowledges that there was tragedy; it was life-altering, but it's something that we've survived and that has become part of our life experience and made us stronger," she says. "The term 'victim' denotes that it's something that's still continuing to detract from your life."

With January's failure of Ballot Measure 28, Bird is especially concerned about budget priorities in the Oregon Legislature. She bemoans the lack of leadership in Salem and wonders why the state continues to give tax credits to corporations while ignoring the problems addressed by SAFES.

"The links between poverty and victimization are very clear, and so the more people that fall through the safety net and live on the streets...are more and more likely crime victims," she says. "We're also cutting services that help people that have committed crimes gain skills so that they won't return to a life of crime.... It perpetuates the cycle of violence and victimization rather than breaking it." ☐



SAFES outreach director David M. Baker

For more information visit www.crimesurvivors.org.



Jan Rosell runs Tod's Corner, where low-income people can select clothing, household goods and personal care items

PHOTOS BY MARIY DAVIS

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