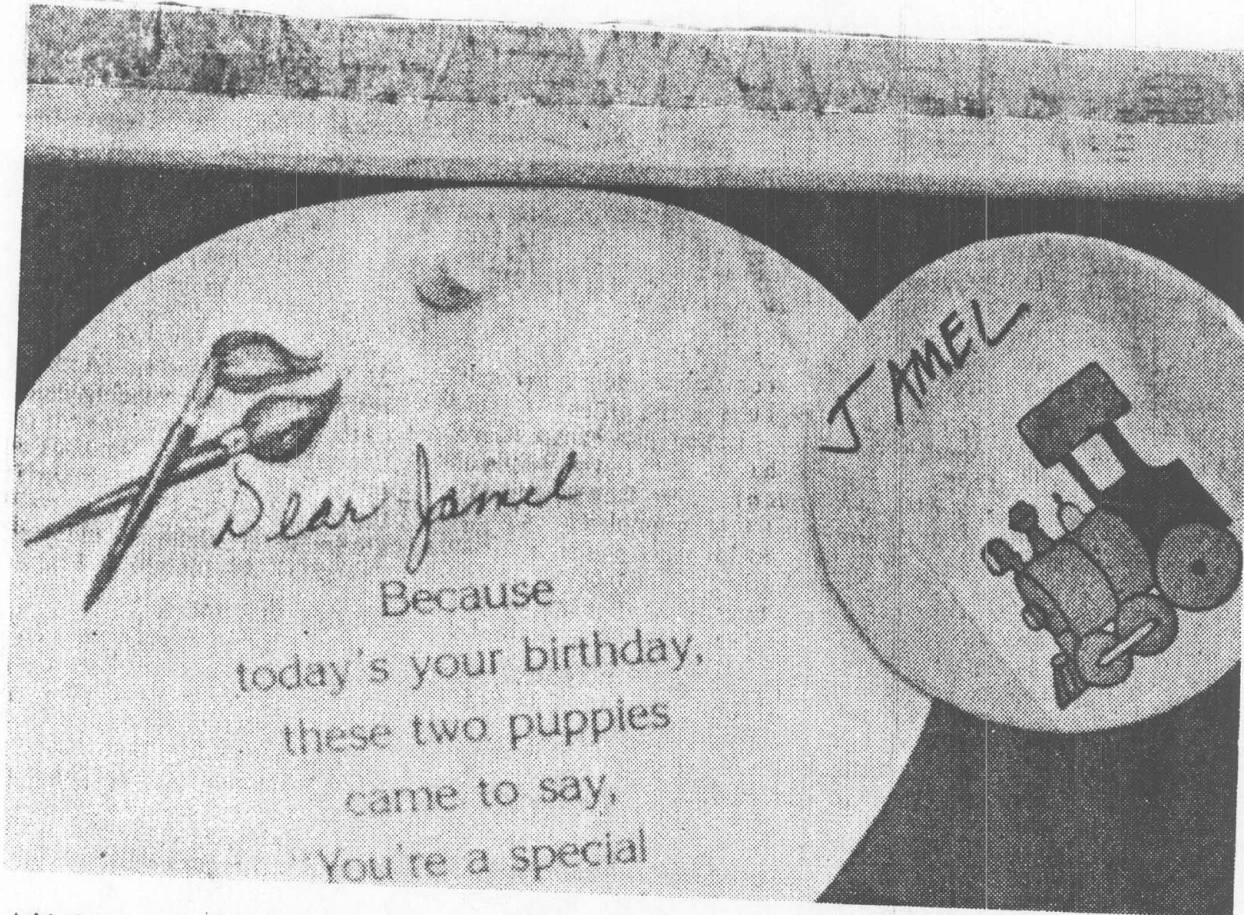


# Jamel



A birthday card and a button reflect the love shown to Jamel at the children's center.

ADVANCE PHOTO/STEVE ZAFFARANO

drome or are infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

It is the first and only such residence in the state, but it is hoped to serve as a model for more, said Arthur Webb, commissioner of the state Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental

Disabilities. OMRDD contracts with the Birch agency to run the home that provides round-the-clock medical care and huge amounts of love.

For Jamel, that means "if he wants to be held, he will be held," Ms. Mullen said.

For the children less advanced in the disease, that means helping

them thrive, Ms. Susser said during the outdoor dedication.

"Whether or when the children live or die — and even more importantly, how they live or die — is the reason that this house came to be," she said from the podium in the Birch home's yard.

Inside, one of her toughest little fighters slept.