

We are the world

Events throughout the state
commemorate World AIDS Day on Dec. 1

Compiled by Jim Radosta

• **Portland:** Cascade AIDS Project will honor World AIDS Day, thank volunteers and acknowledge victories during a private celebration at the Hilton Hotel.

This year 632 youth and adults volunteered 19,067 hours valued at \$532,173. Mirroring demographic shifts in the epidemic, agency volunteers were an increasingly diverse group: 59 percent were heterosexual, 47 percent were female, 10 percent were youth, and 26 percent were people of color. One-quarter were themselves people living with HIV/AIDS.

The 2003 Torchbearer Award will honor the Meyer Memorial Trust for its support of the Kids' Connection program. Receiving CAP's Angel Awards will be Butters Gallery, Microsoft Corp. and a Catlin Gable School class. Honorees also include 22 youth and adults who volunteer with agency programs providing housing services for low-income families with HIV; prevention education targeting at-risk youth; prevention information to statewide callers on the Oregon AIDS Hotline; practical support to monolingual Spanish-speaking families with HIV; one-on-one emotional support to men, women and youth with HIV; and leadership in fund-raising activities.

The celebration also will feature pianist Matthew Kern and the King Elementary School Choir.

For more information call 503-223-5907.

• **Medford:** Jackson County's 16th annual World AIDS Day celebration will be held 7 p.m. at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 1801 E. Jackson St. Participants include OnTrack's Alan Collins AIDS Project, the Jackson County Health Department's HIV Division, the Rogue Valley Gay Men's Chorus, Women with Wings and HIV-positive community members. Also appearing will be local singers and musicians Kendra and Sierra Law, Jennifer Schloming, Beth Baker and Kurt Bernhardt. The evening of music and remembrance culminates with a candlelight ceremony conducted by the Rev. Paul Robinson. Admission is free; candles are provided. The event provides a safe place in which to grieve for

friends and neighbors who have died of AIDS, honor those living with the disease and renew the commitment to the struggle.

For more information call Bill Coyne at 541-772-1777 or 541-282-0281.

• **Lincoln City:** The Coastal AIDS Network will commemorate World AIDS Day with its 13th annual candlelight service/vigil 7 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 N.E. High-



take a minute: visit www.worldAIDSday.org

way 101. The event, which is open to all regardless of faith or lack thereof, will feature music, prayer, readings, interpretive dance, stories, remembrances and honors for those who serve the community. Volunteers are needed.

To participate call Daniel Beck at 541-994-5597.

• **Eugene:** Students and faculty at University of Oregon will recognize World AIDS Day from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. with a variety of activities including lectures, a poetry slam, a vigil and tabling by campus clubs and health organizations. For a complete schedule, contact Cameron at 541-346-0634 or camiluvsozzy@hotmail.com.

with someone and was surprised and impressed to learn how much of a nonissue being poz has been. He is now planning his retirement.

Joy Halme is a mother of six and grandmother of nine, and she has been living with HIV since 1981. I was raised and was exiled at an early age from a very fundamentalist religious family. I reached out to my mother shortly after I found out, and she was horrified. I think her knee-jerk reaction was to lash out at me. The fear in her automatically presented itself by her determining it was God's punishment for my wayward life. I think it's been amazing for most of my family to see that I'm still alive and thriving and actually doing really well.

It takes a lot of creativity to feel that you

are productive and have some meaning outside of being so self-focused. In our culture, success means having a good paying job, but long-term HIV people are faced with having to redefine what success means. Success for me today means having healthy relationships and being able to contribute to a better world. At no other time do I feel surrounded by such loving support as I do when I'm around others who are facing the challenges of HIV. So that's what AIDS has taught me: how to love.

Halme is increasingly healthier, although she is having difficulties adjusting to a new medication regime.

FLOYD SKLAVER is a free-lance Portland writer. Marie Fleischmann contributed to this article.

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