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BERING
COMMUNITY
SERVICE
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BERING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION

"To improve the quality of life for those with critical needs by providing physical, emotional and spiritual assistance."

Enclosed please find my contribution for \$ _____.

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Donations of any amount are appreciated and can be mailed to **Bering Community Service Foundation, P.O. Box 540517, Houston, Texas 77254-0517.** Should you have any questions, please feel free to call us at (713)529-6071. Bering Community Service Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible to the amount allowed by law.

Since 1987, Bering has been providing services for people living with HIV/AIDS. We annually assist over 2,500 people who have been left financially and medically indigent by their disease. The Bering Care Center and Bering Dental Clinic are designed to help individuals manage their infection. This reduces the need for costly hospital visits, which saves dollars for not only the clients but also the tax payers. It has been estimated that the Bering Care Center and Bering Dental Clinic save the city of Houston over \$4 million annually.

At Bering, we recognize that people with AIDS are our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and our friends. Our services are available at no charge and without discrimination, to anyone who needs them. Individuals and organizations wishing to support the services we provide are encouraged to visit our facilities.

Bering Community Service Foundation ,
Box 540517
Houston, Texas 77254-0517
(713)529-6071

Bering Care Center (713)520-7070
Bering Dental Clinic (713) 524-7933
Bering Support Network (713)526-1017

The Bering Care Center

Our **Care Center** provides adult day care to individuals with HIV/AIDS who should not and cannot be left alone during the day due to their health status. We serve over 500 clients annually in an environment that is safe, nurturing, and provides the opportunity for healthy social interaction. The **Bering Care Center** offers a wide range of programs and services, including:

- ☐ Daily meal program
(over 19,000 meals are served annually)
- ☐ Educational programs
- ☐ Nutritional counseling
- ☐ Nutritional study participation
- ☐ Physical therapy
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Vision screening
- ☐ Financial Counseling
- ☐ Emergency Financial Assistance
- ☐ Bilingual Services

The Bering Dental Clinic

Our **Dental Clinic** provides quality dental care for over 2,000 people with HIV/AIDS annually from across South Texas. Because of their depressed immune system, people with HIV/AIDS are unable to fight off germs and bacteria. Therefore, without proper dental care, a simple tooth infection can quickly become life-threatening.

Currently, the **Bering Dental Clinic** averages 25 patients per day and 40 new patients per month. The Clinic also provides continuing education for health care professionals and students. The range of client services include:

- ☐ Emergency, restorative and preventative care
- ☐ Chemo and surgical therapy of oral Kaposi's sarcoma lesions
- ☐ Treatment of Hairy Leukoplakia
- ☐ Prosthodontics (dentures)
- ☐ Diagnosis and treatment of other oral pathology
- ☐ Periodontics (gum disease)

Emergency Financial Assistance

Our Emergency Financial Assistance program prevents homelessness for men, women and children by providing comprehensive budget planning and financial counseling for persons living with HIV. A client receives assistance in the form of rent/mortgage and utility assistance to resolve a financial crisis, and learns how to create and live within an appropriate budget based on his or her reduced income.

Bering Support Network

In addition, the Foundation helps fund a **Support Network** operated by Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. This program includes weekly support groups and individual counseling for people with HIV/AIDS, as well as their family members, friends and caregivers regardless of beliefs or religious affiliations. Over 150 individuals participate monthly.

Ontario, N.Y.

March 9, 1993

Dear Mrs. Huffman,

As you can see, I do not
make a habit of writing letters,
and yet "the word ~~is~~ spoken,
how grandly it has rung."

It's rather awkward to say
to a stranger how much I
appreciate the wonderful things
you've done for our son Dennis.
And yet you're not a stranger
you're a warm person.

We do not have many
communications from Dennis but
it's good to know there are people
who care

Enclosed a small contribution
to further your work

Frank & Helen Carr

Ms. Lindy Huffman is Director of the Bering Care
Center, a facility for adults with HIV/AIDS.

**BERING
COMMUNITY
SERVICE
FOUNDATION**

STACIE J. COKINOS

Development Director

P.O. Box 540517 • Houston, TX 77254-0517
1440 Harold • Houston, TX 77006
(713) 529-6071 • Fax (713) 529-3626

BERING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 540517

Houston, Texas 77254-0517

July 12, 1993

Two years ago I wrote a piece on what The Bering Spiritual Support Group ment to me as a Mother of one who has AIDS. That was a devastating time for my son and me. As I stated in my letter, Bering's Support Group helped my son and me during this very difficult time. It is impossible to measure or put a price on the love, caring, emotional and hands on support that my son and I received from this group.

My son passed on in January, 1992 but the group did not stop there. It has continued to support me this past year and will be here for me as long as I need them.

For those that have not been touched by AIDS it is very difficult for them to understand this dreadful disease and how it effects the PWA's, their family and friends. It is not like other terminal illness such as heart disease and cancer. These are socially accepted diseases and have the support of family, friends, community and Church. Not so with AIDS. There are many, many cases where there is no support from either family, friends, community or Church. This is where Bering makes the difference in these peoples lives. No matter who you are, where you come from, rich or poor, young or old, any one that has been touched by AIDS will find a safe place to receive support, caring and understanding at Bering. There is also dental care and day care, canceling, education and information for PWA's.

A cure? No you will not find it here but you will find people who care and will help you to help yourself and to help you to help others until a cure is found.

There are so many, many stories that could be told of courage, friendship found, loved ones lost but as I said this is a safe place and I can only share my story with you. My son found the courage to die and I found the courage to live with the help of our friends at Bering.

Mary

Mary Parker

"Kelley's Mom"

Adult Day Care Center First In Nation

By Jeff Bray
The Montrose Voice

At first appearance, Tom Graham seems like every other young man. He sweeps the steps outside Bering Memorial Church and smiles as you walk up. But as he speaks, there is something different about him—a forthright honesty—an almost childish lack of inhibition. It doesn't take long to realize that he is special.

"I've been here since day one," he says, smiling, as he leads the way to the Bering Care Center, located behind the stately Bering Memorial Methodist Church sanctuary. "I'm the head Care Bear. You can tell by my balloons."

He points to the tiny brown fuzzy bear hanging on his shirt collar, festooned with tiny balloons. "The balloons are powder blue, like my eyes."

Inside the Care Center, there is great activity. Another Care Bear is coming for the first time, making the total number of PWA's (People With AIDS) to three.

Graham suffers from dementia, a progressive deterioration of mental capacities, due to an infection in the brain, brought on by the virus that leads to AIDS.

"He was a basket case before he came here about a month ago," says Thom White, the Care Center's director. "He was abused by his nurse, and his father practically held him prisoner in his own home. Now he's really calmed down, and he's very happy. It's made a world of difference."

White has been director of the Care Center since its inception in March. He is a gentle looking man with white hair and a bushy white moustache, leaning comfortably back in his chair behind his desk.

"We call them Care Bears because we can't call them patients, and we don't want clients. This is just a nice term we can use to identify them, and they all get the little Care Bears for identification. Tom is the head Care Bear because he was the first, so his has balloons."

Graham fingers his Care Bear affectionately before walking out of the room with his broom. He is anxious for the new person to arrive.

"This whole thing has been a fast thing happening," White continues, sitting at his desk in the spacious office he shares with Mary Walbert, his assistant. "I'm full time here, from seven in the morning until six p.m., Monday through Friday."

White emphasizes that the Care Center is exclusively for adults with AIDS. At first, he was getting calls from working mothers who thought the Day Care Center was for children, but the calls have been dwindling since word has spread. Currently, the center will accept PWA's through a doctor's recommendation, and the PWA doesn't necessarily have to suffer from dementia only.

"The main function of the center is to care for people so loved ones can go to work and not have to worry about them," White says. "Dr. Robert Awe is on the steering committee. He's the chief of pulmonary medicine in the chest clinic at Jefferson Davis Hospital—that's where they handle the AIDS patients.

He noticed that people were just dumping people off in the lobby at Jeff Davis and leaving them there all day until they could pick them up on the way home, and that seemed really cruel. Then again, we're also finding a lot of people who don't have a caregiver at all. They're all alone, and this gives them a place to go where they can have company and some social contact. There's a real need for the Day Care Center."

White is very proud of the work done on the Day Care Center in its short two month life. "All this furniture has been donated," he says, pointing out the living room chairs and tables. There are two televisions and a dozen comfortable lounge chairs and couches. Behind a partition are six beds, neatly made and ready for anyone who may feel like napping. The tiny kitchen is complete with donated refrigerators, oven, microwaves and cutlery. Desks and file cabinets were also donated by local businesses and private donors who rushed to aid the center as it materialized.

"Right now, we'd prefer that they be ambulatory," he says. "We're getting a ramp put in like the one at the dental clinic. In fact, the new guy today is in a

wheelchair. The response of volunteers has been remarkable, though. Many of these people will need an almost one-on-one ratio of volunteers."

"Transportation is a big problem right now," says Mary Walbert as she fingers a pencil at her desk. "Some people can't drive because their medication makes them dizzy, or they're too weak. We have a hard time getting them to and from the center." She says a van is the

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ideal solution, but is down the road as far as planning is concerned. Vans are expensive, and liability insurance and upkeep are almost prohibitory. Nevertheless, the Bering Care Center will most likely have one before long. Nothing seems to stop it from getting what it needs.

White explains that his involvement with the Bering Care Center is more than just a job. Having lived in Houston for about 17 years, where he had been very successful in the restaurant business, he became very ill and almost died. From December, 1986, to February, 1987, he struggled for his life, then slowly recovered. Meanwhile, his lover developed a virus of the brain and died after four months of suffering. White says that this exposure to illness gave him

plenty of experience for handling other PWA's.

"I was the second president of EPAH (Executive Professional Association of Houston), and was really involved in what was then the GPC (Gay Political Caucus). I helped start the Rainbow Lodge, and managed the Brownstone." After his illness and the death of his lover, White felt he needed to contribute more to the community. He is now finding his hands quite full.

"I've been so impressed with the way people are helping out," he says. "We're getting plenty of food from different restaurants in the area. Ouizie's is donating food, as well as Jonathan's. We'd eventually like enough restaurants to donate food so we could schedule each to donate twice a month."

White says a local rice farmer donated over 200 pounds of rice. Parkway Athletic Club is offering free exercise programs, and numerous hairdressers have offered their services to the Care Bears. The Care Center may even offer yoga classes in the near future, enabling the PWA's to gain access to as many diverse recreational and health pastimes as possible."

Walbert answers a phone call, then hangs up with a sigh. She is an habitual volunteer, and works from six in the morning until midnight on various projects, including the Day Care Center.

"I've been very involved in Omega House for quite some time," she says. "When the Day Care Center came up, I wanted to help." She looks behind her at a large wicker basket, then turns and laughs with a shrug. "The only trouble



(l to r) Patrick Walker, Mary Walbert, Thom White and Tom Graham at Bering Care Center

Patrick Walker rushes into the room, surprisingly agile for such a big man. The air conditioner is too cold, and one of the Care Bears may be uncomfortable. He discusses the problem with White and Walbert before deciding how to solve the problem. He, too, is an addicted volunteer.

"I'm on permanent disability," he says, smiling through his trim beard. But I'm not one to sit at home, so here I am. I'm kind of the Go-fer.

Right now, he and Walbert are working on the Omega House Party to be held at Spotts Park, May 15. He laughs at Walbert's laundry basket.

"We call her Betty Benefit, she's so involved."

He then points around the room at the donated furniture.

"Isn't this wonderful?" he asks. "All this stuff is donated, and it matches. You don't see anything that isn't coordinated! One guy approached his company and got a big donation for the center, and another guy went out and just bought us a VCR. People have been really great about it."

All three are active members in Bering's congregation. White even co-celebrates the service in church, serving communion to his friends in the congregation.

"It's hard to believe this is the first Day Care Center in the whole country," he says proudly. New York and San Francisco have been trying to establish one, but they've had problems. It's mostly a matter of economics."

White explains that Houston's rather oblique zoning laws, long an object of national scorn and criticism, have served the gay community well. In cities like San Francisco and New York, such a day care center would have to pass exhaustive zoning ordinances and building codes in order to exist. In Houston, however, it has been relatively easy to establish a haven for PWA's.

"You're looking at a quarter of a million dollars just to open your doors in San Francisco," he says with disbelief. "In Houston we don't have such obstacles, and nobody in the state or the city is doing anything to help, so people are eager to give to the only thing available."

The Day Care Center is working under a state grant from the Department of Human Resources, sharing the funds with a grant for Omega House. White says that an association of foundations, including the enormously wealthy Ford Foundation, has recently made \$8 million in funding available for AIDS related projects. United Way has also made \$300,000 available in grants for the elderly and for AIDS care. According to White, these agencies are merely "making up for lost time," because the situation is becoming shamefully desperate.

"Dallas is trying to set up a center like ours," says Walker. "I think they're disappointed they weren't first." Once again, the old regional competition comes out. "But they're having some problems."



NEWS MEDIA REPORT

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Montrose Voice

5-6-88

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"I grew up in Dallas," says White. "Houston is far more cosmopolitan. You have to remember that Dallas is the seat of conservatism. It's the center of the Baptist Church. Houston is far more liberal and accepting, just because we have so many different kinds of people here. We have Chinese and Japanese and Indian and Iranian and Korean and Vietnamese. There are huge communities of Germans and Italians and Greeks. It's a lot more open to change and new ideas than Old Southern Bible Belt Dallas."

"But you know if it weren't for Bering Methodist, none of this would have happened," says Walbert.

"We have people all over the country watching us," White adds. "One thing you have to remember is that in about five years the heterosexual community is going to be crying for help from us because it's going to start affected them just as badly. But, you know, we're not going to say, 'We had to figure it out for ourselves when you didn't help.' Instead, the gay community is going to reach out and help those people. That's when the whole world is going to realize that it doesn't make a damned bit of difference whether someone is gay or straight."

Meanwhile, another volunteer enters the room and says the new Care Bear has arrived and needs help getting his wheelchair into the center. People rise and walk to the front door to welcome him. By the end of this week there will be six new PWA's in the center. By the end of the year, White hopes there will be 20 to 24. Their work is cut out for them.

"And I said I'd never do windows," Walker says with a wink.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Montrose area dentist shares AIDS expertise with Chinese

By GREG MAY

BERING Dental Clinic's Dr. Mark Nichols has probably treated more AIDS patients than any other dentist in the United States.

So when the Chinese Medical Association asked the non-profit organization, People to People International, to send specialists to educate Chinese officials on the disease, Nichols' phone at 1440 Harold was one of the first to ring.

Nichols, 34, and the clinic's director, Michael Collins, departed on Monday, Nov. 5 for a two-week stay in China funded through Bering Community Service Foundation, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church and Fiesta Markets.

The group — which includes about 140 physicians, counselors and educators from the United States and Canada — is being coordinated through PTP's Citizen Ambassador Program, which is based in Spokane, Wash.

During a Beijing AIDS symposium, Nichols will give a slide presentation on identifying and treating oral signs of the human immunodeficiency virus. The mouth is one of the first sites where symptoms of the disease appear.

"I feel real honored about going," Nichols said. China has only recorded about 400 cases of AIDS, but officials there fear the disease has potential to spread through infected needles used by drug abusers, he said.

"If AIDS gets in their population, it could be devastating," Nichols said. "It could have a global impact."

Ironically, Nichols warns that many Americans are unaware of the dangers they face with AIDS. "AIDS still has the stigma of being a white, gay disease," he said. "That's changing."

At the Bering clinic, for example, patients include entire families — men, women and children. The patients are from various ethnic and social backgrounds. They come from Houston, Galveston, Beaumont and small towns throughout eastern Texas.

Officially, 4,582 AIDS cases have been recorded since 1981 in Houston-area counties, but the number of cases is believed to be higher. The epidemic is predicted to strike 27,000 people in the area by 1995.

The clinic was the first privately-funded clinic treating HIV in the nation. It treats only those who are infected with HIV.

There is a minimal fee of \$5 a visit to help cover expenses. "If a patient doesn't have money, we don't insist they pay," Nichols said.

The illness has reduced most patients to poverty. "There's no way they could afford dental treatment, and most of these patients need it very badly," Nichols said.

The Bering Community Service Foundation opened the clinic in September, 1987 using donated equipment and volunteer staffing. Nichols, who had previously established a practice in town, joined as a volunteer two months later and was eventually hired as the clinic's one paid, full-time dentist.

The clinic started opening for one day a week, but the need dictated that it open three days, then five days a week. A prosthodontist, or dentist specializing in dentures, comes in twice a month, and another dentist and a hygienist make periodic visits to help.

"The patient load is really heavy," Nichols said. "We have been averaging 34 new patients a month." The current patient total is about 900.

Nichols provides the gamut of dental care — fillings, teeth cleaning, tooth removal. "Our primary purpose is to get patients where they can chew food and nourish themselves, and free them from infections," Nichols said.

With AIDS, any infection can be deadly. The disease compromises the patients' immune system, rendering them vulnerable to a multitude of infections. For example, gum disease develops much more rapidly in an AIDS patient because that person's body can't fend off bacteria and plaque.

"Some diseases can happen in a few months (in an AIDS patient) that would have taken 10 years to develop in a healthy person," Nichols said. "Abscesses can grow very rap-



William Hardy photo

Dentist Mark Nichols uses gloves, face masks and rubber dams to isolate teeth when making fillings for AIDS patients.

idly and lead to swelling and fever."

One problem Nichols must deal with are the cancerous lesions called Kaposi's sarcoma, which can grow over teeth or clog the air passages in the back of the throat. Radiation therapy is one way to deal with the lesions, but reactions are severe, including tender teeth and gums.

Nichols said some people subjected to radiation therapy for dental problems have starved to death because the side effects of the therapy made eating too painful.

His technique is to inject the lesions with an alkaloid toxic to cancer cells. "If I can get the KS lesion when it is relatively small, then I can usually alleviate the problem," he said.

Dealing with AIDS carries its own risks for those caring for the patients. There's a danger of infection to anyone who is pricked by a hypodermic needle that has been used on an AIDS patient. Nichols said that with proper precautions, the danger is exaggerated.

"There seems to be a lot of fear about dentists getting infected from patients or patients being infected from dentists," he said. "I work in a lot of blood and I'm continually testing negative to human immunodeficiency virus."

He uses gloves, face masks, rubber dams to isolate teeth when making fillings. The danger is greater, he said, to those dentists who don't know the backgrounds of patients they treat. "I'm not working in the dark," he said. "I know what I'm having to work with. You just have to be really careful."

Nichols must also protect himself in another way — from the mental and emotional strain of dealing each day with victims of a deadly disease. "I've learned to deal with it," he said. "You have to learn how to detach emotionally."

For more information or to make a donation to the clinic, contact the foundation at 529-6071 or write: Bering Community Service Foundation, 1440 Harold St., Houston, Texas 77006.

BERING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION 1994

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About Bering Church and the Bering Community Service Foundation

For more than 144 years, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church has served the people of Houston.

Founded in 1848 as the German Episcopal Methodist Church and located in downtown Houston, services were conducted in German until 1912. Sometime after 1848, the church was renamed after one of the founding families and original settlers of Houston.

As Houston grew, so did Bering's congregation. In 1924, the church moved to its present location in Montrose. New buildings were erected over the years to accommodate a membership of over 2,000. The final name change came in 1968 with the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Churches. Bering's membership roll now approaches 500.

Outreach ministries of the church date back to its earliest days and include care for people stricken with Yellow Fever during the time the Houston Ship Channel was being dug. During the 1940's, Bering nursing teams were organized to provide home care to victims of poliomyelitis. In 1983-84, the church responded to the needs of the homeless during an unusually cold winter. Church facilities housed street people during that cold period until other suitable housing could be provided.

With the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980's, Bering Church made a firm commitment to minister to the needs of people affected by its illnesses. Programs described in this brochure were created to help meet those needs.

In April 1987, the Bering Community Service Foundation was established by the church to coordinate fundraising activities to support the church's outreach programs.

AIDS Ministries at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church



with major funding support from

Bering Community Service Foundation

1440 Harold Street • Houston, Texas 77006

713/526-1017

**BERING
CARE
CENTER**
(713) 520-7070

Adult day care facility for HIV infected people who are at least 18 years of age. Open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Continental breakfast and hot lunch served daily to individuals without resources for proper nutrition. No fee.

Other services offered: educational programs, fitness and exercise instruction, physical therapy evaluation, nutritional enhancement programs, crisis intervention, housing referral, client advocacy, recreational activities, and healthy socialization programs.

Volunteers needed in many capacities.

**FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**
(713) 520-7070

Emergency financial assistance for HIV infected individuals who need help with rent, utilities, and prescription medications. Applicants must schedule an appointment for interview. Money management and budget planning is provided for all applicants.

**BERING
DENTAL
CLINIC**
(713) 524-7933

Quality dental care for HIV infected individuals who lack funds and/or insurance. Emergency, restorative and preventive services are provided at no fee to the client. Treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma, lesions, and tumors, keeping opportunistic infections of the mouth to a minimum, allowing proper nutrition to be received.

**SPIRITUAL
SUPPORT
GROUPS**
(713) 526-1017

This growing "family" welcomes, supports and helps reconcile persons with AIDS or AIDS-related diseases and those diagnosed as HIV+, their family members, friends and survivors. The group meets each Wednesday at 6:45 p.m. After a pot-luck dinner, trained volunteer facilitators lead small groups in an exploration of the evening's discussion topic. Though Christian in orientation, the Spiritual Support Group respects and appreciates persons of all beliefs.

Focused subgroups include:

Family and Friends Support Group for family members of PWA's, meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. to share information and experiences and discuss problems unique to their special role and emotional perspective.

Primary Caregivers Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. for persons responsible for providing a major portion of direct care for PWA's.

There is no fee for support groups.

**BERING
COUNSELING
CENTER**
(713) 526-1017

Individual, couples and family counseling for HIV+ persons and their caregivers. Sliding fee scale, but no one is excluded. Appointments scheduled Monday through Friday. A Grief Group is also sponsored by the Center for persons who have lost loved ones to AIDS.

Resource Persons

Bering Memorial U.M.C. Office	526-1017
Counseling Center	526-1017
Bering Community Service Foundation	529-6071
Dental Clinic	524-7933
Bering Care Center	520-7070

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BERING CARE CENTER LAUNCHES PROGRAM EXPANSION

Kitchen Renovation plans announced to expand meal program and nutritional studies

The Bering Care Center opened its doors in 1988 as the first adult day care facility in the nation for people with AIDS. The Care Center initially opened for only two clients and today serves over 500 through its programs, averaging 50 to 70 daily. Although a variety of important programs are offered, including physical therapy, financial assistance, transportation, art and educational classes, and healthy socialization and fellowship, our meal program, nutritional counseling, and nutritional studies are of primary importance. We recognize nutrition and proper

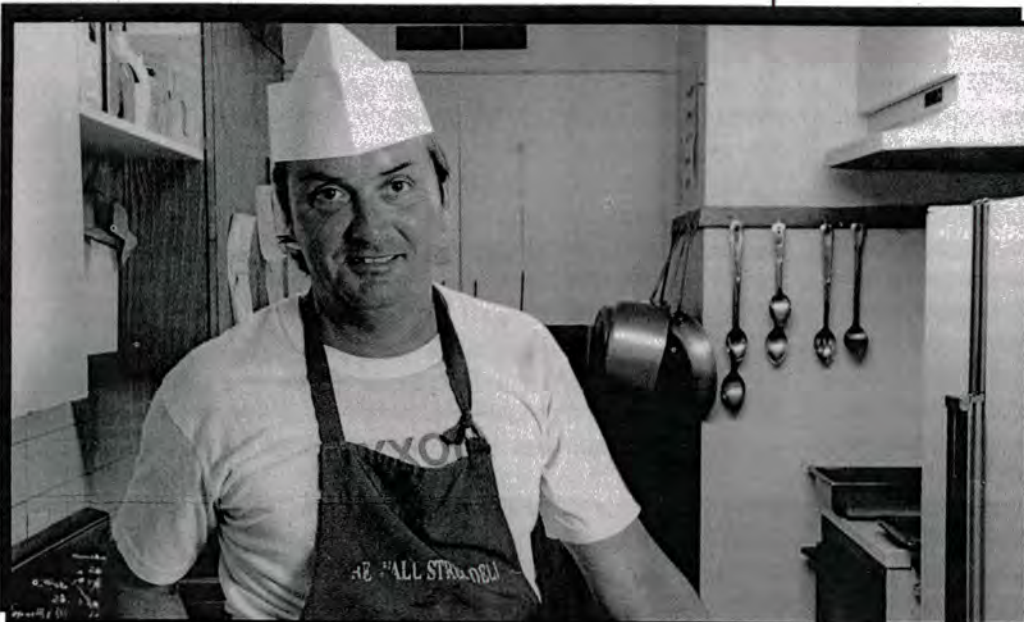
apartment kitchen. Although we have the caseload to feed over 100 clients daily, our current kitchen capacity limits us to about 50. To combat the problem of limited food preparation and service capacity, we have determined the need to expand the food service facilities to a full size, commercial kitchen. The renovation will increase the daily capacity of our services to 100 persons. That translates to 100 persons who will be better fed and nourished and more capable of fighting off the opportunistic infections that come their way. 100

individuals who will not have to worry where their next meal will come from, or if it will be wholesome and healthy.

We focus so much attention on nutrition because being adequately nourished is vital to human immune function. Food supplies the raw materials necessary for fighting disease, regenerating tissue, maintaining homeostasis, and providing energy. Researchers are now reporting that the metabolic needs of people with HIV/AIDS are increasing even while they are asymptomatic. It is unfortunate for persons with the virus that, as HIV/AIDS progresses, their daily caloric need of protein, and micronutrients tends to increase

while their ability to consume food generally decreases. The nutritional needs of people with HIV/AIDS are complex. Besides having personal food preferences, they have different and changing nutritional needs due to the challenges presented to their bodies by the HIV virus.

The kitchen renovation will allow us to expand our nutritional counseling and nutritional studies programs, in addition to expanding our food service program. The renovation project is estimated to cost approximately \$150,000, including construction costs and equipment procurement. We anticipate beginning construction in February 1994 and expect the project to be completed in 90 days. While the new kitchen is being built, our current food service or programs will not be interrupted. The community response to the renovation project has been



diet as paramount in keeping the basic health of our clients balanced so they are better fortified to handle the opportunistic infections that come their way as a result of the HIV virus. For many of our clients, the noon meal at Bering is their only hot meal of the day, as they are too ill or lack funds to have any other sustenance. The nutritional challenges faced by people with AIDS are dramatically compounded by the economic realities of the disease. The precarious living situations of many Bering clients only serves to intensify the threat to their nutritional status and thus, their health risk.

In answer to the intense nutritional needs of our clients, the Bering Care Center serves over 19,000 carefully prepared, nutritious meals annually, most of which are prepared in a kitchen that is no larger than a typical

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BERING DENTAL DIRECTOR INVITED TO BERLIN

Treatment Studies Presented to International AIDS Conference

Houston AIDS dentist, Dr. C. Mark Nichols, Clinical Director of the Bering Dental Clinic, has recently returned from the Ninth International AIDS Conference in Berlin where he was privileged to exhibit one of his studies in an oral presentation workshop. The topic of his presentation concerned treatment of an AIDS-related oral cancer. Only three dental presentations were performed at the conference, including Dr. Nichols, another American dentist, and a German dentist. The Conference was attended by over 15,000 people, including scientists, doctors, dentists, and individuals from all over the world who are involved at all levels in the fight against AIDS.

BERING FOUNDATION PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE...

Since 1987, Bering has quietly provided services for people living with HIV/AIDS. Our programs address today's problems and adjust to meet the changing face of this virus. The Foundation is led by Jody Huckaby, Executive Director.

Bering Care Center

Our Care Center provides adult day care, including hot meals, physical therapy, nutritional counseling, transportation, educational programs and the opportunity for social interaction. The Care Center serves over 19,000 meals annually and more than 485 clients were served in 1992, with Lindy Huffman as Care Center Director.

Bering Dental Clinic

Our Dental Clinic provides quality dental care for over 2,000 people with AIDS annually. Because of their depressed immune system, a simple tooth infection can quickly become life-threatening without proper dental treatment. The clinic offers a full range of dental services under the direction of Dr. Mark Nichols, Clinical Director.

Emergency Financial Assistance

Provides financial counseling and emergency funding for rent, medications and utility bills.

Bering Support Network

The Foundation helps fund the Support Network operated by Bering United Methodist Church. This program includes weekly support groups and individual counseling to people with AIDS and their family, friends and caregivers, regardless of beliefs or religious affiliations. Over 150 individuals participate monthly under the direction of Rev. Troy Plummer.

Special attention was given to the presentation selection process to ensure that all presentations were of good, strong scientific quality. Dr. Nichols was honored to be a part of this distinctive, hand selected group.

Dr. Nichols' current study involves treating oral Kaposi's sarcoma lesions by injecting the lesion with a chemotherapeutic agent. The drug is called vinblastine and is a derivative of the periwinkle plant. Dr. Nichols takes this drug and dilutes it before he injects it directly into the lesion. The cancerous lesion requires at least two treatments and usually responds in 4 to 6 weeks. Dr. Nichols evaluated the effects on 41 patients with a total of 116 lesions and had complete success with 70% of the lesions, and a partial response with the remaining 30%. An article will be published later this year in the Journal of the American Dental Association on the first phase of this study.

The Foundation currently provides services for over 2,500 people annually, living with HIV/AIDS, who have been left financially and medically indigent by their disease. The Bering Dental Clinic provides a full range of quality dental services through over 5,000 dental appointments annually. Without such care, a simple tooth infection can quickly become life-threatening for a person with AIDS. Patient services offered include: emergency, restorative, and preventative care, chemo and surgical therapy of oral Kaposi's sarcoma lesions, treatment of Hairy Leukoplakia and diagnosis and treatment of other oral pathology. The clinic also provides continuing education for health care professionals and students.

Dr. Nichols has been with The Bering Dental Clinic since shortly after its inception in 1987. At that time the Clinic operated only one day a week, was the first program of its kind in the nation, and was staffed by volunteers. As the scope of AIDS progressed, so did the need for expanded dental services directed to the HIV/AIDS population. The Bering Dental Clinic has grown to its current, full-time operation, which includes two dentists, one hygienist, three dental assistants, and a patient coordinator. The Clinic sponsors two residency programs of the University of Texas Dental School. The focus of the programs are prosthodontics (dentures) and periodontics (gum disease).

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Kid's in the kitchen...

Actually they are not kids, but rather young adults from Episcopal High School who volunteer at the Care Center as part of the school's Outreach program. It stands to reason that their time at the Care Center will be a learning experience to help prepare them for the future. It also stands to reason that we can learn from them...

"Let's talk about sex." As the crimson curtain opened, the words exploded into the audience. I sat in the tenth row of the orchestra section at Jones Hall for the production *Heartstrings*, the national touring musical fundraiser for AIDS. Last May, as I listened to the powerful

words of the opening songs and the many that followed, I knew that I had to get involved.

I promptly decided to volunteer at Bering Care Center, a center that provides lunch, and a community environment for AIDS and HIV positive patients, many of

whom live on the street. Here they may use the telephone, pick-up mail, and receive free treatment from physical therapists, nutritionists and other professionals who volunteer their time. I was prepared to do all I could and went with an open-mind — or so I thought.

My first day, outfitted in a Polo shirt and J. Crew shorts, I drove to the center in my bright red Ford Explorer, parked, and walked inside. Glancing around, I noticed twenty to thirty underweight men watching Geraldo on television and commenting boisterously. Some were obviously sick others just looked depressed; all were dressed in old T-shirts and ragged jeans or shorts. It took only one long glance to realize that something was out of place — ME. I slowly untucked my shirt, as if this would help me fit in and left the room to sign in as a volunteer. As I grabbed for a pen, my hand ended up in the basket of free condoms; I quickly pulled it out. My shocked expression must have given away my surprise because I heard a man laughing. Smiling at him nervously, I made a beeline for the kitchen where I found a volunteer cooking mashed potatoes. Safety, I thought. But when he turned around, I notice he was wearing a pink ballerina apron. This was not any better. Soon, however, he put me to work making a salad which became my special job. That day I stayed behind the protective walls of the kitchen and observed the men.

The next day, in cut-offs and a t-shirt, I kept myself busy cooking, doing

Untitled

You've all taught me so much
What each individual should be capable of understanding
Human kindness should be able to teach you;
to let you grow in.

You let me walk through my fear
and share a little piece of myself
While each of you trusted yourselves so fully with me
That meant so much. Thank you —

I felt not for one minute that I was
unhappy volunteering for you
Yes I was picked on and teased at
(Not mentioning any names)
But that helped me understand the way you and I think
How two people can appear so different
but deep down feel so much of the same feelings

Thanks will never be enough —
I thank god every day for letting me have each of you in my life.
You each gave me a different realization, a different piece of
Yourself and some pieces I'd never know you had.
I thank you all for letting me
so graciously into your community
It has been a wonderful eye opener —

I came in a scared teenager,
and I leave with more gifts than
I ever dreamed of receiving —
You all mean so much to me...
Again, Thank you!

(continued on back cover)