

Partnerships

1987 to 1997: Commemorating a Decade of Community and Hope

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Illuminating a Decade of Compassion *Tenth anniversary commemorated*



On April 10, 1997, three hundred of Bering's clients, donors, volunteers, and friends gathered to commemorate our tenth anniversary. A solemn candle lit procession was led along Harold Street by our Founders, accompanied by Bering Chancel Choir, to Bering's campus. There, the participants were greeted with a special song by Bering & Friends. BCSF President, John M. Gonzalez, welcomed the crowd by reading proclamations from the City of Houston and the President of the United States, and reflecting on our ten-year journey.

Dr. Reverend Don Sinclair, Pastor of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church at the time of BCSF's founding, was asked to introduce this year's recipient of the annual leadership award named in his honor. Esther V. Houser was presented with the prestigious Don Sinclair Leadership Award for her visionary leadership to create the Bering Community Service Foundation. As early as 1983, before much was known of HIV/AIDS, Esther designed a Grand Plan for Bering Church that included the creation of a non-profit organization to serve the community. When HIV/AIDS became a crisis at Bering Church in 1987, the Grand Plan idea for a non-profit community organization was resurrected and Esther opened a bank account with her \$250 check. Bylaws were created and Bering Community Service Foundation was born. Esther reflected during the award presentation, "be careful what you dream, because it can be!"

We are grateful for the vision of Esther and our other Founders. Without your dedication, bravery, and leadership, BCSF would still be a dream. ♦



Photo by Gabriel Tran Photography
Rev. Dr. Don Sinclair (L) and BCSF President John M. Gonzalez (R) congratulate award recipient Esther V. Houser (center), at the Anniversary Commemoration.

Below, official greetings from President Bill Clinton

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 24, 1997

Greetings to all those gathered to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Bering Community Service Foundation.

Our nation's strength always has depended on the unselfish acts of generosity and community action of our citizens. Over the years, the members of your organization have devoted themselves to caring for the needs of others. You are making your own contribution to the spirit of service that is such an integral part of the American character.

The members of your foundation can take great pride in their dedication over the past decade. I commend you for your hard work on behalf of people with HIV/AIDS and their families. You are helping to create a brighter future for all of us.

Best wishes for a memorable event.

Bill Clinton

President's Message

Dear Bering Friends,

I can't tell you what a joy it is to be part of the Bering family at this time in its life. As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Foundation and prepare for next millenium, there is a new excitement among our Trustees, staff, volunteers and funders.

It was an honor to present the Don Sinclair Award to Esther V. Houser this year. Not only does she richly deserve this recognition of her personal leadership to the Foundation. She is an excellent reminder to all of us today of the commitment and risk taking that were part of Bering from the beginning. Without the audacity to dream big, Bering Community Service Foundation would never have been born and its mission would have gone unfulfilled.

We have not spent this Anniversary year only in reflection - although we have done much of that. We have reached back to the wisdom of our Founders and sought out the new ideas of our current board, staff, community leaders and volunteers. We are expanding our original programs. Adding new programs, where the need arises and is not being met by others already. We are learning new ways to leverage our leadership, sound financial condition and goodwill in the community to further the mission of Bering. The biggest change of all really is our realization that our mission is always adapting to new realities while staying grounded in our core values. The irony is that they knew this 10 years ago and we are only rediscovering this! I've often wondered what it was like

(Continued on page 2)

Bering Care Center course helps clients deal with tough issues

As Activities Director/Client Service Coordinator for the Bering Care Center, Norma Zoda works closely with clients on a daily basis. Last summer, she observed some were struggling with depression, stress, and relationship troubles, in addition to the on-going challenge of living with HIV. Norma particularly noticed their need for tools to deal with these issues. Remembering a useful program she had utilized in the past, Norma decided to introduce it to a small group of clients. Using a workbook by David D. Burns, MD as a guide, the Rational Accepting Person (RAP) session was launched August 8, 1996. The weekly closed session of five individuals set goals to build self-esteem and develop tools for resolving issues. RAP required a tremendous commitment from the participants. For eleven months, the group met once weekly. Each participant, when their health allowed, was expected to fully participate on a weekly basis.

From the beginning, Norma sought to maintain a cohesive group. "Key to the group's goals was learning how to turn negative thoughts, feelings, and actions into positive ones," she reflected. "RAP proved to be a real success. The participants learned the value of sharing their feelings in an open and trusting environment. They were surprised to find a commonality to their problems, and that they were not alone in their struggles."

Robert Snellgrove, Program Director for the Care Center, knows this is



Bering Care Center's Rational Accepting Person (RAP) group graduates proudly display their diplomas.

an important component of the Care Center's program. "Living with HIV is hard enough," he stated. "But, if you don't have good living skills; if you don't know how to deal with the stress, fear, anger, grief etc. in a healthy way; this difficult situation becomes impossible. At the Bering Care Center, what we have tried to do is to show the clients that there are alternative ways of handling these powerful issues. We have tried to provide clients with healthy living tools, so that they might work on their own issues, empowering them in the process, while avoiding the temptation of resorting to destructive lifestyles such as the use of drugs and alcohol."

At the completion of the course, each participant received a diploma and

wrote what they gained from the program. One participant's shared his experience: "The RAP classes were very helpful in teaching me how to cope with feelings that were difficult for me to control. The rage, anger, and other feelings of hopelessness are now almost under control... my heart is more forgiving, when once it never would forget. Life seems to be easier to cope with now and more enjoyable." Another participant shared that he "learned how to change the way I think or react in certain situations and benefit from them. I've also learned that I am a very good person when I'm not beating myself up over something that may or may not have been my fault." ♦

Soiree Aubergine topples the charts with a grand total of \$200,000!

Soiree Aubergine 1997 has recently announced the results of its tireless fundraising efforts over the past few months. This year, \$41,000 net was raised for the Bering Care Center Nutrition Program and to fund a Patient Suite in the Bering Dental Clinic Renovation. Singularly Bering's largest benefactor organization that consists solely of volunteers, Soiree Aubergine has given Bering \$200,000 since its inception six

years ago. Each year, the Soiree volunteers plan an impressive array of fundraising activities that take place January through March. The Soiree volunteer Hosts personally pay for any expenses so that every dollar raised goes straight to Bering.

The devotion of this organization to Bering and the clients we serve is unmatched. We are grateful for their unsurpassed dedication! ♦

We extend
special thanks to...

Hadrian Corp.

for providing after-hours
answering services for the
Bering Dental Clinic

Telesurveys of Texas

for independently writing,
reviewing, and analyzing our
client satisfaction surveys



Smith Barney Branch Manager, William Lee (L), and First Vice President, Esther V. Houser (center), are shown presenting BCSF Executive Director, Bill Kersten (R) with a \$10,000 check from Traveler's Foundation

Smith Barney renews financial support *BCSF Corporate Committee seeks other giving programs*

Bering Community Service Foundation has been given \$10,000 by Smith Barney as part of the company's local contributions program being conducted at Smith Barney branches throughout the country. The selection of Bering was made by William Lee, Branch Manager for Smith Barney's Houston-Transco office. The initial selection of a local worthwhile organization is made by Smith Barney personnel. Applications are sent to the Travelers Foundation in New York, which is the philanthropic arm of Smith Barney's corporate parent Travelers Group. Esther V. Houser, First Vice President-Investments for Smith Barney and BCSF Founding Board Member, was instrumental in securing the contribution to BCSF by facilitating the application process.

Travelers Group is a diversified financial services company engaged in investment services, insurance and consumer finance. We are grateful for Travel-

ers continuing support. Past grants to BCSF include \$10,000 in 1995 and 1996, and \$1,000 in 1996.

Following the example set by Travelers and Smith Barney, the new BCSF Development Council's Corporate Committee is researching other corporations with similar giving programs. We would like to learn our supporter's corporate affiliations to locate partners in the corporate community. Our primary goal is to identify which corporations have giving programs, either through out-right grants to organizations or through employee-related volunteer incentive grants. You can help us with this process by telling us about the corporate affairs/community benefits personnel in your company. Our Development Department handles the actual application process. Please contact Stacie Cokinis, Director of Development at 713-524-9304, ext. 101, or e-mail to staciec@bering.org to learn more about this program. ♦

T Jim Ireland appointed to Board of Directors

The Bering Community Service Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Jim Ireland to its Board of Directors. Bering Foundation President, John Michael Gonzalez, stated that Jim 'reflects the energy and determination characteristic of Bering's Board and other volunteers.' Jim is currently

General Manager of the Houston Grand Opera, in which capacity he is responsible for the overall development and implementation of the financial, musical, production, and technical elements of the company. Bering is proud to have Jim serve in this capacity. ♦

From the desk of the Executive Director...

Three bricklayers were asked what they were doing. One said, "I'm laying bricks." The second replied, "I'm building a wall." The third stated, "I'm constructing a temple."

It is easy to be so caught up in the details that we often forget the big picture. We all do it. Fortunately, the board of the Bering Community Service Foundation took a step back and looked hard at the big picture. Proverbs 24: 3-4 advises us that "Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts." The facts are striking. Change is everywhere. Technology is advancing at a lightning pace. Managed care is changing how healthcare is delivered. The face of AIDS is changing as well. Ten years ago most of Bering's clients were gay white men. Today, less than half of our clients are white, 20% are women and almost a third are heterosexual.

In this constantly changing environment, only those that adapt will survive. The Bering Board has met the challenge and has set the course. The community's needs have been analyzed. We must seek diversity and assure inclusion. Only through collaboration and cooperation, will the foundation remain innovative. Everyone is preparing for the next ten years. From staff members to board members, roles are changing in order to be better able to meet the opportunities ahead.

This is a very exciting time for Bering Community Service Foundation. The winds of change are bringing us opportunities we never dreamed could happen. Read about us, commemorate with us, and join us as we build the foundation to meet the critical needs of the Bering community.

Sincerely,
Bill Kersten

Bering now has a homepage on the World Wide Web!

Visit us at:

www.bering.org

Special thanks to Houston Education Resource Network (HERN) for providing unlimited internet access for all BCSF employees and for hosting our web-site!

Pierson Estate continues to share blessings *Hart Galleries receives special recognition*

Bering Community Service Foundation, The Assistance Fund, and Pet Patrol recently shared the balance of the Estate of Edwin Leslie Pierson. \$40,762 was shared among the agencies, which was raised for the Estate by Hart Galleries. A special ceremony was held July 14 at the Nettie Roberts Pierson House, 1401 California, which was willed to Bering last year through Mr. Pierson's Estate. In recognition for a job well done, Wynonne and Jerry Hart and Mary McConnell, all of Hart Galleries, were presented beautiful lapel

pins depicting a guardian angel wearing a red ribbon.

Mr. Pierson left a beautiful and lasting legacy to Bering, The Assistance Fund, and Pet Patrol by naming them beneficiaries of his estate. The Nettie Roberts Pierson House, named in honor of Mr. Pierson's mother, houses Bering's Development, Outreach, Volunteer, and Sentry Programs. Each of the three beneficiaries also received generous cash donations from the estate last year. ♦

A Randalls Remarkable Reminder!

Bering Community Service Foundation is in partnership with Randalls Food Market Good Neighbor Program. Our number is **2316**. Please ask the cashier to link your Remarkable Card to Bering's number.

SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR THE
HIV/AIDS
COMMUNITY

GENEROUSLY
UNDERWRITTEN BY

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This calendar of fundraising events is brought to you by DIFFA/Houston and the HIV Service Providers, Inc. This listing does not include all events occurring in the greater Houston area. (For information about HIV/AIDS educational events please contact: 524-AIDS). Inclusion in this calendar does not imply endorsements by DIFFA/Houston or the HIV Service Providers, Inc. To receive the calendar, or to add your HIV-related fundraising events, please write: Tori Williams, Chapter Director, DIFFA/Houston, P.O. Box 131605, Houston, Texas 77219, or (713)552-1671 (fax). We look forward to hearing from you.

December 1997

- 7 "A Christmas SongFest", Edwin Hornberger Conference Center, 6:00 p.m. Benefiting Bering Dental Clinic and the Montrose Clinic. Individual tickets \$45.00, Table \$500-\$800.00. Contact: 713-802-2188.

Other events, not included on the Special Events Calendar, which include Bering as a beneficiary....

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| September 13 | 29th annual Miss Camp America pageant, 713-940-STAR |
| September 16-November 1 | Vampire House, 281-931-5422 |
| October 18 | Halloween Magic "How to Succeed in Montrose Without Really Trying", 713-266-2342 |
| October 19 | Reach Out Houston Polo Match, 713-524-9304, Ext. 101 |
| November 8 | Houston Black Tie Dinner "Renaissance", 713-523-9611 |
| December 31 | 5th annual New Year's Eve Celebration, 713-524-9304, ext. 101 |

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We invite you to explore our Internet site at: <http://www.swbell.com>



BCSF volunteers Perrie Dolph(L), Geoffrey Westergaard(R), and Barbara Sadof (front) prepare for their role in the commemorative procession.

We extend our appreciation to the following for their assistance with our Anniversary Commemoration:

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church
 Spring Festival Committee
 Bering Chancel Choir
 Bering & Friends
 Clayton Catering
 Glassworks- Bob Niel & David Pace
 Gregg Farris
 Kroger Store #313- South Post Oak Road
 J. Michael Marks
 RSVP Catering
 Shelton & Caudle, Inc.



BCSF Founders begin the commemorative procession with the Bering Chancel Choir

photo by Gabriel Tran Photography

Partnerships

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Partnerships is published three times per year by the Bering Community Service Foundation to inform donors and interested parties of the Foundation activities. For additional information, please call Stacie Cokinos, *Director of Development & Outreach*, or Susan Murchison-*Development & Outreach Coordinator*