

A home away from a home

I CAN'T tell you where, for obvious reasons, but somewhere in Melbourne is a very special house that's a sanctuary for people like Eve van Grafhorst, the 11-year-old who died from AIDS in New Zealand last Saturday (*Herald Sun*, November 22).

They are older but, like Eve, family, friends, loved ones or society have turned their heads because they're infected by the virus ... people no longer able to care for themselves for whom the only other option is the loneliness of a hospital ward.

This house (and its seven predecessors) has been caring for people with HIV/AIDS since 1986 when Eve and her mother and father fled Australia after this nation decided it wasn't big enough to accommo-

date a toddler with the virus.

It was that rejection, and that family's flight to New Zealand that led to the establishment of The Australian AIDS Fund (Vic Div) Incorporated, a non-profit charity that sought, and seeks, to cover that hole in Australian society.

To date it has cared for some 60 people ... men and women and an infant girl ... Australian, Asian and African. Christians, Jews, Moslems.

Totally lacking any government support, it must depend on its own fund-raising across Australia to survive, to pay its way.

Up to 50 volunteers support the two full-time house co-ordinators.

In recent times, we've had some 14 deaths in as many months.



Gone, but not forgotten: *Eve van Grafhorst who died of AIDS at the weekend.*

We have a tall picture of Eve in the house, a shot of a kid wildly in love with life, with her own messages of love and support to stick on it.

With World AIDS Day fast approaching (December 1) maybe your readers might see this as an invitation to help us make Australia a place where every Eve

can feel at home. Donations are tax deductible.

— Brian Haill,
president,
Australian AIDS
Fund (Victoria).

- * A second house, ROSEHAVEN, was opened in mid - 1994
- * Both SAN MICHEL and ROSEHAVEN, between them had cared for more than 150 people by Christmas, 1996 - men, women & children.
- * Both houses have now won Govt recognition and receive a little public funding, but we must still depend on YOUR support too.