Dear Friend,

I'd like to share a personal story of how AIDS Action helps people ... not only those who are living with AIDS but their caregivers and loved ones, too.

Ken and I went to AIDS Action for some help last summer. It was becoming apparent that his illness was progressing more rapidly, and we would need to take advantage of some of the support AIDS Action offers. I can say firsthand that they offer a wealth of information, advice, assistance and understanding.

AIDS Action referred us to a lawyer to help prepare for the eventuality of Ken's death, including drawing up the living will that became so helpful in making the decisions we had to face at the end of Ken's life. AIDS Action walked us through the mess that is Social Security, disability, and Medicaid. When the time came for Ken to leave work, they gave us interim financial support while we waited the months for benefits to begin. And AIDS Action is still there for me today, having provided legal advice after Ken's passing. They even offered me bereavement support.

Ken did not cook, which became problematic because I worked evenings, so AIDS Action sent over a freezerful of prepared dinners. Every other week, we would hear from a volunteer, asking how we were doing, if there was anything to be done. When Ken stopped working, he was assigned a Buddy, who would visit him, take him out to the movies, and was there with us at the hospital reading to Ken from "Tales of the City" during his last days. They sent a homemaker to make lunch and help with the chores Ken could no longer do as his vision and energy faded.

We saw "Angels in America" courtesy of AIDS Action's donated ticket program. They sent us to the Flower Show, a great favorite of Ken's, where we met a wonderful salesperson who gave us an orchid that will be a special reminder to me of Ken with each new bloom.

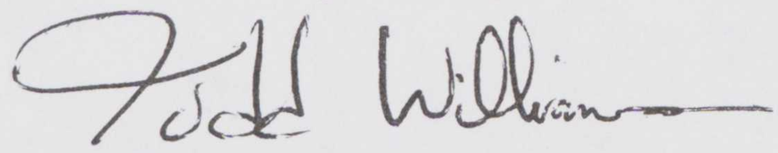
My goals in caring for Ken, in his battle with AIDS and the blindness and debilitation it inflicted, were to provide love, support, comfort, and dignity. I could not have handled all this myself. AIDS Action was a partner.

I can honestly say that AIDS Action made us -- and after Ken's death, me -- feel like we were special. Yet I know that AIDS Action is there, right now and every day, for thousands of other people with AIDS, and those who love and care for them.

I am writing this letter in memory of Ken, and in honor of AIDS Action which I know won't give up helping until the fight against AIDS is over.

As a way to show you care -- or to remember someone you've lost -- I hope you will join me in supporting AIDS Action.

In memory and hope,



Todd Williams