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# Paving a Legacy of Love, Action, and Concern

By [Ileana Cerpa, Communications Associate](#)

As a poet living in NYC and a member of the Human Rights Campaign, Jonathan heard about God's Love back in the 80s. While Jonathan gave to God's Love throughout the years, it wasn't until 2016 that he became a member of our Legacy Society.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Jonathan began writing in high school. In the 80s and 90s, Jonathan was part of the flourishing New York City poetry scene. He frequented cafés and participated in readings throughout the city. Although this was a prolific and creative time, it also marked the beginning of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the city.

In the spring of 1979, Jonathan was deeply impacted by the loss of his close friend, Ralph, to a mysterious illness. Although the disease had yet to be identified and understood, they now believe Ralph passed from HIV/AIDS. This was just the beginning of a very difficult time for Jonathan and all those affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis. Jonathan recalls the confusion and pain felt by his beloved community during these years:

"People were dying all around and no one knew why. A whole generation of young, gay men started to disappear." -Jonathan

This death prompted Jonathan to write a poem dedicated to his late friend entitled, "Lullaby, 1979". Years later, Jonathan made a generous bequest to God's Love when he joined our [Legacy Society](#). For Jonathan, being a Legacy Society member is about ensuring that his community is taken care of for years to come. In his own words:

"The gay community means a lot to me and so do all the people God's Love serves. It's worthwhile to join the Legacy Society because it is a guarantee for future aid. I love knowing that people who have yet to be born will be taken care of. In joining, you provide a legacy of love, concern, and action." -Jonathan

As Jonathan has reflected on the HIV/AIDS crisis, he revisited and revised his poem, "Lullaby, 1979". Jonathan was gracious enough to recite his poem for us in honor of his friend and all the organizations who did critical work to care for those living with HIV/AIDS.



Legacy Society member, Jonathan Clark, recites his original poem as a tribute to his friend, Ralph, who passed away from HIV/AIDS in the spring of 1979. He dedicates the poem to God's Love and all organizations that continue to do critical work for those living with HIV/AIDS.

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