

Faerie Tales: Children & HIV/AIDS

BY NETH URKIEL-TAYLOR

Recently, I took part in the first of a three-part American Red Cross training for HIV/AIDS educators. There are a number of books in the Rainbow Library on this topic and I thought I would share some of those titles with you this month. Some children are infected and many others affected by this epidemic. A child's first introduction to information about sex should not be in association with a disease. However, questions will arise and adults should know resources for explaining questions on HIV and AIDS.

HIV/AIDS books for children may explain facts, be written or co-written by children or be fictionalized stories. Many of the fictionalized stories I have read describe the feelings or events a young child has experienced when an uncle is dying or has died of AIDS.

A Name of the Quilt by Jeannine Atkins is a particularly good book for introducing the love and remembrance of someone, in this case an uncle, who has passed due to AIDS. The book is the story of a girl named Lauren and how her family takes an evening together to create a panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt. This book is not full of facts about the virus or disease. The disease is never once mentioned until the facts pages at the books end. This story shares past and present memories of family history. Eventually, piece by piece, a life story is stitched

together for all of us to remember.

If your child is affected by an uncle (or other adult) who is living with HIV/AIDS, good parallels may be drawn between reality and the books, *Tiger Flowers* by Patricia Quinlan or *Losing Uncle Tim* by MaryKate Jordan. These two books are the stories of nephews and the events before, during, and after HIV/AIDS has killed their uncle. Importantly, each of these books provides children with the idea that no one can catch AIDS by being near an ill person. A child does not have to withdraw from seeing their loved relative or friend.

If there were one book I would give out to all parents and teachers or young children on this issue, it would have to be *Come Sit by Me*, written by Margaret Merrifield, M.D. This book is a superb primer for children and adults alike. It describes itself as an "educational storybook for small children." This is a story of young children coping with a peer's illness at a preschool age. The book illustrates all the ways children cannot get HIV/AIDS in ordinary day-to-day living and provides intelligent information and answers to questions for adults or teachers in the back pages of the book.

A book like *Come Sit by Me* may make you curious to hear more stories about children with AIDS/HIV. In that case, *Be A Friend, Children Who Live with HIV Speak* (Albert Whitman & Company) would be the book to find. *Be A Friend* is a collec-

tion of art and writing by children who have come to the National Cancer Institute. It is divided into three sections: in "I Often Wonder..." children express what they wonder about and wish for; "Living with HIV", children share their daily routine, and some personify this virus as a monster; the third section is about relations in "Family, Friends and AIDS." As 8-year-old Becky says, "I would like for everyone to know that please do not be scared of us - we have feelings, too. It is not so easy to live with AIDS. Be nice, and treat us like everyone else. The worst thing about having AIDS is not knowing if people will be your friends. So please be our friends. We need you to be our friends."

If you want to instill the facts even further, I would suggest a series of books published by Rosen Publishing Group's PowerKids Press. The AIDS Awareness Library is a series of eight books. Some titles include: *Where Did AIDS Come From?*, *Myths and Facts About AIDS*, *What You Can Do About AIDS*, *Kids with AIDS*, and *What is AIDS?*. These books are a multi-volume AIDS/HIV encyclopedia set for upper-elementary-level reading. Each has its own glossary and index.

In the complexity of AIDS and HIV there is no cure. Education of every person - no matter how young - is the best way to prevent the spread of this disease. ▼

The Rainbow Library is a reference library and resource for queer themed picture books, videos and family information. Call 652-0878 to learn how you can become involved, get a bibliography or give gifts to the library.

Neth Urkiel Taylor lives in Burlington and directs the Rainbow Library.

RE/MAX
North Professionals

Jackie Marino

REALTOR
802-655-3377 x23
800-639-4520 x23
e-mail jackie@together.net
website: www.jackiemarino.com

"Out" and Serving our Community since 1989



Practice limited to male clientele



THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE
William Coil, NCMT



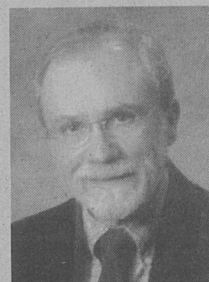
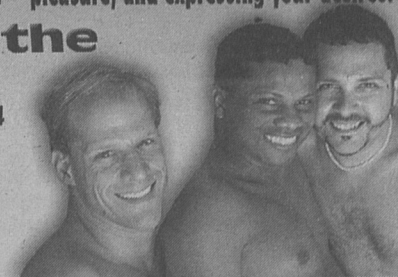
802-658-2390
800-830-5025

Discover Your Gifts! Learn about waking up and sustaining erotic energy, giving and receiving pleasure, and expressing your desires.

Celebrating the Body Erotic

New England • October 22-24
Call Stephen, 617-524-9044

Body Electric School
www.bodyelectric.org



Joseph Kress, M.A.

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor
Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor

Individual and Couples Counseling
Adults and Adolescents

802-334-6301
95 Main Street, Suite 203, Newport, VT



BOB GREEN, LCMHC

LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

SOUTH BURLINGTON, VERMONT

(802) 658-2390
(800) 830-5025

INDIVIDUALS & COUPLES

MAGELLAN, VHAP, MEDICAID & MANY OTHER INSURANCE PROGRAMS ACCEPTED