

The RAINbow

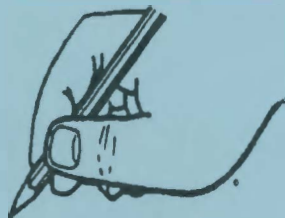
Volume 6, Number 2

May, 1995

The DIRECTOR'S DESK

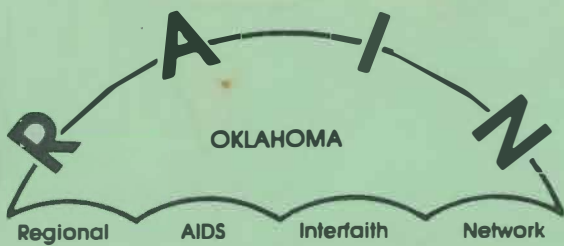
Has it only been such a short time since our world exploded around us, since Oklahoma City became headline news around the world, since America's belief in the safety of the "heartland" was shattered? So many things have happened. Things that were precipitated by the, still incomprehensible to me, ability of people to harm other people. What is it that makes it possible for a human being to have such a lack of care for others? What is it that feeds such hate? We have pondered that question in the face of wars and other disasters and no easy answers will be found now.

For Oklahoma City the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building signified a coming of age, though we may not have realized it at first. The acts of heroism and compassion which began even as the smoke and debris still choked the area signi-



fied the best that people can be in the face of the worst that people can be. The swift, capable response of our local police, fire, ambulance crews, and area medical facilities showed us all how well prepared they were to deal with disaster. And then the help began to arrive from all over Oklahoma, the country, and the world.

Here at the Oklahoma City RAIN office the dangling grids and ceiling tiles bear mute testimony to the force felt nearly four blocks north of the explosion site. The boarded window downstairs in one of the Episcopal offices reminds us how lucky we were that it fell out rather than in on the two people in that office. The National Guard tents across the street make us



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Dear Friend of RAIN,

Have you heard about the AIDS garden? Please consider this request and lend the support of your name to this project. We need your help to pull this off.

AIDS MEMORIAL GARDEN

Purpose:

- To facilitate holistic healing, grieving, and care-giving by creating a beautiful, set-apart space to remember those whom we have lost.
- To build community among all of us affected by HIV/AIDS by working side by side gardening.
- To feed our souls by reflecting on the miracle of life, the beauty of creation, and the wonder of the changing seasons, thus sustaining caregivers and survivors for the journey.
- To increase public awareness through the garden as a sign of hope, commitment, and support.

Plan:

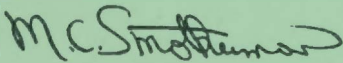
To plant a memorial garden and organize systems to permanently maintain it. All workers will be volunteers. Persons living with HIV/AIDS, their families, friends, RAIN Teams, other community organizations, and everyone willing to take part will be welcome to work together to make this happen. RAIN is the first sponsoring organization, but we are anxious to get every organization possible to be sponsors of the garden. A committee has been meeting to do basic organization and development of the plan. Anyone wishing to serve on this committee is not only welcome, but desired. An ongoing committee will carry out the recruitment and organization of volunteers and funds for the future expansion and care of the garden. This will be a place where memorial services could be held and people could purchase and plant trees, flowers, or shrubs in memory of a loved one. Some method of recognizing names of the deceased, such as flagstones, will be provided.

Location:

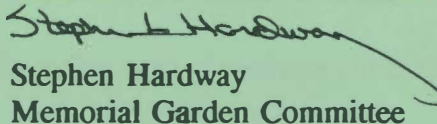
Our first choice for a location would be some place in Memorial Park at 36th and Classen. Will Rogers or Edgemere parks are second choices. In order to secure permission from the city we need sponsors and endorsement.

What you can do:

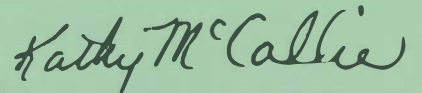
1. We need names of people who support this idea. We need signatures of hundreds of people, especially influential people, who will say, "Yes! I am behind this project."
2. We need organizations to be sponsors of the garden. Businesses, non-profits, civic organizations, anyone who will work on making it happen. We need volunteer workers, but first we need the clout to get permission from the city to build the garden.
3. We need funds. An account has been set up through RAIN for the garden. Contributions can be made payable to "RAIN Garden." All funds received will be used only for the garden and are tax-deductible.



M.C. Smothermon
Executive Director



Stephen Hardway
Memorial Garden Committee



Reverend Kathy McCallie
Memorial Garden Committee

Please sign and return to the RAIN office:

YES! I want Oklahoma City to allow the AIDS Memorial Garden to be established at Memorial Park. I grant permission to present my name, along with other supporters, to city officials who will be considering the project.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Work phone _____

Signature _____

Please indicate below what else you would be willing to do to help create the garden. For example: serve on the garden committee, volunteer to do actual gardening, donate funds, work on publicity, fund raising, recruit other supporters.

feel as if we are in the midst of a war zone, as did the military trucks and police barricades which surrounded our block until they were pulled back a couple of days ago.

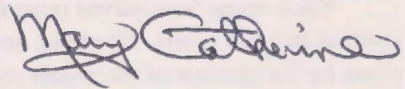
Things are getting back to normal, but our emotions are still tender. I'm over the urge to get out of the building and run, but I still jump at loud noises. Sometimes we find ourselves just sitting and staring at each other, our private thoughts far away from the business at hand. The funerals have begun and there are some we will attend because of a personal or RAIN connection. It's still hard to look out my window. What I saw on April 19th overrides the peaceful scene of today.

You've seen and heard about the tremendous outpouring of support coming from all over the world, as well as Oklahoma. Here at RAIN we were so touched as the calls came in expressing concern for us. They came from other RAIN programs as far away as New York, from London, from Geneva, from friends some of us had not seen for years, from other care providers in the Oklahoma City area who knew our office

was in the blast area. A beautiful floral arrangement arrived from the AIDS National Interfaith Network staff in Washington, D.C. The card read, "Just because we love you!"

I know that many, many more of you have prayed for us as you have for others affected by the blast. I know that your thoughts are with all the people of Oklahoma City nearly every day. Thank you for your care. The lesson the terrorists wanted us to learn was how vulnerable we were. They wanted us to know that no place was safe if someone was intent on destruction. We learned that, but more importantly we learned how much we all care about each other. We learned that there is more good than there is evil. The sorrow of our tragedy will always be there, but the presence of love and care for each other has been and will continue to be the strongest lesson we are learning from April 19, 1995. I can celebrate that, even though the tears still come and the pain is still fresh.

In Love and Faith,



"Lord, teach me how to laugh again, but don't let me forget that I have cried. It's through my crying I may learn how to be happy and free inside so I can help others find happiness. Thank you."

This prayer was written by Frenchy, a friend of RAIN, when he faced a crisis in his life. We share it with you because it fits so well today.



Calendar



May

- 04 - RAIN Director, West OKC Rotary Club
- 05 - Tulsa Candlelight Tour of Homes Patron Party
- 6/7 - Hope Candlelight Tour of Homes
- 07 - Enid RAIN Training
- 9/10/11 - Tulsa RAIN Training
- 11 - RAIN Director, AIDS Education, Monroney Junior High, Midwest City
- 12/13 - Stillwater RAIN Training
- 13 - OKC Metro Men's Chorus Spring Concert

- 16 - RAIN Board of Directors Meeting, OKC
- 20 - RAIN Director, Episcopal AIDS Commission, McAlester

June

- 13/14/15 - Oklahoma State AIDS Conference, Tulsa
- 25 - Pride Parade; Team, Client & Family Picnic at the Smothermans

July

- 18 - RAIN Board of Directors Meeting, Tulsa
- 28/29 - Tulsa RAIN Training

STATISTICS . . .

EDUCATIONALACTIVITY

6 presentations to 507 people.

Total 2/90-03/95 - 675 programs to 24,454 people.

These include faith congregations, community groups, work place settings, and school systems.

RAINTEAMACTIVITY

Seventy-four (45 Western OK, 29 Eastern OK) RAIN Teams consisting of nearly 1,000 people are operating in Oklahoma. Congregations represented include: African Methodist Episcopal, Assembly of God, Baptist, Catholic, Christian (Disciples of Christ), Congregational, Episcopal, Jewish, Metropolitan Community Church, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Quaker (Society of Friends), Religious Science, Unitarian, and United Methodist.

These teams have served more than 275 HIV-infected individuals, their families and care givers. 58 clients are being served currently. A team serves a client for the duration of the illness and is not assigned again until the team has gone through a RAINbow Retreat followed by a period of time to process and deal with what it has experienced.

RAIN Team training sessions are being attended by members of the medical and mental health community, volunteers for community-based organizations, family members living with HIV, and church members who want the education but are not serving on a RAIN Team.

RAIN Volunteers logged 1,440 hours in March.

Compassionate Friends offer support for bereaved parents and siblings

People are able to relate to others who have experienced similar experiences. Sometimes those who have been through what we are going through are the only ones we can open to, the only ones who really understand. That is what The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is all about. They are a "nationwide support group for bereaved parents and siblings offering friendship and understanding."

Not long ago MC Smothermon was asked to speak to the North Oklahoma City chapter of TCF about how that group can reach out to families who have lost a child to AIDS. They want very much to be there for AIDS-related deaths just as they are for other types of loss, but parents of PLWAs have not responded. MC was able to tell them that isolation, fear, and shame are still factors with which families deal in Oklahoma. They often don't feel they will be accepted and may be afraid to try.

Both the North Oklahoma City and Norman chapters of TCF want to be there for you if

you are a parent or sibling of a deceased PLWA. MC was touched by the concern these people felt each other and the desire they had to reach many of our PLWA families. Please call them and/or attend a meeting if you have lost a child at anytime in the past. Linna Robinson is a RAIN volunteer as well as being a member of the No. OKC chapter. Please feel free to call her at 524-3919 or the OKC 24 hour line which is (506) 789-8840. The Norman chapter has a 24 hour line which is (405) 360-4287. For those of you outside the OKC metro area, TCF National Office number is (708) 990-0010. They can give you information on local chapters in your area.

Another parents support group in the OKC area which meets weekly is "Through the Storm." For information contact Warren at Agape Recovery Services at (405) 631-5100. Or you can talk to Linna Robinson as she is a member of it also. Both of these groups are free and we can attest to the caring you will find there.

RAINbows and RAINdrops

Kathy McCallie, W. Ok. Volunteer Coordinator as well as pastor and member of the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church RAIN Team, was featured in a recent Oklahoma City Gazette article as a woman who has made a difference in the lives of others... That RAINbow Power Team has been at work again folding, stapling, labeling for the newsletter as well as other mailouts the past few months... Joan Foreman, Western Ok. Coordinator, returned from her time off for surgery invigorated and raring to go. Many thanks to all those volunteers as well as staff who gave extra time and effort while she was recuperating... Our Eastern Ok. Coordinator successfully defended her doctoral dissertation and is now Sheryl Dagang, Ph.D. Congratulations, Sheryl! ... Sheryl also came to Oklahoma City as a member of a critical incident counseling team and spent 2 days working with families of those people missing in the explosion...

Jane Berryman, DHS HIV/AIDS Case Manager in OKC, is recovering well from a broken ankle suffered in March... Eileen DeBell, Bethany Nazarene RAIN Team, had surgery herself in January and then was in California for some time taking care of her daughter who was gravely ill... Mary Harris, OKC United Methodist Church of the Servant RAIN Team A, was critically ill, but is now back to her perky self... Tommy Chesbro, RAIN Board member and AIDS Coordinator at Indian Health Care Resource Center in Tulsa, has been asked to serve on the National AIDS Fund Board of Directors... Marilyn Staats, RAIN Board of Directors and member of United Methodist Church of the Servant RAIN Team, is recovering from surgery in April... Congratulations to MC Smothermon on being named a 1995 Truman Scholar. She is one of just over 80 people throughout the United States who received the prestigious scholarship this year...

RAIN continues to grow in other states and countries. London RAIN has begun, the first one outside the United States. In Arizona, the second RAIN training has been held in Phoenix. Interfaith AIDS Network sent a representative to one of Oklahoma's RAIN training events when they were getting their program started. MC then talked with them by conference call several times and they now have a successful program going. Interfaith AIDS Network sponsors a number of services for PLWAs in addition to RAIN Teams...

Our prayers and sympathy go out to David Sapper, OKC St. Paul's Cathedral RAIN Team, at the death of his father in February... Reverend Kathy Bird, Duncan First UMC RAIN Team, at the death of her grandfather in March... Jeff Zielny and Rick Landtroop at the death of Jeff's grandfather in April (Rick and Jeff made our wonderful RAIN panel for the NAMES Project Memorial Quilt in 1993)... Sapulpa Upper Room House of Prayer RAIN Team at the death of team member Barbara Lewis.

Congratulations are in order for two United Methodist ministers with RAIN connections. Reverend Bill Moorer, director of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches, has been named Lawton District Superintendent and Reverend Diane Kovacs, Lawton St. Paul's United Methodist Church, is the new Clinton District Superintendent. Bill was the first RAIN Board President and Diane brought RAIN Training to St. Paul's...



In Memoriam



OKC United Life Church of
Religious Science
OKC Wesley United Methodist Church
Mitch

OKC Village United Methodist Church -
Team A
Bobby

OKC Lighthouse Metropolitan Commu-
nity Church - Team B
John

OKC Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Pat

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene
David

Lawton Barnett Chapel AME Church
Eugene

Midwest City Wickline United
Methodist Church
Jesse

OKC St. Patrick's Catholic Church
Mark

Edmond First United Methodist Church
Mike

Norman St. Thomas More
Catholic Church
Mike

OKC Grace United Methodist Church
Paul

OKC Christ the King Catholic Church
Scott

OKC United Methodist Church
of the Servant - Team B
Frank

Norman St. Thomas More Catholic Church
Tomme

Edmond First United Methodist Church
Keven

Chickasha St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Tim

Norman First Presbyterian Church
Frank

OKC Lighthouse Metropolitan
Community Church - Team C
Alan

Tulsa St. John's Episcopal Church
Doug

Tulsa Christ the King Catholic Church
Stephen

University of Tulsa Canterbury Center
and Sharp Chapel
Dale

Tulsa All Souls Unitarian Church
Alvin

Tulsa Community of Hope UMC Church
Michael



Smotherman named Truman Scholar

Resigns from RAIN to pursue public health degree

RAIN began in Oklahoma literally in the back seat and trunk of MC Smothermon's car. Before long we were offered office space in the Episcopal Church Center and the Episcopal Diocese gave us our first grant in Oklahoma. Since then RAIN has grown by leaps and bounds (as you can see by the Update numbers elsewhere in this issue).

MC has been RAINmom and our first Executive Director, but she has also been a part-time student at Oklahoma City University. In December of 1993 OCU recommended her for a Truman Scholarship, one of the top three scholarship programs in the United States.

Following a long period of the application process, a day of interviews in Dallas after she was announced as a finalist, followed by a wait for the official decision of the interview board, MC was notified that she has been named one of about 89 students across the United States to be named 1995 Truman Scholars! She is the oldest person to be awarded the

scholarship since it was first awarded in 1977.

This wonderful opportunity is a good news, bad news item. We are thrilled for MC, but also must accept the fact that she will now become a full-time student this fall.

The scholarship provides some support for her senior year at OCU, then pays full tuition for graduate school where MC hopes to earn a Master's in Public Health. She will be resigning as Executive Director in August, but we don't lose her entirely as she will continue to work with RAIN as a consultant.

All of you should have received a letter with our press release and job search information. If you or someone you know qualifies for this position, we want to hear from you. It is hoped that the new director can be in place by August 1st to have some time with MC before she becomes embroiled in school books. If you need another copy of the qualifications for the position, please call the OKC office.



Have you sent mail to the Oklahoma City office that hasn't been answered yet?

You need to know that each morning our mail was sorted in the Murrah Building by our mailman, Jim, who then began his route about 9:15 a.m. He had just finished sorting the mail on the first floor when the bomb exploded.

Amazingly, Jim was able to walk out of the crumbling building and is back delivering mail now. Even more amazing is the fact that we have

received a batch of mail that apparently was in the building.

It was spattered, gritty, and the envelopes had many marks on them, but they were delivered a few days later. How any mail could have been recovered is just astounding! But - if you sent us a check or a letter and have not received a response, please let us know. Yours may have been one of the pieces of mail which was lost.

There are new faces in the RAIN office

Some changes and additions have been made recently which will make RAIN even more efficient and visible throughout Oklahoma. In the Oklahoma City office Larry McGhghy has been hired to work mornings to balance Larry Hamilton's afternoons. He's already been a tremendous help handling the increasing amount of phone calls and other office duties.

Thanks to a grant from the Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund, Sandra Powell is now the full-time Southwest Oklahoma Associate Coordinator. Sandra has been working part-time in the Lawton area, but will now be able to expand throughout the southwest quadrant assisting the Western Coordinator, Joan Foreman. The same grant applies to the Northwest Oklahoma quadrant and we will be hiring in that area soon.

Dannette Geren has begun work in the Sapulpa office where space is provided by Tom, Sam, and Yvonne Allen in their suite of law offices. The Bartlett

Foundation provided the grant which will enable Dannette to develop a comprehensive education program for the youth of Sapulpa and Creek County.

Dannette, a sister-in-law to Truman Geren, is extremely well-suited for this position, having been involved in HIV/AIDS education and prevention since 1990. She is a certified HIV/AIDS instructor and has worked with the Red Cross in the development and writing of a manual for the "American Indians Decision to Survive" (AIDS) program. She also has a background in marketing and public relations and has produced videos and brochures for HIV/AIDS education.

Stephen Davis has joined the Tulsa office as our new secretary. He got off to a quick start assisting the computer installer as our new equipment and software, provided by a grant from Sarkeys Foundation, was brought on line.

Welcome to each of our new folks and an extra welcome to Sandra as she begins full-time work for RAIN!



RAIN Donations



Edmond First Presbyterian Church has once again made RAIN a budget item for the year. What a wonderful gesture from a church which has always supported our program, both through the members of its RAIN Team and the commitment of financial resources!

Larry Crosby started the Have A Heart Auction several years ago. It has become a yearly event which always provides a wonderful evening of entertainment as well as raising money for AIDS. Larry and John Eckert, co-owners of Tramps in Oklahoma City, turn the club over to the event around Valentine's Day each year. Entertainers from the community donate their time and tips to the effort, many businesses donate auction items, and people are extremely generous as they bid throughout the evening (Larry and his sister donate many items AND bid vigorously, we've noticed). The proceeds this year went to Western Oklahoma RAIN and Loaves and Fishes, two of the finest organizations in this area. Thanks to all who make February extra-special through this wonderful event!

Red Tie Night, sponsored by the Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund (OACF) in OKC each year has become an annual favorite place to be - wonderful food and ambiance, plus a fun evening. But, most important of all, Red Tie Night raises lots of money for AIDS-related services in Western Oklahoma. We appreciate the fact that a large portion of that money

went to RAIN for our Southwest and Northwest Oklahoma programs.

Donors

Leonard N. Slater, MD... Keike Godfrey
 ... Mr. and Mrs Grady McCullough ..
 Mr. and Mrs Roy Brown .. Mr. Peter
 G. Pierce III . . . Drs. Robert & Joy
 Beckerley ... Carol M. Woods ... Billie
 Hurst Gasaway ... Melissa Miracle ...
 Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kirkpatrick ... Linda
 K. Speer ... Connie L. Webber ... Win-
 ston Grocott ... Skip & Donna Ambler
 ... Jeffrey Gaughan ... Jared Bruce ...
 Gary Barton

Memorials

MARTIN RYAN by Linda A. Semelbaugh; LACEY LITRELL by Dr. Philip J. Rettig; RICHARD MONROE by James E. Bussell; JOHN HOCKING by Terry Knapp; PAUL KIRK by Timothy W. Kubiak and Ken Spittler; MARK TAYLOR by Roy and Aline Brown; JIMMY HOUSERMAN by Charles and Verna Lee Falk; TOMMY ARGO by Virginia Martindale, Guardian Health Systems; MICHEAL PENDLEY by Mike Blalock, Ponca City Security Title Services, Pat Schweinsberg.

In Honor of

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH RAIN TEAM by Roy and Aline Brown; EASTERN OKLAHOMA FUND by Kandie Fairchild;

Churches & Organizations

Edmond First Presbyterian Church; Tulsa John Knox Presbyterian Church

Gift bell available at RAIN office

RAIN and AIDS National Interfaith Network (ANIN) are offering "AIDS Ribbon Bells" designed by True Kolor Accessories, Inc. The bells are silver plated and are engraved with the image of the words "Until It's Over."

The bells are 3 and one-half inches high by 2 and one-quarter

inches in diameter at the base, and come in a red gift box suitable for shipping.

The bells make a wonderful gift throughout the year for birthdays, anniversaries, etc., and are available at the Oklahoma City RAIN office for \$10.00 each. Pick one up or add \$2.00 for shipping costs.

*"What the heart has once owned and had,
it shall never lose."*

Henry Ward Beecher

quoted in the No. OKC Chapter
Compassionate Friends newsletter.

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:

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The RAINbow

Volume 6, Number 2

A Publication of RAIN Oklahoma

May, 1995

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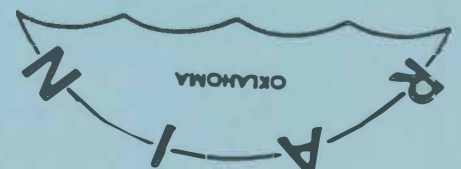
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