

House of Hessed

HIV/AIDS Transition House



Nov. 9, 1999

Dear

Somebody pinch me!! This weather is excellent, there's not a toque or a pair of mitts in sight and I just saw a beautiful Blue jay in our tree in the front yard. Each delicious warm, sunny day is like a bonus summer. I love it.

As of next week our house will be full. All six of our available rooms will be occupied. Things are going really well, never a dull moment. God is not letting any destructive, unhealthy behavior remain hidden for very long. This is very cool because the Lord is so obviously in control and lovingly interested in every person and situation. Each person brings a whole different dynamic to our home. We are constantly learning and everyday brings new challenges and rewards. As staff and volunteers we are always seeking to balance mercy, love and compassion, justice and discipline. We are a very large family around here and I don't think I have to explain the complexities of what that entails. That fact that we only have one television is a constant source of scheduling, negotiating, wheeling & dealing in order to secure a coveted time slot. It's a good thing we have 4 bathrooms.

STAFF CHANGES:

You may remember in our last newsletter we had mentioned that Sandi Hepner would be raising her own funds to enable her to work here full time. Unfortunately things did ^{not} go as planned and Sandi is not able to be here at this time.

Michael Wilson had been our Evening Supervisor since April but due to personal reasons is no longer employed here.

The position of Evening Supervisor is now shared between our own cherished Jason Tippet (who also lives here) and Mareesa Davidson. Mareesa has had experience in caring for a friend who died of AIDS and has also been a volunteer here. Both Mareesa and Jason are awesome people who are extremely compassionate and committed to the people involved in this ministry. We are very thankful and Blessed that God has once again provided for us so lavishly.



VOLUNTEERS: (HEEEELLLLPPPP!!!!!!)

We DESPERATELY!! need volunteers here during the day on weekends. Our evening supervisor does not start until 4:00 and so there is the need for a volunteer or two. This would be just hanging out watching t.v. , playing cards with the residents, stuff like that. We need someone here to ensure our residents' have access to their medication, which is always locked in the office. We have very strict policies regarding medications and so either a staff person or volunteer must be present when meds. are taken. Please consider donating a few hours of your valuable time here on a Sat. or Sun. , you'll have a blast!! Well, okay maybe a "blast" is a little over the top, (maybe), but you won't be bored. If this seems like something you might be interested in doing please call me and we'll chat.

There is one volunteer around here that we can't keep. His name is Peter, he's extremely attractive, gentle and affectionate. He has volunteered to be totally lovable, fed, cuddled, and doted on. We have no complaints, he does his job to perfection. Yeah, Peter is one cool cat, and I do mean CAT. We all love him to bits, he's really terrific. The problem is a new resident moving in may be allergic to him, and there are vet bills, food etc. So, we have to find Peter a new home. He's probably under a year old, has great house manners and is getting neutered next week. Please call us if you're interested in adopting him. All serious animal lovers will be considered.

Thanks to Darlene Feakes (a.k.a. Dodo) for coming every Wednesday to prepare or help prepare the evening meal. And for making the Best butter tarts in the whole world. We love you Dodo!

HOUSE OF HESED BIRTHDAY PARTY

We'll be turning a year old next month and will be having a Birthday Bash in February. Details to follow in upcoming newsletter.

HOUSE OF HESED RESIDENT, RANDY HILL SPEAKS OUT

It's the kind of thing that can shake one's faith, no matter how strong. When I first found out I was HIV positive it was as if someone had imposed a death sentence. I tested positive in 1994, and I feel I have been able to come to terms with his disease only due to the help of others and through the advent of drugs that have given me my health back. My improved health and acceptance my HIV status are pushing me to help others understand the threat of HIV/AIDS. They figure I had it since I was a kid in my teens. When I lived in Toronto in the 1980s I was using intravenous drugs. You really didn't think about it then. It was a "gay" thing and we were just kids trying to get some kicks. Kids now still think they're invincible, I guess it really doesn't hit you until you meet someone who has it. That's why I think it'd be a good idea to talk in schools.

I was 32 and living in Portage la Prairie, with my wife and 4 children and nearly fell apart when the bomb shell dropped. I lost it when I found out. My marriage screwed up and it really tested a lot of my friends. I've come to terms with it more. I'm not going to die tomorrow, at first I thought I would. A lot of talking to different people brought me back.

A priest friend helped counsel my mother. She was able to speak to someone else who lost their son to AIDS. I was diagnosed with HIV when I was clean and living with my wife and 4 kids. I feel the fact they did not contract the disease is nothing short of miraculous. I was positive and they weren't, God must have done that. I think it is a sentence of God in a sense, not punishment, but he has done it for a purpose.

I left Portage la Prairie due to a lack of resources. Since being in Winnipeg and living at House of Hesed, I have been volunteering at one of the AIDS service organizations. But more importantly I have been given the privilege to speak and to educate as many youth as possible. My first speaking engagement is on Dec.1 at the Chief Peguis reserve. I'm excited about this opportunity and look forward to many more.

Thanks to House of Hesed


Randy Hill

This is dedicated to the memory of Gordon Forest "Minogeezhigan".

Gordon passed away on September 12, 1999 at the age of 29 yrs.

Minogeezhigan, was Gordon's aboriginal name it means "it's a good day"

Every day with Gordon was good, he always managed to brighten the day,

The paralysis, dementia, and eventual loss of sight & speech could not contain his spirit. Gordon showed courage, dignity, strength and unshaken faith. More often than not he comforted those of us intending to comfort him. I always felt more peaceful and free when I was with him. Jason, Rodney & I learned a lot from Gordon and we are better people for having had his friendship. He always knew how to make us laugh. "Our" Gordon was definitely one of kind. There is a deep, real comfort in knowing he is now dancing, singing up a storm and enjoying life in the home that his Father built just for him.

We miss you terribly, Gordon, you will never be forgotten,
and will always be a part of House of Hesus.

We'll see you soon dear friend

Please remember to pray for us, we need to be as wise as serpents and gentle as doves. This work can be very rewarding and fun, but it is also extremely difficult and challenging. We are grateful for your continued interest and support. Remember we have an open invitation to anyone who wants to visit. Just phone ahead to be sure that I'm around and we'll set the date.

Have a wonderful Christmas.

In Christ



Moe Feakes