

A JOSEPH'S HOUSE NEWSLETTER

THE COMPANION

Winter 2006





The mission of Joseph's House is to provide a home, nursing services, and community for formerly homeless men and women in metropolitan Washington DC who are terminally ill and in the last weeks or months of their illness. While our primary mission is to those with AIDS, as space is available we also welcome men and women with other terminal illnesses.

A continuum of care and support is available to each resident. Joseph's House provides nursing care, emotional support, and spiritual nourishment, including comprehensive case management, 24-hour nursing care, addiction recovery support, personal care services, transitional support for those who regain their health, and end-of-life care for those who progress through the final stages of life.

Above all, Joseph's House offers a caring human presence for men and women who would otherwise face a lonely, isolated death.

Dear Friends,

In this, our first newsletter of 2006, we bring reflections by Joseph's House founder, David Hilfiker MD, and by Gus Nasmith, an international activist on behalf of persons living with AIDS and a long time friend of this community. David's essay, *Sundown Towns*, is a continuation of his exploration of economic and racial injustice in the United States, and in particular, in the urban ghetto. What does such an exploration have to do with the mission of Joseph's House? It is a *vital* aspect of our mission.

As a community, our capacity to turn—courageously, with compassion—towards the suffering of the individual men and women who come to Joseph's House, is enhanced when we understand more thoroughly, the consequences of the injustice that many of our residents have lived with their whole lives. Joseph's House's mission of compassion and love is one expression of our responsibility as citizens, to restore justice where we are able.

Gus's essay, *AIDS 2005*, puts the mission of Joseph's House in context—Joseph's House is a sister community to the many community expressions of solidarity, compassion, and action around the world, particularly in Africa and other parts of the developing world. Gus invites us to look up www.beadforlife.com. I did and I took so much strength and hope from the stories and the photos presented there. Later this year, maybe next Christmas, Joseph's House will host a *Bead for life* party to help support the families in Acholi, Uganda. My deep gratitude to Gus for introducing us to these courageous, resourceful Ugandan and Kenyan women, men and children affected by AIDS.

To introduce this year's interns and volunteers, we've profiled them by sharing their responses to certain questions. We ask them, "*What brought you to Joseph's House?*" "*Before you came to the House, were you aware of any fears or assumptions about what working with those who are sick and dying would be like?*" "*Have those fears or assumptions shifted or changed in any way?*" "*What do you hope for, for the rest of your service year?*" I was struck by the depth of compassion that each one is committed

to at Joseph's House, and by their capacity for self-reflection.

I want to mention Sister Rose Mary Dougherty, SND. Rose Mary helps each of us to a greater awareness of being *spiritual beings on a human journey*. When Rose Mary knocked on the door three years ago she offered to "do people's feet" and she became known as the foot massage lady. Since then, Rose Mary's role at the House has expanded to that of guiding our community in *awareness practice*, the practice of "staying awake" and becoming a prayerful, contemplative presence to whomever we are with; to whatever we are doing.

Three times a year, Rose Mary leads a contemplative retreat for our staff and volunteers. She regularly invites our residents and those who assist them to her home for a quiet day away—a day for spiritual nurturing and quiet reflection. Recently, Rose Mary guided our community in a Day of Mindfulness—a full day dedicated to the intentional practice of compassionate awareness right here in the midst of our every day life. With Rose Mary's gentle, wise support, we experienced our ordinary day as a day with softer edges, a day that seemed to hold more opportunities for compassion and with that, enhanced possibilities of choosing and being that compassion. With Rose Mary's guidance, we are learning how to support one another in our work and life at Joseph's House in deeper ways, from a deeper place.

This coming June Joseph's House will once again sponsor a weekend with Frank Ostaseski, founder of the San Francisco Zen Hospice and the Alaya Institute. Frank's June workshop will deepen last year's theme, *Becoming a Compassionate Companion* with a focus on *Grace in Dying*. I hope you will attend his workshop if you can. Teachers such as Frank are rare.

With gratitude and love,

Patty

SUNDOWN TOWNS

By David Hilfiker

The impoverishment of the black ghetto is, in large measure, a result of its profound segregation. Social scientists have many times demonstrated the fact, and after many years of working in inner-city Washington, I understood its deep truth. But exactly what forces, I wondered, had created this ghetto, enforced its poverty and caused its segregation? Out of that question came my book *Urban Injustice*, published 3½ years ago.

I've recently read another book, *Sundown Towns* by historian James Lowen, that sheds new research light on that question. Lowen has discovered that the phenomenon of northern towns, villages, and suburbs enforcing laws and practices that shut African Americans out after sundown was far more common than previously believed. Shortly after the Civil War, he found in his research, many African Americans moved out of the South and dispersed across the small towns and rural areas of the North. Apparently they were initially welcomed and treated well. But about 1890, shortly after Reconstruction, for a number of reasons that are not completely clear, the mood in many of those places turned ugly and, over the next several decades, in place after place, they began forcing blacks out.

Much of the time the force came in the form of violence. An African American would commit a crime (or be accused of one that he or she didn't commit), and a mob would storm the jail and lynch the person. Then the mob would turn toward the black section of town and destroy parts or all of it, threatening the remaining residents with further violence if they didn't get out of town immediately or within a few days. Anyone who stayed was threatened again, their property burned, or they were injured or killed. Signs would go up at either end of town: "N——r, you'd better be out of town by sundown." Sometimes an actual ordinance would be passed outlawing black residence. Even without an ordinance, the sheriff (or a vigilante) would meet any African American trying to move into town, forcing them to move on.

Lowen discovered that this sundown-town phenomenon occurred all over the north and west, *probably in a majority* of the towns, villages, and

other jurisdictions. It rarely happened in the South until later when suburbs started forming because the whites in town depended on the blacks to be their domestics and agricultural workers and perform other undesired tasks, and they had found other methods of keeping the color line.

There wasn't always violence; sometimes just threats of violence would do. In other places, blacks who did move in were *frozen* out: schools refusing to accept their children, businesses refusing to serve or hire them, neighbors ignoring them. In many communities, the residents created legally binding covenants that wouldn't allow them to sell homes or property to African Americans. In whatever way, towns across the country made it crystal clear that African Americans would not be allowed to live there.

When suburbanization started in the early 1900s, the practice became even more widespread. Lowen believes that almost all suburbs of northern cities were sundown neighborhoods, and he was unable to find a single residential development (where one firm built up an area and sold it to families) that wasn't at some point a sundown town. It's no accident that suburbs have been, and continue to be, so segregated.

These sundown policies remained in force in most places until well into the 1960s, when due to Supreme Court decisions and congressional legislation, it became illegal to enforce such policies. I remember in the Buffalo, New York suburb where I lived, an African American family was awakened one night—soon after they moved in—to crosses burning on the lawn. Afraid for their children, the family moved out. This was 1961.

Just because they were illegal, of course, didn't mean that the practices didn't stop. No less rigid for being informal, they continued for decades and only gradually withered.

The reality then—with the exception of some all-black towns and a handful of actually integrated ones—the only places that African Americans could live in the North were in the black sections of the larger cities. Only in the ghettos.

The United States government actively abetted sundown towns. When in the 1930s the Federal Housing Administration began guaranteeing mortgage loans so that people could buy houses, they redlined black areas, refusing to grant the federal guarantees there. They also exerted pressure to keep African Americans out of white areas, publicly pronouncing the undesirability of mixed neighborhoods. Included in the FHA *Manual* was a model restrictive covenant that neighbors could sign to legally prevent sale to blacks. The FHA required some developers to have all home buyers sign such restrictive covenants. 98% of the mortgage loans guaranteed by the FHA after World War II were to whites.

These loans were economically crucial. Home ownership is the way that people move into the middle

class; a home is generally the first significant asset. When after World War II, the government began deeply subsidizing suburban development with highway programs and the mortgage interest deduction and other tax breaks, virtually all of the largesse went to whites. It was the largest affirmative action program the government has ever undertaken, but it was only for whites. It is not surprising that the ratio of assets owned by Americans is 10:1 in favor of whites.

Justice is fairness. The injustice of the urban black ghetto is deep. That injustice is not a “black problem”; it was created, in fact, by whites. It belongs now to all of us. After not only 300 years of slavery but also a century of ghetto building, our society has a deep responsibility to restore justice.



Grace in Dying:

A Special Workshop with Frank Ostaseski

June 3 and 4, 2006 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

**REGISTER
TODAY**

Continental Ballroom
The Marvin Center
800 21st Street, NW
Washington, DC

Registration: \$150

CEUs available

Weaving together moving stories, Buddhist practices, and good common sense developed over 20 years at the bedside, Frank helps us to see that accompanying the dying is much more than providing appropriate medical care. It is a spiritual practice.

He will introduce contemplative practices, transpersonal approaches and pragmatic tools that help us to reclaim the spiritual dimensions of dying and foster a more peaceful way of dying. These include concentration practices to stabilize the mind & body, ways of cultivating a calm and accepting presence, guided meditations on pain, methods for facilitating life review as an aid to discovering meaning, forgiveness practice, and rituals near and after death.

This workshop is open to all and may be of particular interest to professionals or those who anticipate caring for family members or friends facing life threatening illness.

For further information:

Please visit the workshop website at:

www.compassionatedc.org or

call (202) 328-9161 ext. 15



The 2005-2006 Joseph's House Volunteers/Interns were asked to share about what brought them to Joseph's House, to speak about any shifting that may have occurred in their fears or assumptions about what working with the sick and dying might be alike, and what they hope for, for the rest of the service year. Here's what they've said...

Angela

I feel that God had a part in bringing me to Joseph's House. He's placed a desire on my heart to give of myself to those in need. After finishing college, I was free to follow this desire and am now I am here through the Cappuchin Franciscan Volunteer Corps. Because of my faith, I have come in hopes that by giving I might receive and in suffering, I might find life. I had been with my great-grandma when she died and I was excited by the idea of being with others who could use a friend at the end of their life.

I believe a certain aspect of myself is being honored by being here: the part of myself that knows no boundaries of race, religion, status, ability or anything else. I hope to cultivate the part of me that see the dignity of each person and strives to connect with them as a brother or sister in Christ.

The fear I brought with me was that of not being able to connect with the residents because of our differences. This *has* been a struggle at times. I'd assumed that people with AIDS might be sicker than they are at Joseph's house and be in need of me more. Since many can be fairly healthy by taking their

medications, I've been challenged to be with people who are *living*. Mostly the residents just have different medical conditions and physical abilities than myself. They have personalities, pastimes, good and bad days like me and everyone else. When the time comes that a resident really is at the last days of his life, I find it to be the most fulfilling and special part of the job, when our differences matter even less.

In the midst of anxieties, I find that touch, a calm presence, or a listening ear can be a good way to show support. I am learning that my service is less about me, and more about them. I must be open to each resident as an individual and not just a suffering person as if they're all the same. J house is helping me to be a more accepting person towards everyone in my life. The emphasis we put on community has affected the way I see my volunteer corps and my ideas for family in the future.

For the second half of this year, I want to recommit to being a peaceful presence, a listening ear and a self-starter when something needs to be done and have an honest relationship with the residents.

Shane

Honestly, I had and I have no assumptions about being with suffering. Joseph's House seemed to be the most interesting and by far the most challenging placement opportunity offered by my program, Washington AIDS Partnership. While testing and shaping prevention messages are an important aspect of controlling the spread of HIV, the reality is that people are still dying from this disease. Ironically, HIV in this country is treated more like a chronic illness instead of a life threatening disease. However, in other parts of the world, HIV is ravaging families, communities, towns, and villages. Death is still a prominent concern for people living with HIV even in the presence of excellent health care. I wanted to see the side of HIV and AIDS more common in the world; not just the glamorized HAART ads and fundraising for charity. The residents are a unique manifestation of the havoc this disease is capable of causing and they handle this challenge with a quiet, but seemingly supernatural strength. I often wonder how one can remain so content, knowing what the end will be, knowing that the pain will only get worse, and knowing that nothing can be done to reverse this course. All of this gives me a purpose for being at Joseph's House.

Working at Joseph's House has offered me a unique opportunity to be supported by a community that consists of remarkable men and women, exceptional health care providers, and dynamic volunteers. I used to think of Joseph's House as a place where people came to die with dignity, but that's oversimplifying its mission. Joseph's House has become a place of living, loving, recovery, healing, and discovery. I am in awesome respect of the challenges each resident faces and I am grateful to be present with each one so that we may face them together. Joseph's house is my community and my family. It is a place where pretension and judgment are absent and everyone is allowed to simply be.

Mary

I was drawn to Joseph's house through one sentence in particular describing the job placement through my program, The Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

It mentioned the "act or practice of being fully present to men and women who are very sick or dying". I wanted to know more what that means. I think it also spoke to a need to be more present in my life; and to my curiosity about suffering.

I feel Joseph's House honors people as a whole. It has allowed me to be myself on both good and bad days. Being cultivated as a whole person helps me to be more compassionate and to turn towards suffering. It honors reality.

I didn't have much experience directly with AIDS or cancer before I came to Joseph's House. I was always at a distance from it, and I was afraid of not knowing how to respond, or saying too much, or saying, "I know" or when it's clear I don't. I was afraid of upsetting what little balance people can achieve.

I assumed that balance is different in suffering. I assumed that I would be there without actually experiencing the suffering. Many of these assumptions have shifted, changed, disappeared. I try to assume much less, if anything.

I've learned that it's not about me, but it can be about us. The point is to be close enough; even so close that you, too, are in the suffering. You can feel it, too. Being present and bearing witness is a way to be with someone without having to worry about words or action.

When I came to Joseph's House, I was afraid that it would be sad and somber all the time. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to relate to the residents, or of making mistakes that would hurt someone. The people in the house keep the mood joyful, even playful. There is a

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time and a place for everything, and even when my timeline or experiences don't match those of a resident's, we're both human, with the same needs and the same capability for the same emotions. Commonalities go beyond experience. Everyone makes mistakes. It's true. People fall and we can't always be right there to catch them. It's helpful to know that.

I am hoping that in the second half of this year, I can continue to be open to people. I hope that I can be comfortable and alert, awake, aware. I hope to continue to pay attention and learn what I can from what's around me.

Maggie

The way I ended up at Joseph's House *felt* like an accident. But I know it wasn't; I'd been interviewing and interviewing with Lutheran Volunteer Corps placements in Seattle, hoping for a year out there between the mountains and the sea, and none of the placements were right. So when the LVC Coordinator at the time suggested Joseph's House, I decided to see what it was about, and I am so so grateful that he suggested it.

It seems to me that our society is short on places where we can honor each other wholly- we are so accustomed to being valued only for the parts of us that win awards and receive acceptance that we mostly only know how to hide the parts of us that ache. It feels like – and I'm not sure just how it happens- that J House honors the bright parts AND the shadows. Also the contradictions. It is a place where I feel safe from being labeled or defined or having my identity summed up or packed in a box. It seems we are always surprising one another. It seems we are always learning here.

I was terribly afraid of having nothing to offer when I came here. I was worried about my society-penned “privileges” and the disconnect they would bring. But there is a way in which, knowingly or unknowingly, we seem to lay it all down around the table and find something to laugh about. When I'm with those who are suffering, I've been surprised at how deep the connection between us becomes and how we seem to hold each other in it. I'm learning a lot, too, from residents whose suffering is less apparent; how they each seek balance in living with so much pain and the knowledge of what sort of pain may be yet to come. It feels like an honor to be here, in both the moments that feel so holy and also the ones that feel ordinary. My hopes for the rest of my time at Joseph's House include to just keep learning about all of this, and also to write and make art more.

Brey

When I tell people that I work at a hospice, the common response is one of admiration and incredulity out of their belief that they could never work at a place like this. After a while I found it humorous how everyone seemed to say the same things and I was struck by how I never had any of those reservations. I was intrigued when I first learned about hospice work and I have felt called to the work for years. This calling lead me to Joseph's House where I was not sure what to expect from the experience, but I knew it would both challenge and change me. While I could relate the many ways I have grown and changed I think the sharing of my relationship with Alonzo will capture my experience here the best.

When I came to Joseph's House in August I met Alonzo who had been a resident for close to three years. At first I was uncertain of my role at Joseph's House and

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how best to interact with the residents and Alonzo lovingly took me under his wing. He would ask me how I was doing and give me advice on how to help out around the house. I will never forget when he asked me to massage his feet for the first time. I appreciated him offering me the chance to help him and the guidance he offered. Of course I started by using way too much skin savvy and then hurt him by pressing too hard, but Alonzo was patient with me. He would tell me not to use so much skin savvy next time and commend me when I was rubbing in the right way. He was always gracious and thankful for any help I was able to give him, which made being with him a pleasure. Later on, when Alonzo became sicker, I was able to spend a great deal of time helping him clean up and get dressed for the day. He was always patient with me when I made mistakes and made jokes to help put me at ease.

In November, Alonzo became bedridden and was clearly close to death. The staff and I spent many hours sitting by Alonzo's bed, supporting him in his last days as Alonzo himself had done so many times with other residents. Alonzo passed away early on a Sunday morning and we had a memorial for him later that week. At the memorial I reflected on what Alonzo had meant to me, and how I realized that I had lost a great friend. At a time when I was the guest, he had welcomed me with open arms and showed me the joy that filled Joseph's House. Many people shared their reflections of Alonzo during the service and they all spoke of his compassion, kindness, and joy. I have had the opportunity to know many residents in my short time here and each one has touched me in their own way, but I will never forget the kindness of my first friend and his way of showing me how life-changing love can be.

Helen

I heard about J House through a friend who used to work here and loved it. I'd always wanted to work with people who were very ill or dying. I certainly feel that Joseph's House honors each of us- my innermost being is touched by the life here. I feel that my own life experiences can be useful. At Joseph's house, one has



the opportunity to go deeper into what it is to be human, to live what is important in life and relationships. The fears and anxieties that accompany me are mostly those of my own inadequacies; I meet the challenges that might confront any person who is trying to care for someone—essentially a stranger—at such an important time in their life. I didn't have much prior experience with those who are suffering from AIDS, but I've had experience from a few friends with cancer. When I was with them, I'd help to make them comfortable and listen to anything they might want to talk about. What I've realized through my experience of being with those who come here suffering is that they continue to be who they were before they came here; they keep their needs, quirks, fears, limits. But also I see change: a softening, relaxing into the loving care in the house. It's awesome. I find support from the staff and volunteers – their joie de vivre, generosity, practice and compassion. “Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.” God is at Joseph's House. As far as my hopes for the future, I know there are so many ways in which I need to grow in giving of myself – I hope I can continue to open my heart ever wider. I hope to continue as long as I am able to be useful.

AIDS 2005

By Gus Nasmith

Might our “leaders” finally get it that we all breathe the same air, that planetary sickness affects us all? The threat of avian flu transmuting to lethal human varieties may galvanize us to national efforts at prevention and preparation for care. To be successful, fulsome support for multinational international efforts, including creative solutions to address poor country realities, must move quickly beyond rhetoric.

Will combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic—a reality, not a hypothetical, for more than twenty years—be further sidelined? In remarkable accomplishment, every member government agreed to the mandate for global action of the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS in June 2001. Alas, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, subsequent preoccupations and expenditures of war and natural disasters took the spotlight off the pandemic at hand. Those who haven’t blinked—UNAIDS; the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; UN specialized agencies; non-governmental organizations; and courageously those at the grassroots—struggle on valiantly. Ideology of the Bush Administration cripples fullest prevention strategies and provision of medications, but it has been a significant financial contributor in international AIDS efforts—equivalent to a few days of our being in Iraq.

Contrary to the impression that AIDS in the U.S. “is over,” new HIV infections remain at 40,000 annually, with increased rates in underserved populations. Absence of effective sexual education, including attitudes that safer sex practice can be relaxed because there are now pills to treat HIV/AIDS, are astounding. Not astounding, since it is an American reality, is the lack of equitable care. While we have improved in knowledge, treatment and awareness since the 1980’s, stigma, fear, ignorance and denial are still AIDS’ allies in the U.S.

In the poverty stricken developing world, stigma, fear and denial fuel the pandemic’s expanding swath. Forty MILLION infected, well more than 3 million deaths last year, 15 million children “AIDS orphans.” Shameful

male irresponsibility, abuse of women and girls, refusal to use condoms or lack of access to them, cultural/religious myths and hypocrisies block effective prevention practices and compassionate care.

The huge numbers of infected and devastated poor shock some into action and numb many to turn away. To turn from reality amputates the fullness of life experience and intensifies the suffering of others. In contrast, to join the fight against AIDS, is to partner with Americans from all walks of life and fellows from every corner of the globe! Altruism, compassion and simply “doing what is right” should be guiding motivations in themselves! But for those who demand justification by profit motives or “what’s in it for me,” there is the message that HIV/AIDS destroy countries’ and regions’ viability—making them ripe for terrorism, war, drug and human trafficking, rather than healthy democratic trading partners.

26 MILLION of those with HIV/AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2003 I joined 900 others at the International Conference of Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Kampala, Uganda. Inspirational HIV+ women are the courageous leaders who stand up to fight to live and save their children. The women’s efforts are magnets to decent men as well. The suffering and death in the AIDS pandemic are horrendous, but from those battling it come incredible energy and light from unconditional love and shared commitment. When we know death and share grief, we share a most profound experience of living and capacity to share. Why is this more apparent among the poor and suffering than the rich and powerful? Grassroots activism and international support prod governments and bring hope.

Returning to Kampala at the beginning of this year, I reunited with Milly, Lydia, Irene, Sam, David and Dorothy and their children and other dear Ugandans. What a joy to bring them together with my friends, newly resident in Kampala, Charles Steinberg (MD) and Torkin Wakefield, founders and leaders from 1987 of the empowering American experience, “AIDS, Medicine and Miracles.” AM&M opened so many doors to my own living with AIDS. Treasured by the African nurses and doctors he trains, “Dr. Charles”

respectful loving connection with his patients and staff is key component of his effective HIV care.

Some months before my visit, Torkin found a desolate shanty-town of Acholi refugees from Uganda's war-torn north on a sun-baked rock quarry on the outskirts of Kampala. For a pittance, the Acholi, mainly women, pounded rocks by hand in incredible heat, their adjacent homes mere shacks without water or electricity. The setting seems a purgatory, if not hell on earth. Torkin's serendipity encounter with a woman making beautiful beads from discarded magazines spearheaded "Beadforlife." Now 160 beaders, more than tripling their incomes from the quarry, support their families. Visit www.beadforlife.com for an enriching exposure to the principles, organization, and the beauty of the people as incandescent as their beads. The energy, spirit and family dedication of Ugandan women has been linked to North Americans who believe in creating "a world that works for all." Read how, in addition to fair wages, Beadforlife profits provide scholarships, training programs and other community development projects for a sustainable future.

From Uganda I traveled to neighboring Kenya. The populous poor Kayole district far from Nairobi's center bustles as a city of its own. The modest Kayole outreach center of Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK: www.wofak.or.ke) is a vital lifeline to those in most need. Vivid memories of my three days with WOFAK include the packed community support group, energizing even those almost too ill to sit; the children quietly assembling for the lunch of porridge and vegetable, their one meal of the day; the kindness and cooperation of the medical doctor and the traditional healer, whose small office were side by side; the visit to neighborhood apprentice trade programs for grateful older orphans; the respectful classes taught by young HIV+ teachers in an orphanage where the children took care of the building and each other; the home care visits to ill women whose ten square foot family living space lacked water, electricity or toilet facilities.

One morning an exhausted 14 year old orphan brought in Daniel, his listless 10 year old brother (who looked

5). Daniel was ill with tuberculosis and found to be HIV infected. Indicative of how those needing help are helping others, Christine, the Kayole program coordinator, mother of two and HIV+ herself, took in Daniel. Through her nurturing and the medical care she could access, Daniel greatly improved, going from 33 to 48 pounds in a couple of months. The boy who hardly spoke his name now insists upon attending his new school, even when he would be allowed to rest at home. Another HIV+ Vermonter and I sponsor Daniel's schooling and non-medical needs for \$40 a month.

WOFAK proudly had me meet 19 year old Linzy. Her father died of AIDS some years ago. Since then she has been a key help to her mother (living with AIDS) as they take any variety of menial jobs to provide for food for 8 children and costly rent for the one room structure that is their home. Against all odds, with WOFAK's help Linzy finished secondary school and gained university admission. My family and friends have joined to enable her to enroll for a community development degree at Kenyatta University. The fees, board and other living costs total less than \$1,000 per year.

Caused by a virus, AIDS' devastation reflects prejudices and fears, and the failures of human institutions damaging to us all. We must continue to try to correct the killing injustices, however daunting the history and the tasks seem. Rather than turn away, we can take specific personal actions that enrich our own experience. What awful realities the friends in Africa face. Even so, they radiate in their hopes and gifts for life. "Where we are broken is where the light comes shining through."

Augustus "Gus" Nasmith, Jr. represented AIDS, Medicine & Miracles, Vermont CARES and the Vermont People with AIDS Coalition at the XV International AIDS conference in Bangkok, Thailand, July 2004. For information on how to assist WOFAK programs or individual sponsorships (through tax-deductible contributions) contact Gus at: gasmith@sover.net.

UPCOMING JOSEPH'S HOUSE EVENT

Benefit Concert for Joseph's House **Jeshua Erickson**

Jeshua Erickson is a contemporary folk singer/songwriter. He's been writing and performing original music since college, while taking random jobs in various parts of the country.

Last summer he recorded Swords into Plowshares with two other musician friends from Holden Village. (Holden Village is an ecumenical retreat center in the North Cascades of Washington state. Jeshua has lived and worked there on and off since graduating from Luther College in 1998.)

Friday, May 19th at 7:00 pm
Potter's House Books 1658 Columbia Road, NW Washington, DC 20009

For further information please call Tommy at (202) 328-9161

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