



Our Friend, Robert Burrows

Several of Innisfree's coworkers are old timers of more than 30 years. One of these fortunate coworkers was 74-year-old Robert Burrows. Robert was a diligent worker in Innisfree's therapeutic workstations and at home. Chopping vegetables each morning in the kitchen workstation, he was happy to participate in preparing lunch for the community. After lunch, Robert wove scarves and placemats in Innisfree's weavery. Coming home in the afternoons, Robert did the laundry with gusto, set the table for dinner, and chatted with long-time buddy Matthew. Many evenings in the early years, Robert bagged the freshly made loaves of honey whole wheat and sesame oat bread from our bakery.

In summer 2005, Robert's health began declining. Cancer that had been in remission returned. This active man who had worked and helped and contributed gradually lost his strength. With the help of Hospice of the Piedmont and his dedicated Innisfree family, Robert received his last wish: to remain in his Innisfree home during his final months, surrounded by those who knew and worked with him.

Many Innisfree meetings were held with the volunteer houseparents in Robert's house and the entire Innisfree community to figure out how to make Robert comfortable. Volunteers changed their schedules to be with Robert, taking him to the doctor, and helping with his therapy. When needed, a volunteer slept on a



on a cot in Robert's room in case he might need

assistance. Housemates confided that it was a privilege to serve Robert in his final weeks.

In those last weeks, Robert's world grew closer to home. He still went with Sharon to grocery shop and attended Senior Lunch at Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) with Arvin and Stefanie. He got one last look at the fall colors on the Blue Ridge Parkway with Nancy and Florian, and he attended our Halloween party dressed as Pope Robert the First. However, by November Robert was confined to a wheelchair and required much assistance throughout the day. On his last weekend, the whole village came to watch a slideshow with him, of his many years at Innisfree. Through it all, his good nature persisted.

Robert died peacefully on November 16, at home in his bed, listening to the hymns he loved and after his housemates had said their goodbyes. More than 70 friends attended Robert's memorial service, the entire Innisfree community and also Robert's nurse, therapists, and other healthcare workers; acquaintances from Robert's church; and all three of Innisfree's former Executive Directors and some of our founders, all of whom had done so much over the years to mold a community where people like Robert could flourish. Held in Amity, Robert's home, the service was a mixture of celebration, sorrow, and humor. Robert's enduring contributions to Innisfree, and all he taught everyone about community, commitment, and love, were very clear that day.

Tasty Lunch

by Kristin Meyer

“We’re having tasty food for lunch today!” An Innisfree day rarely passes without hearing Angelica’s voice announce this bit of truth. With Indian curries, vegetarian chili or quiche on the menu who could disagree?

As our Kitchen Coordinator, Sharon knows, preparing lunch for sixty is a balancing act in many ways. “It’s important to consider different elements of nutrition, tasks that are appropriate for each person and timing the tasks according to when people are in the kitchen.” When planning a potential recipe it’s necessary to keep all of these elements in mind. During the summer months there is the added challenge of incorporating produce that needs to be eaten immediately, and of course, the joy of having a kitchen filled with fresh, seasonal, organic produce grown in our own gardens.

Warm up your winter with this easy recipe that uses Innisfree granola!

Innisfree Cran-Apple Crisp

4 cooking apples
½ c fresh or frozen cranberries
¾ c (or to taste) brown sugar
4 Tbls butter
1 tsp cinnamon
2 Tbls fresh ginger (or 1 tsp dried)
2 c Innisfree granola

Chop apples into 1 inch pieces. Cook apples, cranberries, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon, and ginger over medium heat until soft. Pour into a greased casserole dish and cover with granola. Bake 20 – 30 minutes (or until brown) at 350 degrees.

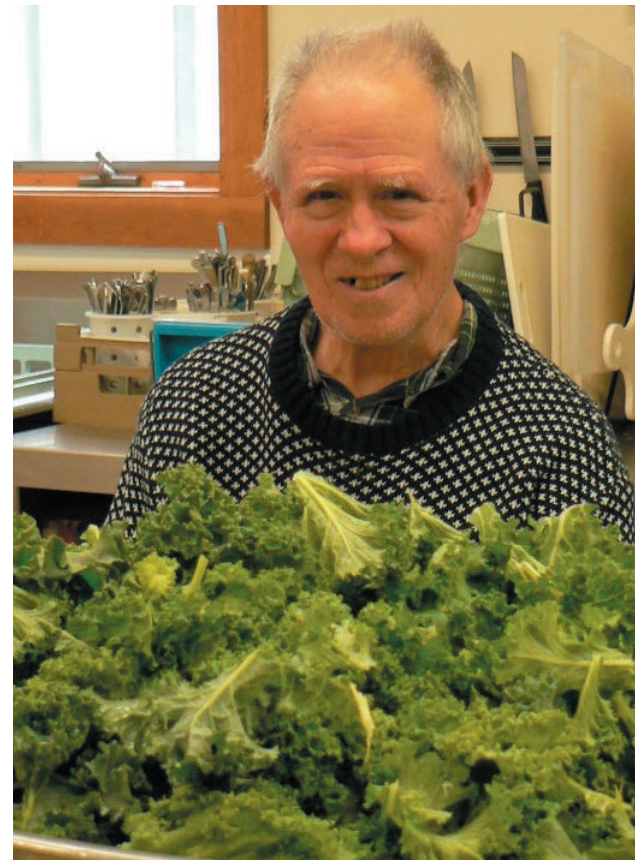


Mark is an eager cook.

Everyone has a strength when it comes to cooking. Some peel veggies, while others dance to kitchen tunes. Linda admits that cutting apples is her favorite kitchen activity, though some days she appears

to have more fun singing into her imaginary microphone. Working in the kitchen is a group effort with immediate gratification. “There is so much satisfaction in watching it all come together,” shares Joseph. Eating a days’ labor is great but the real satisfaction comes from feeding a community you care about.

Many CLEAN hands play a part in preparing our lunches. Those many hands bring love to the food we eat and fill our bodies with the energy we need to make it through the day.



A mountain of greens for Robert to prepare

A Mother's Gratitude

By April Bermudez

Laughter is everywhere at Innisfree. It is the sound I take away with me every time I leave. In the little groups working in the garden, in the kitchen mingled with the clanging pots, in the lazy groups relaxing at the end of a workday, even in the quiet of the herb shed where the soothing scents of all manner of herbs linger in the air and on your clothes and hands. The scents and sounds of Innisfree are always seducing.

What can I add that hasn't been already said about Innisfree or better said than W.B. Yeats whose awesome description of his beloved Innisfree in Ireland has been so perfectly transplanted to Virginia? These 550 acres of beautiful countryside are home to about 60 people, half adults with mental disabilities and the rest the incredible people who live and work with them. No better setting can be imagined for being happy than this sunny mountainside land.

My daughter Angelica has been a member of the Innisfree community for almost five years and how I came to find this little corner of heaven is in itself a miracle. A search that took almost fifteen years and several different communities in England and eventually Scotland. None totally satisfactory, when out of the blue and a chance conversation at a dinner table in London, led me eventually to Innisfree.

After two trial periods and an agonizing wait to see if she would be accepted the good news came, another miracle, as Angelica is a very colorful character both in her speech, which is sometimes graphic and her behavior, which is often boisterous. And then Angelica blossomed and at 23 her life really began.

At my first Family Day a volunteer approached me and said, "Mrs. Bermudez, I must tell you that when Angelica started here I



*Angelica,
our 'colorful
character.'*

was adamant that she wouldn't fit in; she was so 'different'. Now I cannot imagine Innisfree without her." It was the best gift I have ever been given.

I visit Innisfree three or four times a year and because my home in Trinidad is so far from Innisfree, I often stay some days or a week at a time, joining in the life of the community.

I have slowly gotten to know most of the residents; the coworkers and the amazing volunteers who care for them. I am constantly humbled by their dedication and their joy.

In the herb shed there is a sign that reads "You are equal to your life." How huge are these people; how huge are their lives. A hundred years from now when one's possessions count for nought and our worth is measured by our legacy to others, the people of Innisfree will be well measured and I will be eternally grateful for the difference they made in the life of a girl called Angelica.

INNISFREE 2006 CALENDAR

Mayfair

May 6

Family Day

November 11

Winter Vacation

December 19 – January 2



Innisfree Village Voice
a newsletter of

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"Relax and kick your shoes off..."

by Kristin Meyer

Life in the village requires plenty of walking; fortunately we have Jake to massage the hardworking feet of Innisfree. This is no small job; Jake rubs the soles of up to five people a week. He has been massaging feet with a blend of oils crafted in the Innisfree herb garden for about three years. Jake says that working on feet calms him down in various ways and lowers his blood pressure. "It relaxes me and it relaxes other people," he says. Jake is most interested in foot reflexology and how working on different

pressure points in the feet helps to release pain stored elsewhere in the body. Conversations with physical therapists peaked his interest and prompted him to check out books about reflexology. He laments the fact that it took Americans so long to accept the usefulness of healing through reflexology. Jake says skeptics don't bother him, he knows the benefits of his foot massages are enough to convert any doubters. Occasionally, people become so relaxed they fall asleep while he's working on their feet, although he's had no snorers yet.

Please see our web site at www.innisfreevillage.org

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The past year, 2005 has been noteworthy. One new residence was finished, a second begun and fund-raising took place for the construction of our new drying shed and greenhouse for the herb gardeners. New directions are vital for our continued growth and expansion, keeping our work fresh and projects vibrant. We feel deep appreciation for those of you who responded to the "Violet Appeal" as the ground has been broken and construction underway. We hope to move in by late spring/early summer.

—Carolyn Ohle



Jim, an herb gardener

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*Octogenarian John D.
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