

The RAINbow

Volume 6, Number 3

September, 1995

The DIRECTOR'S DESK



For many people, beginning a new job is a lot like the first day of school - we worry about what to wear, we worry about whether everyone will like us, and we worry about our success or failure. Following Mary Catherine's tremendous history with RAIN Oklahoma and other HIV/AIDS organizations could be daunting for me if it were not for the tremendous strength of the staff, the inspiring dedication of the volunteers, and the faithfulness of contributors to RAIN.

In the few days that I have been the Executive Director of RAIN, I have felt surrounded by warm embraces and well wishes. This may be similar to the wonderful feeling of acceptance that our clients feel upon meeting their RAIN teams! It isn't surprising that many people living with HIV/AIDS who are served by a RAIN team actually feel their physical and mental health improve once they have that acceptance and support.

It is indeed an honor to have joined RAIN at a time when we have been able to expand services in southwest Oklahoma through the Lawton office and in northwest

Oklahoma through the Enid office. Having offices located within those areas, staffed by people from the communities, will greatly enhance RAIN's visibility and effectiveness at serving individuals and families impacted by HIV/AIDS. Saundra Powell, Southwestern Associate Coordinator, and Alisa Hankins, Northwestern Associate Coordinator, bring to their work an exceptional knowledge of the needs of their communities but also an understanding of the wealth of human resources available to them.

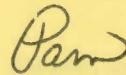
My enthusiasm for being a part of RAIN comes from how closely RAIN's mission fits with my personal mission. Serving as the coordinator of teen pregnancy prevention and adolescent HIV/AIDS prevention projects at the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy I worked for improved adolescent health through direct education with youth, program-

ming with parents and other adults who work with youth, and community presentations designed to enhance awareness of health issues. Without a doubt, the most powerful educational experiences combined accurate HIV/AIDS education with the opportunity to meet and interact with someone impacted by HIV/AIDS. Witnessing an individual or a group begin to challenge misinformation or attitudes that might hurt others is a chance to observe personal growth.

Because I have seen this occur with young people and adults in a variety of settings (schools, churches, and work places), I am thrilled that RAIN has entered more formally into the educational realm. Dannette Geren, Eastern Oklahoma Educator, is working closely with schools in Creek County. The curriculum and activities she develops and implements will serve as a model for other school districts.

My outlook for the future of RAIN is a positive one. I believe that RAIN will continue to provide (through our invaluable volunteers) loving support for those impacted by HIV/AIDS and that the numbers served will increase as we build bridges in all areas of the state; I believe that the education provided by RAIN staff and volunteers will make a difference in slowing the incidence of new infection; and I believe that RAIN will be able to provide these services because of the continued commitment of resources by those generous individuals and organizations who understand that we cannot afford to become complacent regarding HIV/AIDS. Thank you for the opportunity to help shape the future of RAIN in Oklahoma.

In Faith and Hope,



Smotherman & Cooper to be honored at Carepoint's Red Ribbon Ritz

RAIN recently received the exciting news that two Oklahoma women who are very dear to us will be guests of honor at CarePoint's Red Ribbon Ritz.

Mary Catherine Smothermon and Barbara Cooper will received the "Local Legend in the Fight Against AIDS Award" given in conjunction with the Virginia Slims Legends Tour. Twelve of the most celebrated women in tennis will attend the reception at 5 pm, Saturday, October 7, in the Great

Hall of the Myriad Convention Center.

Mary Catherine's and Barbara's names will be engraved on a plaque that will become part of a permanent exhibition at the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York.

For more information regarding tickets to the Red Ribbon Ritz, please call CarePoint at (405) 232-2437. Tickets for the tennis events must be obtained from the Myriad, (405) 297-3000.



Calendar



SEPTEMBER

- 04 - Labor Day
- 08 & 09 - RAIN Training, Baptist Mem. Hospital, Miami
- 10 & 17 - RAIN Team Training, Western Oklahoma, Norman 1st Presbyterian
- 24 - First day of Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year)—Farewell/Welcome Party for Mary Catherine Smothermon and Pam Cross, 5:00 PM
- 25 - Team Rep Meetings, OKC & Tulsa
- 30 - AIDS Walk, Tulsa

OCTOBER

- 04 - Yom Kippur (Jewish Atonement)
- 08 - First Day of Sukkot (Tabernacles, Jewish); AIDS Walk, OKC

- 09 & 10 - CarePoint's "History of the Banner of Color" conference. Call 232-2437 for info
- 19 - 22 - National Skills Building Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 23 - Team Rep Meetings, OKC & Tulsa
- 28 - Boo Bash RAIN Fundraiser, SilverStar, Tulsa

NOVEMBER

- 01 - All Saints Day
- 07 - Guru Nanak's Birthday (Founder of Sikhism)
- 23 - Thanksgiving Day - All RAIN offices closed
- 27 - Team Rep Meetings, Tulsa & OKC

DECEMBER

- 01 - World AIDS Day Memorial Service

Correction!

We quoted an incorrect price for Red Ribbon Bells in the last newsletter. The cost for one of these beautiful silver-plated bells is \$15.00. The bells are imprinted with a ribbon and the words "UNTIL IT'S OVER." They make lovely gifts and are a perfect reminder of the AIDS epidemic when placed on your desk or

window sill. The bells are available through the OKC office. Please add \$2.50 if you would like us to ship the bell to you.

We have also been able to re-order the small enameled red ribbon pins which were so popular. The cost is \$5.00 for the plain pin, \$15.00 for the one studded with rhinestones.

RAIN continues to grow

So many things have happened since the last issue of The RAINbow. As you all know from the Special Edition sent out last month, RAIN has a new Executive Director. Pamela S. Cross, MPH, better known as Pam, took over on August 7. She has been busy meeting with staff members across the state, getting settled in her new office, meeting with the executive committee of the board, and listening and learning all she can. Pam's background in AIDS prevention, coupled with her compassion and caring, make her an excellent choice as the new director of RAIN.

M.C. Smothermon, RAIN's founder and first Executive Director, will continue to serve as a consultant to RAIN and provide whatever services Pam and the Board of Directors deem necessary.

In Lawton and Enid, thanks to the generosity of the Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund, full-time offices are now operating. Sandra Powell had been working part-time, thanks to a start-up grant from DIFFA, and has accepted the full-time position of Southwest Associate Coordinator. Sandra is a member of Southwest AIDS Network (SWAN). She has first-hand AIDS experience, as her son was a PLWA. Centenary United Methodist Church has donated office space for RAIN in Lawton.

Alisa Hankins was recently hired as the Northwest Associate

Coordinator in Enid. A member of the Enid AIDS coalition, Alisa was instrumental in bringing RAIN to Enid. A successful training held recently resulted in a team composed of members from several congregations in the area.

Dannette Geren was hired under grants from the Bartlett Foundation in Sapulpa and the PacifiCare Foundation. Dannette is located in an office donated by the Allen family in their law offices in Sapulpa. Dannette is developing community education programs, particularly for youth and Native Americans. She is a board member of the Tulsa Chapter of the American Red Cross and helped write the Native American Red Cross curriculum. As Education Coordinator, Dannette quickly became extremely busy in Sapulpa as the school system asked her to write their HIV/AIDS curriculum and in-service programs for employees. The programs developed in Creek County are serving as a model for the state.

Jeni Markham Clewell has been hired to share the Western Oklahoma position of Volunteer Coordinator with Reverend Kathy McCallie. Jeni is a candidate for the diaconal ministry and brings to RAIN a considerable amount of compassion and caring. She has been a member of the RAIN Team at First United Methodist Church in Edmond for several years.





RAIN Donations



Each donation is special and vital to RAIN, for we would be unable to provide the vital services we do without you. Often, a special letter accompanies a donation. This month, we'd like to share the letter which came to RAIN with a generous check from the United Life Church in Oklahoma City. United Life sponsors a RAIN Team and will host a training session in the near future.

"Our church teaches and abides by the Principle of tithing and each week we tithe 10% of our Sunday offering to a person or organization we feel has spiritually fed our church family in some way. Recognizing that God is the Source of all, we know that our gift of love blesses and enriches as it circulates and returns to us multiplied.

"We appreciate and honor you as a divine expression of God. We are blessed by you and your work and it is our pleasure to share with you the good that has been entrusted to us."

Some pledge and/or donate regularly...some honor or memorialize someone special...some support fund raising activities...some donate for a special event or presentation...some donate anonymously - all are vital to the ministry of RAIN.

We thank each and every one.

INDIVIDUAL:

Jackie and Barbara Cooper...Billie Hurst-Gasaway...Carol Woods...Skip and Donna Ambler...Dr. Robert Jones...Roy and Aline Brown...Skip and Mary Catherine Smothermon...Gerald and Betty Beck...Daniel Norton...Don

Knight...Jeffrey Gaughan...Charlotte Alexandre...Betty Brown...and several anonymous donations.

IN-KIND:

DR. BETTY BRITT, office equipment; **EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA**, office equipment; **STEAVE M. HARLON**, two side chairs for the OKC RAIN office.

MEMORIALS:

ROB BORDERS by Robert and Norma Borders; **JOHN HOCKING** by Terry Knapp; **JOHN WHITTMORE** by John McNeese, Jeffrey Gaughan, Joan Boggs, Bill Rogers, Roy Scott, Roy and Aline Brown, Sue Brown; **TOMMY GREENHAW** by Ronald Wheeler, Floyd G. Greenhaw, Buck McPhail, Calvin McLish, Earl Baker, Floyd W. Greenhaw, Linda Patzkowsky, Jo Ann Fair; **PAM ARGO** by Bill Rogers; **KEVEN HAND** by OKC Metro Men's Chorus; **ROY BECK** by Jody Martin; **MARK HOUSTON** by Lorie Summers, The Oklahoma Gazette; **RAY McDONALD** by Linda Newcomer; **KIRT SMOTHERMON** by Skip and Mary Catherine Smothermon; **EDMOND P. GAUDIN** by Kathy Leithner; **K.J. COBURN** by Van Wilde; **JOHNSON SINCLAIR** by Mary Lou Doudican; **JIM MOSS** by Warren Riggs; **WILLIAM SOUTER ALLEN** by Tadaaki Hatta.

CHURCHES:

United Life of Religious Science
Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church
Catholic Church of Saint Mary
Faith United Methodist Church

Edmond First Presbyterian
Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa

ORGANIZATIONS, GRANTS AND FUNDRAISERS

Hope Candlelight Tour of Homes
Valhalla Energy Corporation
Coram Healthcare
Tramps Club of OKC
Junior Hospitality Club of OKC
Tulsa Community AIDS
Partnership (TCAP)
Follies Revue, Inc. of Tulsa

AIDSMEMORIALGARDEN DONATIONS:

Carolyn Wright..Jayne Fleener...Polly
Houston... Van Wilde; **In Memory of
John Whittmore** by Eddie Rothermel,
Terry Dennison, Planned Parenthood
of Oklahoma, Eursey Lenoir; **IN
HONOR OF GENEVA SMITH** by Jo
Ann Fair, Jesse Sparks, Margaret
Plumb, Pat Denham, Joe O'Neal, Joe
Gill, Judy Pearson, Lance D. Smith,
Earl Baker; **IN HONOR OF MARY
CATHERINE SMOTHERMON** by
Joan and Larry Foreman, Jeudi
Hamilton, Leslie Heathman, Nora Leal,
Garline Wheatley.



Holiday Cheer in September? You Bet!

Plans for a "Free Store" to be available to PLWAs are moving toward reality. Understanding that many people living with HIV have little or no money left over to be able to give gifts to their loved ones, Lighthouse is encouraging the donation of nice items to be available for properly screened clients to pick out and give as a gift for the holidays. If you have

something you would like to donate, or would like to contribute money for the Free Store, please call Nancy at 528-8359 or John at 942-2822.

Lighthouse MCC also operates a food pantry for people with HIV and AIDS, serving 25-50 people per week. They are always willing to accept donations - and volunteers - for the Food Pantry.

Have you been planning to present a panel for the NAMES Quilt? Here's your chance!

A portion of the NAMES Memorial Quilt will be on display in Tulsa October 13, 14, and 15. If you have been planning to make a panel for a friend or loved one, this will be an excellent time to present it.

All new panels become part of the display and are then sent to San Francisco to be sewn into the larger

panels which constitute the Quilt.

RAIN will once again be presenting a large panel listing our clients who have died in the past two years. We need someone, or more than one, who would like to give their talent in this most special way.

Please call the OKC office if you are interested.

Wecome to the RAIN Team Family

Stillwater Salem Lutheran Church
Enid St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

RAINbows and RAINdrops

When Mark Vickers died recently we lost a good friend, an advocate, and a healing force against anger and bitterness. Mark was one of the founders of Rainbow Village in Tulsa and he served diligently on the RAIN Board of Directors as well as the United Methodist AIDS Task Force. He also worked with the AIDS Coalition of Tulsa, the planning committee for the HIV Resource Consortium, the Barriers to Bridges Committee, and the Tulsa Community AIDS Partnership Advisory Council. Despite being asked to leave one church and made to feel unwelcome in another, Mark returned love and patience in the face of anger and fear. He shared his story at RAIN training sessions as well as other venues. His RAIN Team experienced the uniqueness of his spirit as they cared for him. Though Mark is gone, he lives on in the legacy of love he left behind.

Our prayers have been with several people: Mike Claborn, Ardmore St. Philip's Episcopal RAIN Team, suffered a heart attack...Ellen Griffith, Epworth UMC RAIN Team A, who had three family members severely injured in an auto accident...Jane Lundquist, Norman St. Michael's Episcopal RAIN Team, underwent surgery...Doris Pettigrew and Clemmie Ingram, Lawton Barnett Chapel A.M.E. RAIN Team, whose sister in Kansas has been critically ill...Joy Schreiber, RAIN board member, whose sister is critically ill...Toni Wizenberg, member of OKC Christ the King Catholic RAIN Team, broke her ankle and is using crutches...Debbie Keck, Team rep for OKC Grace United Methodist Church, who is recovering from recent surgery...Love and sympathy go to Jan Hutchison, Epworth UMC Team A, whose father died recently.

Dan Logsdon completed a practicum with RAIN and is now back at OU working hard toward his degree in social work...Ellen Griffith also completed a RAIN practicum toward her bachelor's degree...Harold Swink, Epworth UMC RAIN Team A, has been named the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor of the Year...several RAIN people from Epworth UMC in OKC and UM Community of Hope in Tulsa were in Nicaragua on a Volunteer in Mission trip. They provided medical care and helped to build a medical clinic...Congratulations to Kathy McCallie and Gail Addis who served as Rodeo Grand Marshals for the OGRA...Special thanks to the **RAINbow Power Team** who helped with the last RAIN mailing in July: Kathleen Sawyer, Betty Mann, Aileen DeBell, Jean Montgomery, Jeni Markham Clewell, Ellen Griffith, Jim Zurcher, Bob Young, and Larry Hamilton.

At a RAIN picnic in June, Mary Catherine Smothermon was given two gifts which proved to be an emotional time for all attending. MC was told a tree will be planted in her honor in the AIDS Memorial Garden in Oklahoma City. The Garden Committee is hard at work and it is hoped that ground-breaking will be held by World AIDS Day, December 1st. MC and Skip plan a matching memorial to their son, Kirt. They are considering a bench as a place for people to relax in the shade of MC's tree.

The other gift, a Memory Book designed to be an on-going project, was also presented to MC. Written memories and stories are being put in plastic sleeves and added to the book. Anyone wanting to share a memory with MC is encouraged to put it in writing and mail to the RAIN executive office in Oklahoma City.

Once again, the annual Hope Candlelight Tour of Homes in Tulsa was a huge success! \$100,760.00 was distributed between Eastern Oklahoma RAIN and St. Joseph's Residence for PLWAs.



In Memoriam



OKC Christ the King
Catholic Church
Don

Tulsa Christ the King
Catholic Church
Johnson

OKC Clark
United Methodist Church
Team A
John

Tulsa All Souls
Unitarian Church
Team A
Mark

Norman McFarlin
United Methodist Church
Bethany First Church
of the Nazarene
Roy

Tulsa First
Presbyterian Church
Rl

OKC Lighthouse
Metropolitan Community Church -
Team C
Darrell

Muskogee St. Joseph's
Catholic Church
Rick

Tulsa University
Canterbury/Sharp Chapel
John

Edmond First
United Methodist Church
Gina

Tulsa Family of Faith
Metropolitan Community Church
James

OKC St. Eugene's
Catholic Church
Lenny

RAIN lost another gentle spirit August 18 with the unexpected death of Patty Gammell, member of the OKC Christ the King Catholic Church RAIN Team. Patty will be remembered for her ability to discern the needs of others, her generous gifts, and the giving of her time, energy, and love to those in want and in pain. Mother Teresa speaks of a poor widow with children, who, when given a bag of rice, immediately took half of it to a neighbor who had no food. Mother Theresa said, "The amazing thing is not that she shared the rice, but she knew the need". This story personifies Patty Gammell.



As I see it . . .by M.C.

Wow...What a whirlwind the past few months have been!!! In February when I went to Dallas for an interview with the Truman Scholarship selection panel, one of the questions I was asked was how I planned to finish my undergraduate work in a timely manner if I was selected as a Truman Scholar. A reasonable question since yours truly had been attending Oklahoma City University since January of 1990! The "plan" had been to whip right through and have my degree within two years. But RAIN intervened and I was lucky to get three hours a semester from then on. I told the panel I would resign as director of RAIN if I was awarded the Truman Scholarship and go to school full-time. Well, as they say, "the rest is history..."

How can I tell you what RAIN has meant to me? It has been both the most wonderful and the hardest job I've ever had. I've been blessed beyond belief. There have been times of deep frustration, certainly times of great grief, times of anger, times when I've questioned my sanity (and also that of others), but all along I have been in the company of saints, both the living and those who have left this earthly existence behind them. Not only have I felt deep humility as our clients have allowed RAIN into their lives, I have also been touched and forever changed by the many volunteers who have made RAIN what it is. I have seen members of the clergy go out on a limb and support AIDS ministry when they knew they risked professional censure to do it. I have listened to RAIN Team members tell of their joy and their pain as they came to know and love their clients and then were left with the memories. I have watched in awe as they began working through their grief at RAINbow

Retreats, took the time to begin the healing, and then began the process anew with another client. What wonderful people they are!

I have seen the face of God in our clients and other people living with HIV that I have come to know and love. Many people with AIDS have taken hold of their pain and, with dignity and grace, shown the rest of us what it is to really live until you die. They have lifted me beyond myself and helped me to do things which I never thought were possible.

It has been my privilege to travel throughout the world because of RAIN. Who would have believed I would speak at Harvard or present a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand? Or be a member of national and international boards? Sometimes it has been really scary and I've wanted to retreat to my house by the lake and just hole up. Often I have felt inadequate for the work ahead, but the necessary doors have always opened and the strength has always come.

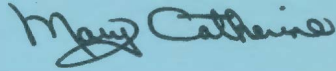
Where will I go from here? The needs are many. Through the work I have done, I have seen so many times the injustice meted out to so many people. Here in America the promise of freedom and justice for all is often relegated to a select few. Social programs vital to the existence of people are being cut, discrimination exists no matter what our laws may say, and those who most need our love and care are often the last to get it, if they get it at all.

I was in Washington, D.C. not long ago, my first trip to that fabled land. At one of the Smithsonian museums I saw the first American flag and the soda fountain where the first sit-in for civil rights took place. I visited the Vietnam Wall and cried as I traced the name of a

friend and thought of many others. I stood in front of the White House and wondered if its occupants have ever really been able to maintain touch with the American people. I felt within me the pride and promise of America, while seeing around me the hurting and the homeless. I cannot rest until the promise of America is a reality for all of us.

Granted, it may not happen in my lifetime, but I hope when my time on earth is over I can say I did my best to bring it about.

In Love and Faith,



They meet...and life is beautiful for a moment in eternity.
Animal needs and primal desire dance in their souls,
unblemished by reality.
Then daily existence intervenes and
distorts the expectations of something true.
And all that is left are passionless echoes of empty dreams,
Glittering futures never to be lived.

Mike Atchley, in memory of Ray McDonald

RAIN UPDATE!

By the end of August, 1995, RAIN has presented 736 programs to 26,415 people. Seventy-three teams (44 Western OK, 29 Eastern OK) are currently serving 59 clients. More than 295 clients have been served since February, 1990. During August, volunteers gave 1,699 hours of service.

Yes, I want to be a RAIN supporter. Enclosed is my contribution:

\$ _____ My gift is in memory of _____ . Please notify the family: _____

My gift is in honor of _____ . Please notify the honoree, whose address is: _____

I understand RAIN Oklahoma is a non-profit organization and my contribution is tax-deductible. My cancelled check will serve as my receipt. (Please check here if you prefer to remain anonymous and do not want to receive RAIN newsletters and mailings.)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Please make check payable to:

RAIN Oklahoma
924 N. Robinson
Oklahoma City OK 73102-5814



Episcopal Church Center
924 N. Robinson • Oklahoma City, OK 73102-5314



The RAINbow

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