

## ICARE Discussion and Support Group

In August, ICARE held its first monthly discussion and support group for people with HIV/AIDS. The group meets from 6:30-7:30 pm at ICARE (438 Southgate Ave., Iowa City). The group is intended to provide an opportunity to meet others, share concerns and information in a caring, supportive environment. Refreshments are provided. Upcoming meetings will take place on December 19<sup>th</sup>, January 30<sup>th</sup> and February 27<sup>th</sup>. Hope to see you there! For more information, contact Michael Niece at (319) 338-2135.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Programs like ICARE are able to carry out their mission because of the support and dedication of volunteers. ICARE is fortunate to have a large group of volunteers who assist with the success of our pancake breakfast fundraiser every year. This allows us to continue providing needed services to individuals, families, and the community. ICARE also needs volunteers to provide direct services to clients, provide assistance with clerical duties, and contribute to development activities. If you are interested in volunteering for ICARE, download an application at [www.icareiowa.org](http://www.icareiowa.org) or contact Joe Kane at 338-2135.

## YOU'RE INVITED



to attend the  
**World  
AIDS Day  
Benefit**  
Dec. 1

See Page 3 for details.

## Meet Michael

Hello, my name is Michael Niece, but you can call me Mike or that new guy at ICARE. I grew up in Richland, Iowa (near Fairfield) and I went to college in Mt. Pleasant (during the week and the U of I on the weekends), so this area is home for me. I just moved back a few months ago from the south. Luckily, I missed hurricane Katrina and the devastation that she caused. I am thankful that the building and the people I worked with at South Mississippi AIDS Task Force came through with little damage, although many clients were greatly affected and are still searching for assistance.

My background: I have worked for 22 years in the HIV/AIDS field as a volunteer, case manager,

assisting people in applying for disability, AIDS educator, grant writer, program coordinator for the state HOPWA



**MICHAEL NIECE**  
ICARE  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

(Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) program in Mississippi and managed the day to day operations of a small AIDS service organization on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. I have also sat with many friends during the last stages of the disease. I also have experience in

substance abuse counseling, hospice, and mental health services.

I am very excited to be here. I continue to do this kind of work because I become energized by helping folks make their lives better. I also see a need to educate about the disease, as there still are too many myths about HIV. I strive to make a difference in helping people live healthier and happier lives. I hope that together, we will continue to build on the foundation that others have produced in order to continue the good work that this agency has provided over the last twenty-plus years. It is my hope that I will be able to meet you very soon. I invite you to stop by the office and say "hi," call (338-2135) or email me at [mniece@meccaia.com](mailto:mniece@meccaia.com).

## Note from Dena



With the holidays quickly approaching, I begin to think about the countless people in my life that I am thankful for. I want to thank all of you for allowing me to provide services for a cause that I am very passionate about. I have had the opportunity to work with many people that have made such a positive impact on my life, and I hope that I was able to do the same in return. From the annual ICARE Pancake Breakfast to the World AIDS Day Benefit, I have been inspired by the generosity and commitment that has been shown by our community to ensure that proper care is provided for people living with HIV/AIDS.

As many of you already know, I have resigned my position as ICARE, Program Coordinator. Although I will continue to work part-time through December 1st, my last full-time day was Friday, November 18th. I will remain in the Iowa City area and I look forward to being a part of ICARE in the future. Thank you once again for allowing me to be a part of your lives.

Sincerely,  
Dena McDowell



# World AIDS Day – Grateful to Remember

By Joe Kane

*Life goes on.*

I remember the first time after his death that I went through an entire day without thinking about him. I felt guilty. I wondered how I could go on as if nothing had happened. The pain was raw and tender.

He was my first cousin once removed. As often happens in large families, the generations seem to melt into one another. In my growing up years, I knew him as the little kid at family gatherings who still had to sit at the Kool Aid and hot dog table long after I had graduated to the big table. In high school I feigned sophistication and hid my teenage awkwardness in silence. As I grew older I learned to seek him out at family weddings and funerals for his humor and unique perspective.

A ringing phone startled the quiet of mid-December 1988. All I could hear was sobbing. It was my cousin's mother. Finally his father took the phone and explained in halting phrases: He is really sick...his mother is really upset....no insurance...needs a hospital...hasn't been diagnosed yet, but we think it is... The terror of the late eighties had invaded my family.

My wife and I arrived quietly at his parents' home where he was resting. I was privileged to his condition because I worked for the county and his mother thought I might help with access to care. He had trouble looking us in the eye. In the dim lights of a back bedroom with hushed tones, he told us his darkest secrets. He swore us to secrecy. Just a month before a cross was burned on the lawn of an African American family who had dared to move into this neighborhood. He didn't know what his parents might encounter if the local community discovered that he had AIDS. We were a family of south side Irish Catholics and he feared all our baggage of prejudices. It was 1988 and the stigma and panic were strong.

He entered Grant Hospital at the end of December. He died in February. In that whirlwind of two months we all grew with him. He proudly introduced us to old friends and new acquaintances. We came to visit him to cheer him up, but if the truth be known he was the one who did most of the lifting of spirits. My 86 year old uncle made the trek from the south side to the near north side. We all were included in my cousin's pilgrimage moving from one place to another. He led the way from fear and shame to care and concern. He initiated a group on the floor

that he called "The Proud PWAs." One day he even organized a parade of men and wheel chairs with signs that proudly rolled along the circle of the floor boasting who they were. With the clarity of death looming, he displayed courage and bravery to love who he was and share it with all who could bear it.

*"He led the way from  
fear and shame  
to care and concern."*

He touched us so profoundly with his love of life and his courage to be who he was that we were proud to name our first child after him. I thought I would never have a day that I would not consciously remember him. But it happened. There was a day filled with sick kids and dirty diapers and it passed without a conscious thought of him. I suppose those days have grown in number as years have passed. The raw tenderness has scarred over. But I know this: I have a fuller life because of him. I have a richer life because of him: I miss him. I am grateful to remember.

*Life Goes On.*

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## ICARE Helped Me Realize My Dream

**W**hen I was diagnosed with AIDS September 7, 1993, my life was in turmoil. Goals such as finishing college were the last thing on my mind. My health report was so grim that living past weeks, months or years was unthinkable. At age 20, I was faced with my own mortality. I was so depressed that I had to take depression medication on top of AIDS drugs. If it hadn't been for brave doctors, nurses, dietitians, social workers and volunteers who tirelessly provided comfort and care, I wouldn't have been around this long.

My creator was able to work through awesome health care providers and volunteers who gave everything they had to make my world livable. Today, I'm in a much better place. My health is restored to a level that allows me to function. I was able to go back to school to finish my educational goal of a Masters in Business Administration. I take my medications on time, exercise daily, follow proper diet and have fun. Life is great! I feel that my life is nothing but a miracle.

But....I don't take any credit for all of this. Credit goes to God and all professionals including volunteers. I want to say a little more about volunteers. I'm a strong believer that volunteers are extremely important in the fight against AIDS. For example, this past June, I attended ICARE's fundraising breakfast in Iowa City and I was moved by all who participated in the event. ICARE has been there for me every step of the way and I am forever indebted to the volunteers who support ICARE's effort.


ICARE is constantly working overtime to insure my emotional survival. Thanks to Dena McDowell, I'm currently enjoying the once a month support group at ICARE. These monthly meetings allow me to share my life with other newly HIV positive people for the purpose of restoring their confidence and also to learn from others.

## ICARE's World AIDS Day Benefit at Chait Galleries

On December 1, 2005, from 5:00–7:00 p.m., The Chait Downtown Galleries is sponsoring a World AIDS Day benefit for ICARE, "An Evening with Art." The Galleries are located at 218 E. Washington Street, Iowa City.

Your support makes it possible for ICARE to provide essential services to people affected by HIV/AIDS, and HIV prevention education throughout southeast Iowa. The event will include a silent auction, refreshments, and a short program. There is a suggested donation of \$25 at the door; however, all are welcome to attend. Since 1988, World AIDS Day has been a day to remember and celebrate. We remember all those who have gone before us. We remember the great contributions that they have made to our lives through their talents and their personhood. We celebrate the advances in medicine and services. We celebrate those who continue to champion justice and provide access to care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

According to UNAIDS estimates, there were 37.2 million adults and 2.2 million children living with HIV at the end of 2004. Another 4.9 million people have become newly infected this year. Worldwide, about half of all people who become infected with HIV are under the age of 25 and die from AIDS before the age of 35.



**Iowa Center for AIDS  
Resources and Education**

### An Evening with Art Benefit

**Thursday December 1st  
5 PM - 7PM**

The Galleries Downtown  
218 E. Washington Street, Iowa City  
(across the street from the Englert Theatre)  
\$25 Per Person

The reception will include tempting appetizers and desserts from local restaurants, a silent auction and contemporary art of all mediums.

Your support makes it possible for us to provide essential services to people affected by HIV/AIDS and HIV prevention education throughout southeast Iowa.

**Sponsors:**

Alberhasky Eye Clinic	Hamburg Inn No 2	On The Go	Rose Water Plumbers
Bo James	Hands Jewelers	Precision Designs	Sam's Pizza
Chait Galleries Downtown	Iowa Artisans Gallery	Plumber's Supply	Scheels All Sports
The Cottage	Lou Henry's	Prairie Lights Books	Synchronicity Chiropractic
Dawn's Hide & Bead Away	The Mansion	River City Dental	The Wedge
East Iowa Hairloom Quilters	New Pioneer Coop	Vortex	Wave Length
Europa Salon	Norma Jean's	Whitedog Auto	Zender's Salon & Spa
Every Bloomin' Thing	Northside Book Market	Room Service	z'Marks Noodle Cafe
Fin and Feather			
Ginsberg Jewelers			

## What a Difference a Few Hours Make

By Joe Kane



Once again the New Pioneer and ICARE Pancake Breakfast was a great success. The numbers are staggering: 125 volunteers prepared a breakfast for 1,000 people. Twenty gallons of syrup, three hundred pounds of sausage, one hundred and fifty pounds of pancake mix, 30 cases of oranges (squeezed by fifteen people over the course of six hours the day before), piles of strawberries, peaches and blueberries, and a mountain of fresh whipped cream.

It was a great time for a great cause. The idea of the pancake breakfast was conceived by Marcia Wegman, David Leshtz, and the late Rick Graf in 1987 as a fundraiser for ICARE. A partnership was forged with New Pioneer Co-op and its vendors to donate the food, and an incredible community event was created. This year over \$22,000 was raised. Over fifty local businesses contributed to the event.

ICARE is ever grateful for all the supporters of the Pancake Breakfast. The businesses, volunteers, and patrons that come together to enjoy this event have a great time for a great cause. We hope everyone can join us next year for the Nineteenth Annual New Pioneer Co-op and ICARE Pancake Breakfast.



Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
Permit No. 229  
Iowa City, IA 52240

Iowa Center for  
AIDS Resources and  
Education  
438 Southgate Avenue

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**ICARE PROVIDES COMPASSION, EDUCATION AND RESOURCES:  
THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST HIV/AIDS**

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## ICARE

News from the  
Iowa Center for AIDS Resources and Education

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**Mark Rugeberg**, World AIDS Day Poster



**Visit us on the web:  
[www.icareiowa.org](http://www.icareiowa.org)**

### Who we are

ICARE is a not-for-profit organization of staff and volunteers who provide comprehensive support to persons living with HIV/AIDS, their partners, families, friends and others concerned about HIV or AIDS in a safe, accepting and non-judgmental atmosphere.

### What is HIV?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is an infection that disables the human immune system's ability to fight infections and overcome illnesses. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

### Our Mission

ICARE's mission is to enrich the quality of life for persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Though the distribution of information and services, we foster the self-empowerment necessary to live productively and positively in the face of HIV/AIDS.

### Our Approach

ICARE offers a client-centered, holistic service approach that actively involves the client and family in the service delivery process. All services are free and confidential.

### Direct Services

We provide case management, linking clients to health care and other support services including: housing assistance, utility assistance, primary medical care, AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), client advocacy, nutrition-related services, information and referrals.