

## Lou Gherig's patient copes with debilitating illness

BY FELICIA SLIDER  
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Like most young adults, many of us tend to work full-time and/or part-time jobs just to financially keep up with the basic necessities of everyday living. Or maybe, like some young adults, view their post-teen years as means to party, hang-out and keep up with the "411" on everything. Whether it's the latest Timberland boots, to the breaking gossip on "Puff Daddy" lawsuits...we want to know.

Or simply put best by the funkster himself, "Warren G"...basically..."We Want it All."

But in the world of hip-hop hierarchy, not even the biggest or baddest "Bad Boy", the rawest "Rockafella" or even a lyrically skilled "No-Limit" soldier, can predict if or when life changing events will occur. And because time waits for no one, one can either, look at life, and take advantage of every positive opportunity, or...just simply, take it for granted.

But it's time, that Mr. Darryl "Tre" Ricks doesn't take for granted, but sincerely embraces, cherishes and appreciates.

Before Mr. Darryl Ricks, better known as "Tre" was diagnosed with the terminal disease called ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) also known as Lou Gherig's Disease, named after the famous baseball player who died of the same, Tre lived the life of what most of us view as "normal."

Up until October of 1998, this 24-year old Portland native not only lived the lifestyle of a "normal" young-adult, he took all the pleasures of "normal" day-to-day-living. He also took pride in the passion of promoting his favorite genre of music: "hip-hop"... that like himself, people around the world, young and old, long...love... and live for.

With his never-ending passion for hip-hop, it's culture, as well as being involved in the r&b community, he worked for a local music production company called "Black Flag Records", in which he promoted such home grown groups as "Grass Roots", "Fundamental Madness" and others.

But it was in November of 1998, that Tre became sick with what his family thought, was Strep-Throat, but really was the onset and first sign of a the disease, ALS.

When Tre's father, Darryl Bradley, died of the same Lou Gherig's Disease at the age of 20, Tre was just six months old. It was at this time during his fathers death, that, Tre's mother, Laurie Toepp, was concerned about the possibility of her son getting sick as well. She was told it was not hereditary, so for 23 years she was not concerned. But after several months of trying to determine the source of his illness, it was then, in the month in February 1999 that he was diagnosed with ALS, thus learning that it can be hereditary. The family learned that ALS was hereditary to five to ten percent of families who have it.

They also face the fact the Tre and Susan's daughter, Akaisha, has a 50 percent chance of getting this disease. Tre's father, who passed on January 23 in 1976, experienced much different onsets, as well as stages of his battle with Lou Gherig's Disease. His father's presented itself with limb onset. With Tre, his started within his throat and neck.



Tre's mom, Tre, and his daughter Akaisha.

Because ALS attacks the nerve and muscle functions, it causes a person to become easily fatigued and eventually leads to paralysis. With Tre, he has experienced what the family knows as "Bulbar." The medical definition is when there is muscle loss. Tre has experienced the loss of being able to use the muscles in his neck, throat and upper body. But as ALS effects many of the physical day-to-day things that used to come so easily to Tre, it has by no means, affected his mind.

Tre & his family would like to acknowledge that he is fortunate to receive quality care.

"Amy, Ruth and Joanne have been a wonderful team of caring nurses" states Laurie.

One in particular that is not involved in his daily care, but whom Tre met as a patient at OHSU while getting diagnosed, is his nurse and friend, Colleen Lindsay.

The family would also like to applaud Mrs. Colleen Lindsay, a registered nurse at Oregon Health Sciences University. "She is many things to Tre and our family, in so many different ways" stated Tre's mother.

Along with her husband Frank Edwards, she has and continues to involve herself in Tre's life, in and outside of the hospital.

Colleen has and continues go above and beyond the normal duties of just being a nurse, she has become an unconditional friend."

She has and continues to involve herself in Tre's life, in and outside of the hospital.

Colleen and Frank have made a ramp for their truck and often come over to take Tre and his family to weekly trips. Tre's best friend and mother of their child, Susan states "We are just so grateful for their unselfish time. We greatly appreciate all of her random acts of kindness as well as sincere and genuine concern for Tre."

Other activities like watching DVD's and listening to music are just a few of many that Tre enjoys doing with his family.

For some of us, we may consider these enjoyments as a simple 1-2-3, but for Tre, some days are a little less pleasurable, as well as manageable.

But on this coming day of Friday, November 12, 1999, on behalf of KXJM 95.5, Portland's new hip-hop and r&b station, Mr. Darryl "Tre" Ricks and family will attend the Jammin' 95.5 sponsored "SuperJam Concert" at the Rose Garden Arena. Not only will Tre be able to involve and immerse himself

in the live stage performances of hip-hop and r&b artist, Tre will be able to embrace, alongside with his family, the two genres of music that bring him creativity and comfort. Tre has always enjoyed being involved in the hip-hop and r&b community. Not only does he give props to hearing new artist, he loves staying true to his favorites of Master P, 2nd II None, as well as the late Tupac and Notorious Biggie Smalls.

Tre's mom, Laurie Toepp states "We are more than pleased that KXJM will be welcoming our family with the complimentary tickets to Friday nights performance. These are all the artist that he likes. When I asked him if he'd like to attend, he was so enthusiastic. He gave us a big thumbs up."

"He deserves the best. It would be an honor to accompany him to this event. Tre is a very prideful person. He's always been a ladies man and now he's had to get used to people maybe, looking at him in different ways. Some may say, "what happened", and some, still don't understand. Even it takes for us to speak for him due to the inability to speak for himself, we are all enthusiastic on how this outing will enlighten and enrich all of our lives as a whole."

As Tre's mothers also states, "He is an inspiration to me, our family and friends."

The fact that he still willing to get up and go regardless of his limitations is more than special to me. It takes a lot of courage to do what he does, and we are all so proud of him."

During my discussion with Tre and his family, they recognize that big outings like this, may take a lot of strength for Tre to accomplish. But for a lifetime of memories that Tre, Susan, Akaisha, Laurie, John and family will carry with them, it's more then worth it.

Not only has Tre overcome many difficult challenges that some may never have or ever go through, but he has maintained the pride of who he is as a loving son, a dedicated father, but most of all, a beautiful man who is not only rich in spirit and soul, but will always be rich in love from the unconditional love and strength of his family.

"We are and want to continue to give him the best quality of life than we can give him. This is a man who invested and continues to invest himself, his time, and his money into, not only things like music that make him happy, but also, to his family and friends."

ALS does not just strike older people, it can also strike young people in our community.

The family recognizes that it takes knowing someone with a bigger voice, but would like to combine their voices, and get the awareness out there.

In bringing this type of media attention and awareness to the symptoms and effect of Lou Gherig's disease (ALS) to the young and old, Tre is accomplishing two personal issues. First, even though he may have difficulty in speaking, through his loving and dedicated family, his voice is heard. And second, through his bravery and courage, Tre will be able to attend hip-hop and r&b at it's finest at Friday nights "SuperJam" event. Added together, he is making an impact on his, his families and the lives of many others as well.

## 95.5 brings super artists and super music to "SuperJam"



BY FELICIA L. SLIDER  
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jaaaaamm!...Oh, jaaamm!...jaamm...Portland, Jam forme! It may have been best sung by the "kings-of-new-jack-swing", but when the members of "Guy", Teddy "yep-yep" Riley, Aaron and Damion Hall scored billboard success with this 1980's club-anthem, who would have also thought that in 1999, Portland fans would finally be able to "Jaaamm" and jump to the same success that KXJM has finally brought to 24, non-stop, dance-till-you-drop, hours, of hip-hop and r&b radio. So all together, let's exhale. .... Ahhhhhh!

Now, let's reminisce for a moment.

Longer than waiting for "Whitney Houston" to exhale...way before "Cash Money Millionaire" ballers were "Bling-Blingin"... and just at the beginning of time when urban radio, all over the world, began it's rap-attack of hits like "Whodini's" "Five Minutes of Funk" and "Friends", as well as hits from the the Kings of Rap: "Run DMC", "Hard Times", "It's Like That" and "You Be Lilln"... northwest fans of hip-hop and r&b have been waiting and anticipating for our own bulls-eye, in the world of, on-and-on-till-the-break-of-dawn, landmark in 24-hours of urban radio.

And now, it's here.

But first, not without mention, to our neighbors of "The BOO"; KBOO 90.7, who have, for years, with hard-earned success, been bringing time-slotted, underground, back-in-the-day, as well as chart-topping music to our ears. And because KBOO is community-supported through many of it's pledge drives, the radio station can offer a wide variety of commercial-free formats and genres of music.

And because they are supported by a variety of people, who appreciate different taste and genres of music, KBOO can only play hip-hop/r&b during pre-selected time slots.

So without community radio and "the BOO's" dream team of on-point and knowledgeable DJ's and "turntablist", where would we be in recognizing some of today's artist, who came from "da basement" or what the music world recognizes before an artist makes it big, as "underground music." But now, along with KBOO, we have another outlet as well. We were nine months shy of the new millennium, and at 5:00 p.m., Friday night, on the 26th day March 1999, Jammin's previous Contemporary-Adult format, switched over and began.

## Next week... SuperJam with 95.5

BY FELICIA SLIDER  
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Turn in next week to see a recent interview with KXJM's resident-DJ & Music Director, "Pretty Boy Dontay", he explained how Jammin' 95.5 is and plans for more success in bringing it to the Portland massive audience. TELL ME WHY JAMMIN 95.5 DECIDED TO DO THE "SUMMER JAM" & "SUPERJAM" LINE-UP?

## Mayor Katz announces city's joint birthday and millennial activities

Plans to use celebrations to promote volunteers and encourage citizens to celebrate safely close to home and use free transit

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mayor Katz announced the city's plans for commemorating the bookend celebration of the new millennium and Portland's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday a year later on January 23, 2001.

"This milestone," said Katz, "will be an opportunity for us to celebrate what makes our city special. The millennium is a once in a lifetime occurrence—generations to come will look back in history to see what life was like at the turn of the century."

Katz and a steering committee of community leaders joined a year ago to plan the city's millennial and 150<sup>th</sup> birthday commemorations. Focusing on the themes of Celebrations, Volunteerism, and Legacies, the message to all citizens is to consider what they will do to mark these historic milestones, and to view their contributions as gifts to our city.

To acknowledge and promote what other organizations are doing to commemorate the millennium and Portland's birthday, the steering committee established a sanctioning process. Application forms are

available by contacting the Rose Festival Association, Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, or the Mayor's Office. For updated information on sanctioned events, people can access [www.travelportland.com](http://www.travelportland.com).

The celebrations will begin on New Year's Eve and continue as the Rose Festival kicks off the commemoration of Portland's birthday with their June 2000 program. The theme of volunteerism will be carried out with the help of Volunteer Works, an organization that refers thousands of volunteers each year, and will partner with the city to increase the level of volunteerism. In support of this goal, Volunteer Works will provide informational brochures listing volunteer opportunities at sanctioned events.

Encouraging people to celebrate close to where they live on New Year's Eve, Katz asked that people take advantage of events that will be happening in neighborhood restaurants and venues throughout the city. A listing of those celebrations will be in the Oregonian's November 10 holiday guide and in the December 24 issues of the A&E.

In addition to events at McMenamins restaurants around the city and at the Convention Center, Katz announced the plans for a free family-oriented concert at Pioneer Courthouse Square. The concert will feature

popular swing bands Royal Crown Revue and Dem Brooklyn Burns. It will be an alcohol-free event, and plans include large screens with live broadcasts from around the world and the city, and the display of laser lights and fireworks at midnight.

Portland Police Bureau Assistant Chief Bruce Prunk described the public safety plan developed to address crowd control, safety, and transit issues related to the downtown celebration. The plan calls for the closure of 15 square blocks to auto traffic in the central city. This area will extend from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and from Alder to Taylor. Public safety personnel will be on duty to support public safety goals.

Tri-Met service, bus and MAX, will be fareless. Tri-Met will provide additional transit service to minimize traffic congestion to the city's core area. Eleven major bus routes will have more frequent service throughout the night, and MAX will run all night at 10-minute intervals. Legacy projects include the Classical Chinese Garden as a cultural legacy, the re-siting of the Lovejoy column murals in the River District as a public art legacy, and the removal of the Little Sandy and Marmot Diversion dams to restore the watershed and salmon habitat as an environmental legacy. Another project under consideration is the lighting of four of Portland's bridges: Burnside, Steel, Hawthorne, and Broadway.

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