



# House of Heseb

...building a place of loving kindness

Spring 2006

*Heseb is a Hebrew word used in the Old Testament to describe the eternally loyal, lavish, extravagant, unrestrained, compassionate, merciful love of our Father God. As recipients of this divine love, we desire to emulate His compassion in our attitudes and actions towards others, particularly those living with HIV/AIDS.*

## THE CHANGING FACE OF AIDS IN WINNIPEG

Ten years ago, when I began working as a physician caring for people with HIV, I saw many of my patients struggle against and eventually succumb to the ravages of AIDS. Looking back I sometimes feel if only these patients had been alive now I might have been able to do more for them.

The past ten years have seen one of the most remarkable achievements in modern medicine: the transformation of the natural progression of HIV disease through the use of effective treatments called Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART). Many more of my patients are able to live longer without developing eventually fatal AIDS-defining illnesses.

Despite the huge impact HAART has had on HIV in North America, in Winnipeg we are still seeing increasing numbers of individuals testing positive for this disease. In fact, over the past 5 years there has been an overall increase of 53% in the annual rate of new HIV diagnoses in Manitoba as compared to years previous.

I've just returned to work after a year away and find the face of HIV in Winnipeg has changed significantly. HIV no longer affects one or two isolated risk groups; HIV has increasingly become a concern to individuals who are heterosexual, female, and aboriginal. When looking at Manitoba Health's latest stats on HIV, it is important to recognize the diverse communities of people now affected by this virus.

When HIV first became reportable in Manitoba (1985), all the new cases of HIV were occurring among homosexual men. Last year, of the 98 people newly diagnosed with HIV (by the end of October), the main categories of risk identified for these individuals were:

1. Persons having sex with someone of the opposite sex who was at increased risk for getting HIV themselves.
2. Persons having lived or travelled in an HIV endemic country.
3. Men having sex with men who were themselves at increased risk for getting HIV.
4. Users of injection drugs. Over one third of the people diagnosed with HIV last year in Manitoba were women, many of whom had come from a country where HIV is endemic.

Though there is much more to offer my patients with HIV, I recognize that available effective treatment does not always translate into decreased pain and suffering. A number of my patients continue to struggle with addictions of one kind or another. For them the benefits of these medications can be completely out of reach.

Yet it is in this context that I have found some of the greatest rewards in continuing to work supportively with people living with HIV.

Having seen the untimely death of their peers, a small handful of my patients with serious addictions, most often to alcohol or crack, are making decisions to live differently and have, for months to years, begun to live without ongoing dependence on these substances for their well-being.

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There is another group of patients from whom I have found great encouragement: they are the long-term survivors of HIV/AIDS. These are the patients, mostly gay males, who contracted HIV long before I arrived on the scene and have been through numerous drug regimens and AIDS-defining illnesses and have survived them all.

Some have lost their sight because of AIDS. Others have almost lost their minds due to HIV-related dementia. They have continued to fight and take on life's challenges with humour and grace. I had initially thought that, because of Jesus' presence in my life, I would somehow reflect the face of Christ to them. As it has turned out, it is I who have delighted in the image of God in them.

I hope to see the day when HIV is no longer a threat to vulnerable communities. The realization of an effective vaccine against HIV is, at best, years away. In the meantime I am heeding a calling to live my own life with hope despite the absence of a cure and to walk along side people who continue to teach me, in both their triumphs and failures, about living.

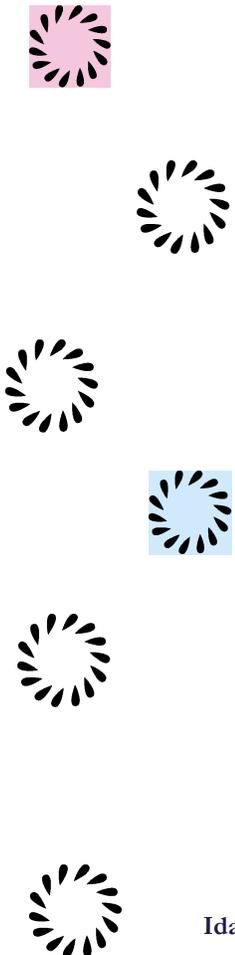
Ida-Lynn Gregan  
Physician at Nine Circles  
Community Health Centre



The Clinic at Nine Circles provides client services and public education to people infected with, affected by, or at risk of HIV/AIDS. It works in partnership with other community-based health, social, allied services and AIDS service organizations to help people with, or at risk of HIV/AIDS secure integrated and responsive health services needed to maintain and improve their health.

Ida-Lynn Gregan; son, Nolan; Husband, Larry; and daughter, Amanda

Ida-Lynn and her husband Larry are co-pastors at **New Life Ministries**. We are so grateful for their friendship and support. **New Life Ministries** has been very kind in their support of House of Heseid. We are also very grateful for their contribution to the West Broadway Community. If you haven't already, check out the **Ellice Café and Theatre** for dinner and a movie. *All profits go toward community projects.*





## In Memorial

This past year has been one of the most difficult years since House of Hesed began in 1997. Since May, 2005, we have grieved the loss of 6 residents, one former staff person and volunteer. This is a significant amount of sadness felt by all at House of Hesed. The grief takes its toll on everyone who forms personal relationships with our residents and definitely affects the residents themselves. Were it not for the out pouring of God's faithfulness in our lives and the commitment of our Hesed friends there is no way we could have continued on with the quality services we provide. Through all the pain, there you were. We received phone calls with words of encouragement and prayers, flowers, cards, gifts for the residents and food for all of us. Every time we received something it felt like Jesus was personally delivering the treasures. We really felt enveloped in that love and it gave us the strength and the courage to continue on. All of us who work and volunteer at Hesed want to love well. We want to honour and please God with the way we love His children, but we can't do that on our own. When you work in the front lines it sometimes gets so overwhelming you just can't think, but your prayers and your love lift us up and for that we are beyond grateful. Thank you. With Christ, all things are possible.

### Flora December 6, 2005



Flora was one of the sweetest, most gentle women I have ever met. Most mornings when I would arrive at work and walk into the kitchen, Flora would be sitting in the dining room eating breakfast and reading the paper. When she looked up and smiled, she was radiant. Flora had such a childlike vulnerability. We just wanted to protect her and keep her safe. Sadly, however, and very suddenly, without any warning, Flora passed away. Words cannot express our shock and grief at the loss of this dear, beautiful, lady. But, we do have the gift of remembering her beautiful smile, her sweetness, and her wisdom. We have the gift of having had her live with us for a short while and the opportunity to show her how much Jesus loved her. Flora received our love and His. She enriched our lives, we love her and we miss her.

### Dale French November 11, 2005

Dale lived with us for more than five years. We walked with him on his journey with life and death. We were there when he gave his life to Jesus and was baptized. He was our friend, our brother, and our teacher. Almost everyday over the last five years Dale's life was intertwined with ours. His absence from our daily lives is just too painful. He was part of the fabric of House of Hesed. My heart is just too full and there is no way I will ever adequately be able to describe what Dale meant to me. The days and weeks following Dale's death, I kept wondering how it could happen. How one moment he could basically be telling me to just let him rest and stop fussing to not being here anymore. I wondered what that moment was like, the moment he passed away. One evening, Dale's friends gathered at Hesed to share our sorrow, our tears and laughter. It was a beautiful time of sharing and honoring our beloved brother. But the question of his actual passing from this life to the next was heavy on my heart. What was it like for him?

That night I had a dream and the Lord showed me that while Dale was lying on his bed, Jesus was with Him. He asked Dale, "Would you like to dance with me?" Dale said, "Yes." and that was it! Dale went to dance with Jesus. I am so grateful God revealed this to me. What a gift. Then it occurred to me that Dale was always dancing with Jesus, on the inside. I believe that is why he could face his mental and physical decline with such peace, grace, and joy. Outwardly his body was being destroyed but on the inside Dale was dancing with Jesus. I pray that for all of us. God Bless you. Love Moe.

Cam Tucker: "Dale and I shared my most treasured memories. We spent many hours together driving in the van. I enjoyed it the most because it was where Dale got to feel like he was free again. We weren't sick, or stuck at home, or in a wheelchair, or trapped inside our heads because we couldn't speak. Dale and I were equals. I often imagined all this when Dale would turn on the radio and an 80's song would come on, then he would laugh and say "alright", like it wasn't a big deal-but I knew it was. The windows were open, the sun was shining and we had errands to run, or a movie to see, or friends to meet at church.

I always tried to push the wheelchair extra fast on those days to continue the adventure, to make the whole day an adventure.

Maresa Davidson: "I have never witnessed a toothless grin that could light up a room like your gums would I miss that smile, I miss your laugh. The thing that I find most striking about you as I think back to the time that we all spent together was your innocent security. We loved so much and told you that and you BELIEVED us. You believed us so much so that you lived in a freedom that most people never experience. Thank you for your love. Thank you for making me a better person just by knowing you."





# We Are Grateful To You!!!



Thank you to all the wonderful people of churches who give so generously to us time and time again! Thank you so, so, very much for your ongoing support and commitment. We cannot do this without your love and compassion.

Thanks to: Gordon King Memorial, Westwood Presbyterian, Winnipeg Centre Vineyard, Gateway Christian Community, Blessed John Parish XXIII, Micah House, Sister Johanna, Sargent Avenue non-ite Church, The Bridge and all the churches represented by each of our staff and volunteers!



Over the Christmas Holidays we were so touched by the thoughtfulness of so many of you as you reached out to include us in your celebrations of this great season.

Thank you to Tache Pharmacy for all their support and candy!!!

Broadway Pharmacy for their ongoing commitment and care for the ones we love.

Toromont Lift Trucks for their most generous continuation to our nourishment and well being.

Grace Hospital Lab for the amazing Christmas dinner and fellowship. We had a blast!!!

Grace Hospice Auxiliary for your kindness and offerings.

## Love HeseD



If you are wondering how you can help House of HeseD this Spring, or forever, here's a few options for to ponder while the snow melts...

We have **Cans** that need a good home. (*Cans not Cats*)



For those of you who want a pet without the commitment, our Cans are right for you. They need to be fed but other than that, they are very low maintenance! They eat **Loose Change, Canadian Tire money** and **Dollar Bills** or **Cheques!**

When full, they can be returned to be cleaned and prepared for another stay if you would like to have them back. Call us for a free trial offer and if you fall in love, you may **adopt a Can** for your house to stay!!! We are also in need of some **volunteers** for our upcoming **fundraiser** to help out, May 25th.

If you would like to make a donation to our **Silent Auction** feel free to let us know! We like prizes!

772-4793

At House of HeseD we have regular volunteers that bless us all more than can be said... Have we told you lately that we love you???

You are all precious and valuable and totally cherished in our hearts. Thank you for putting up with us!!!

Thank you to: June & Clive Hickson, Stan Tataryn, Heather Plett, Barry & Darlene Rowley, Alfredo De Los Santos JR., Neil Warkentin, Joe Podosky, Chris Koebel, DoDo Feakes and Taylor and Kendra Orpin!!!

And a very special welcome to our newest volunteers!

Sister Claire Perreault and Joel Simpson.



Please pray for **healing** as well as greater **intimacy** with Jesus for everyone at House of HeseD. House of HeseD continues to operate by the grace of God and your generous donations. Keep 'em coming and **THANKS** for all you've sown!!!! We really do need your **prayers and financial support** to do what we do, well. Thank God for doing all He has done and enabled each of us to do

For **protection, wisdom, discernment and health** for our staff and volunteers

That all staffing/volunteer requirements would be filled so we can **continue to grow**

That our **stair lift/elevator** would get installed and for all other **household needs**

