

Spring 2009

Friends Association of  
Services for the Elderly

A Quaker Not-for-Profit  
Corporation



# Friends House

## NEWSLETTER

### Resident Profile: Edwin "Red" Stephenson



At a spry 91,  
Edwin  
Stephenson  
is a newly  
elected  
Resident

Representative to the FASE Board who also serves on several committees. Although nearly blind, he doesn't let that stop him from getting involved. But what is really remarkable is the transformation he underwent from a small-town boy raised in a thoroughly racist culture in North Carolina, to a man who devoted many years to social work in North Richmond, California, a poor, predominantly black neighborhood.

Edwin had a Quaker mother and, although attending both Methodist and Baptist Sunday schools, chose to think of himself as a Quaker. Educated at Guilford College with graduate studies in physics at the University of Michigan, he was headed for a career in engineering. However, Pearl Harbor interrupted both his education and his racial outlook. In considering the Christian mandate of non-violence, he (1) became a conscientious objector and (2) began to understand the racial violence — psychological as

*continued on page 3...*

You're Invited to  
Friends House

## 25th Anniversary Celebration

Please be our guest at the following weekend events:

*Friday Evening, April 24*

At 7:15 PM, a panel of founders and original staff will take us on a trip down memory lane at the Family Bible Church (across Benicia Drive from Friends House). Refreshments at Friends House to follow.

*Saturday Afternoon, April 25*

Garden Tours at Friends House beginning at 1:00 PM

Program at the Family Bible Church, 2:00 PM  
*Friends House Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*  
Music, Video Presentations and Salute to our Founders

Reception to follow at Friends House  
Hors d'oeuvres and anniversary cake. Garden Tours continue.

*Sunday Morning, April 26*

Hymn Singing begins at 9:15 AM with Worship at 10:00 AM in the Friends House Library.  
Fellowship and light refreshments to follow.

*Please let us know which event, or events, you will be attending. To RSVP or for more information, call 707-538-0152 or email pcoreris@friendshouse.org.*

*Friends House is a Continuing Care Retirement Community where simplicity and vitality are valued.*

## General Information

707-538-0152

Monday through Friday  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Jim Johnson  
Executive Director  
707-573-4501

Paddy Coreris  
Director of Development  
707-573-4508

Apartment Resident Services  
707-573-4504

Health Care Unit  
707-573-4517

Assisted Living Center  
707-573-4523

Volunteer Services  
707-538-0152

## Board of Directors

John Boles • Ann Boone  
Suzanne Brown • Betsy Harrell  
Stratton Jaquette  
Lanny Jay • Guy Micco  
Sam Miller • Jan Moore  
Herbert Morel-Seytoux  
Susan Stanley • Sue Thomas  
David Tracy • Peter Trueblood  
Tom Whiteman  
Kale Williams (Clerk)

## Newsletter Contributors

Paul Burks • Betsy Harrell  
Barbara Hodgkinson  
Jay Johnson • Harry Zollinger



## Friends Association of Services for the Elderly

684 Benicia Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409  
707-538-0152

fase@friendshouse.org  
[www.friendshouse.org](http://www.friendshouse.org)

RCFE # 496801929  
SNF # 010000123 • COA # 220



Message from the Executive Director  
Jim Johnson

## Our Place in the Sun

In my world view, Northern California is paradise found. I look in the *New York Times* in the morning and see stories of financial fraud, bailout, and heartache. I read of assassinations in Guinea-Bissau, genocide in Darfur, and repression in China. But then I fold the paper, get in my car, and begin the drive from Novato to Santa Rosa along 101 past the Silveria ranch, grazing cows, green hills, and oak woodlands. Northern California is especially beautiful in February and March, during and after the rains. Spring arrives early, well ahead of spring in the East.

It's not as if I'm escaping from reality, however, or turning my back to it. Another friend died today, but not from civil war or starvation. His death is perhaps more tolerable since he lived a very long life of 89 years. Nonetheless, another precious human existence has ended. This birthright Friend was a joy to me and others in our community who appreciated his positive attitude, generosity, and love of life and of the ineffable. He sometimes called this "the Light." He was a spiritual seeker, and recognized Truth in cultural manifestations not just his own.

Because we have the incredible blessing of living (and working) in an intentional gathering of friends who place value on simplicity, community, and involvement, we repeatedly are reminded of the great gifts of our lives. There is a quiet recognition that more than just material existence underlies and supports purpose in life.

Fortunately, there are fairly endless possibilities for worship at Friends House and beyond. We are free to worship any morning in a small gathering in silence. We can sit in meditative stillness with a group of practicing Buddhists. Within a short drive west we can be still with nature at the rugged Pacific; or going north, we can recognize within the redwood groves our connection to something far greater than ourselves. For formal worship, a couple can attend an urban congregation that is housed in a converted movie theatre, or go to a neighboring church that has been designated a cathedral.

Many friends combine these moments of reverence with social activism. Some commit to the ongoing plight of the homeless through monthly gatherings and daily collections. Some women wear black and protest to mourn death from war.

Others support a candidate who they believe offers hope and a new awareness to a United States of immigrants and the indigenous. They are all aware of their special privilege in this precious human sphere.

So we at Friends House celebrate our remarkable twenty-fifth anniversary. We celebrate this by honoring those many hundreds, even thousands, who have contributed to our success. Many publications would list these names in a gesture of recognition and thanks. But in our simplicity, by way of honoring our founders' faith and practice, we offer thanks to the Light for our good fortune and delight.

*Photo collage above: Residents at Friends House enjoy living amongst friends.*



# A Quarter Century and Many Titles

Back in 1984, before Friends House employed Louise Patterson, she had been working as a licensed vocational nurse for a large, impersonal, long-term care corporation. Yet she yearned to find employment at a nursing facility better suited to her values. When Louise heard that Quaker-inspired Friends House was starting up in Santa Rosa, she was intrigued, since she was already familiar with Friends' beliefs regarding non-violent resistance and respect for every individual.

In her quarter century here she has accumulated an impressive roster of titles and duties. Beginning part time in Adult Health Services, she next worked under Director of Nursing Millie Burt in the Skilled Nursing Facility (now called Health Care Unit or HCU). And as Louise became a full-time P.M. charge nurse and stayed on, Friends House helped her return to school and get qualified as a registered nurse. She and Nola Fallis, our Administrator of the Assisted Living Center, became close. Evidently Louise had now found her niche. "Moving here from the big corporation felt satisfying," says Louise. "Especially working with Nola, I experienced a renaissance of appreciation for my role as caregiver. I could focus better on my work. In this environment, I felt I could fully express who I was because the people surrounding me were compatible and had like values."

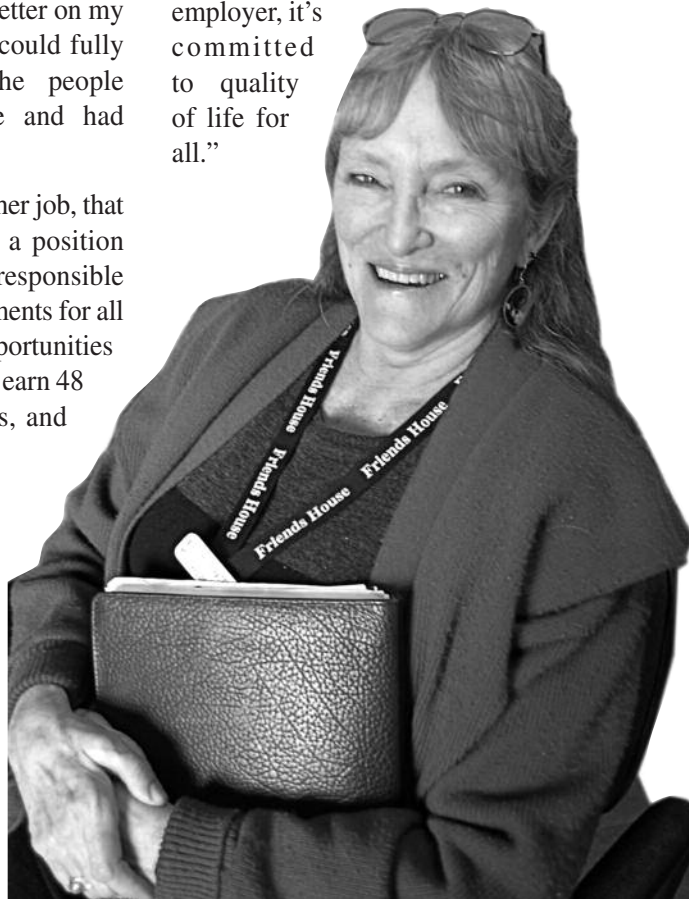
Then Friends House offered her another job, that of Director of Staff Development, a position Louise has held ever since. She is responsible for the mandatory in-service requirements for all employees. She also provides the opportunities for our certified nursing assistants to earn 48 educational credits every two years, and

she notes that Friends House will pay them overtime to get this training. Furthermore, when new employees arrive, Louise orients them to Friends House. "Introducing newcomers to this environment is a pleasure," she explains.

Additionally, Louise serves on our Safety Committee because she is the Infection Control Nurse in the HCU. Her responsibilities are infection surveillance and prevention of spread of infection. To this end, she makes data surveys to help spot trends.

Her duties billowed again in 2006 when Friends House got its Continuing Care Retirement Community certification and she became Resident Services Nurse. Her purview involves delivering the medical support services that residents need for remaining independent and safe in their apartments. She and Melody Allmond constitute our care team.

Louise is an integral figure around campus, with her flowing hair, purposeful step, swishing skirt and pleasant greeting. She will tell you, "I love it here. I love the people I work with. I'm inspired by the community spirit of Friends House. As an employer, it's committed to quality of life for all."



*"I love it here. I love the people I work with" exclaims Louise.*

*"Edwin Stephenson" continued*

well as physical — he had grown up with. His CO service during the war, much of it with Quaker projects, led to postwar work in Europe as a truck driver/mechanic with the American Friends Service Committee. In these years, he met and married his first wife, Madeleine, who he says "nurtured me and supported me in my feeble efforts to change the world," until her untimely death in 1993.

Continuing work with AFSC brought him to Richmond, where he established a neighborhood house, developed creative programs for black teenagers and started a cooperative nursery school. After eighteen years, he began to feel out of place as a white leader in a black community and took his talents to a Planned Parenthood agency in San Francisco.

Edwin has published a highly readable book, *Journey of the Wild Geese*, which is a collection of the letters that he and Madeleine wrote to each other after the war. Edwin's informally published autobiography is also a great read. Both are available in the Friends House Library.

Edwin and Madeleine were one of eight families who created an intentional community called Monan's Rill near Santa Rosa. This became a focal point in his life for twenty-five years. Madeleine and Edwin were also part of the group that founded Friends House. Married to Elspeth Benton since 2000, Edwin feels very fortunate to have had such a varied and productive life, as well as two supportive and wonderful wives.

## Did You Know?

The Friends House staff of 100...

cook, clean, garden, type, answer phones, do laundry, repair and maintain, raise money, acknowledge donors, orient new staff and residents, balance the books, entertain, feed those unable to feed themselves, meet with families, attend to the recovering, sit with the dying, comfort families, read to residents, and so much more

...make living at Friends House the pleasure it is.



## FRIENDS HOUSE

[www.friendshouse.org](http://www.friendshouse.org)

**You're Invited!**  
**25th Anniversary**  
**Celebration Weekend**  
**April 24-26, 2009**

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684 Benicia Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

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## Thank You!

As our fiscal year (ending March 31) is now closed, we want to thank the many donors who have supported the mission of Friends House in this past year — to provide high quality residential, health and social services to the elderly at the lowest feasible cost. This is done while emphasizing the highest degree of independence possible and in accordance with Quaker philosophy in which all are treated with dignity and respect.



Charlotte and her companion Monti, a Welsh Corgi, take walks every day on campus.

## The Human Race is May 9 — Be the Change

Last year, several Friends House residents and staff participated in the Human Race by making donations, asking others to donate, walking along with thousands of others in the Race, and/or working in the Friends House booth on Race Day. Last year we raised \$8150 in support of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County and Friends House programs. This is Sonoma County's largest community fundraiser. It's a good feeling to be part of an event that benefits the whole community, and it's FUN.



We invite you to **Be the Change** — participate with us on Race Day and/or help us exceed last year by donating online at [www.humanrace.kintera.org](http://www.humanrace.kintera.org). Scroll to Human Race Donation (general). Enter your donation amount and follow directions as you continue. Enter Friends House as the Benefiting Nonprofit Agency.

If you have questions, or if you do not wish to receive future fundraising requests from Friends House, please contact Paddy Coreris, Director of Development, at 707-573-4508 or email her at [pcoreris@friendshouse.org](mailto:pcoreris@friendshouse.org).