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## How this Long-Term HIV Survivor Gets the Nutrition Support He Needs

By [John Breece](#), Communications Volunteer

Growing up in West Carrollton, a small town south of Dayton, Ohio, Jack especially remembers performing in his high school marching band. He remembers being stuck on the 3-yard line playing saxophone and thinking there has got to be a better way to showcase his talent. So he became a drum major, the up front and center leader of the swirling and receding mass of blaring brass.

Jack was able to leverage his skill as a drum major in nabbing a music scholarship to Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. After his experience at that small Midwest school Jack studied drama at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago, now part of DePaul University. And from there Jack launched himself into the first of his three careers.

He found work in Chicago plays and later landed roles in off-Broadway productions. Later, he became a restaurateur in Key West, Florida, as a part owner of a fine dining establishment and wine bar and worked the front of house.

But the restaurant business is a hard grind with the competition being fierce the dining public always fickle. Tired of losing money and the every-night stress of running a restaurant Jack was ready for a change. So when a friend offered him an opportunity to come to New York with the promise of a cheap apartment, Jack made the move.

By the time Jack got to New York the city was experiencing the beginning of the AIDS crisis and in the midst of so much suffering and confusion he found his life's purpose of being of service to others. Being HIV-positive himself he had the internal understanding of

personally grappling with the disease and this informed every aspect of his counseling for others.

Jack began by co-producing small workshops on AIDS and his service led to leading the workshop, the AIDS Mastery, which he conducted in New York and across the United States and throughout Canada.

Jack was good. And he was effective. And doing good work was rewarded with more work and that came as the AIDS crisis accelerated and his role of educating others was more in need than ever so Jack found further work as a HIV coordinator at a drug rehabilitation clinic.

But Jack found that when things happen, they can happen all at once. After years of establishing himself as an integral member of a service-oriented community and surviving and thriving himself Jack said “then I had 3 strokes in one day. Boom! Boom! Boom!”

After the strokes and the diminishing of his speech Jack tried to order out and the miscommunications became so baroque that “they thought I was joking.” Eventually his doctor recommended God’s Love. Jack has now been receiving microwavable and nutritious meals from God’s Love for 16 years. Jack looks forward to seeing the delivery volunteers; sometimes they are the only people he sees in a given week. He says,

“Without the nutritious meals and the warm smiles coming twice a week from God’s Love, I would turn to dust”.

Not only is Jack grateful for the meals God’s Love provides he knows he is eating better with the meals specially designed by nutritionists to meet his specific medical needs. And he feels it. Jack is particularly fond of Ronnie Fortunato, his God’s Love nutritionist, and is forever grateful that she shamed him into eating fruit. He says,

“My nutrition would not be nearly as good without God’s Love.”

Today, so many of our clients not only live with the long-term effects of HIV, but many also live with additional illnesses. We hope you will make a gift in honor of all the courageous members of our community like Jack, who gave back to those in need during one of the scariest times in our nation’s history.

Sponsor a meal for an HIV Long-Term Survivor



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## **Checking in with Robert on Zoom as we discuss the coronavirus**

Listen to Robert talk about life with serious illness during the coronavirus knowing that God's Love We Deliver will be there for him.