



# Mission of Love



"You are not here to save the world, but to touch the hands that are within your reach."  
~ Kathleen Price

ANGELS DO EXIST ~ written by Sandra Byrd



The Mission of Love came into my life at a time when I needed them the most. Out of resources, hope, courage, strength and resolve that this is the thing that needs to happen and my dream was worthy of finding existence in this world. Crawling out of poverty through education, going beyond survival mode and wanting to create a place where people can come and feel welcome, eat a good meal at a fair price, learn to do bead-work, receive help with homework, write a resume, conduct a job search, receive help with career planning, along with fostering a sense of community and belonging seems insane at times.

Sometimes I thought, all I need is a little help encouragement or support just to help me get over the current stumbling block, in whatever form it took at the time (lack of skill, knowledge to accomplish the task, or it is too heavy or big for one person), that would paralyze progress toward a goal. When I reached the point of being broken-hearted and broken-spirited to the point of despair, a friend, Jason Schoch, shared my story with Kathleen Price. While he was animate that there would be no promise of help, just something else to try and he said, "If this doesn't work, we will keep trying other things." That is all a person needs to hear sometimes to help keep them on track and keep hope alive. An indeed, the idea that "someone may try to help you" was all it took for me to start getting ready and working on the place again to be ready for whatever help may come. Had to take a leap of faith that it, or, something would happen.

My story is a little different than most of the people who are served by the volunteers of the Mission of Love. At first glance it seems like I am a person of means, but in reality I had to struggle and sacrifice for everything. Resourcefulness is part of my being and how I survived since I was nine years old – help others, maybe someone will help you when you need it – pay it forward and expect nothing in return. The first three things that I learned early on was that 1) I was special to no one, 2) there was no one to call me to come home and 3) no one was going to take care of me. But there should be more to life than just survival.

Although it isn't apparent at first, I am someone who just barely makes it from journey to journey. The one key that I learned early in life was that an education was the way out of poverty. Although at the time of realization, I couldn't do much about it. The educational track came later in life for me. The more education, the more choice you have, so for someone like me who just barely crawled out of survival mode, to put off the next stage of an education to build a dream, in itself is another choice to do what is right. Going a few steps beyond survival and actually being able to dare to have a desire to build a dream is a big risk. Going beyond



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personal, physical, and financial limitations and trying to seek a better life and, in the meantime, trying to help as many people along the way as possible is always an idea that I walk with daily.

Unconditional service to others is an integral part of some people – it is a calling that can't be ignored or taken for granted. Sharing your unique gifts with the world is innate to some and a struggle for others. Choosing to continue serving in this manner has many opportunity costs as well as intrinsic rewards. Sometimes it gets to a point where it would have been easier to not make this journey or choice to serve the community in which I live – but there is a need for these services.

But just like Kathleen Price, who may be criticized for helping someone like me, sometimes you have to do what you know in your heart is the right thing to do – take a chance and hope that it comes out the way that is was meant to be.

Kathleen is a person who knows how to move the human spirit along with vast amounts of materials, human resources and spiritual aid to those who need it the most. I asked her why she does what she does, she stated "For the children of the world." As I sat with her contemplating that I am over 40 years old and how I fit into the equation, she looked at me and said, "We are all children." She sees the need in people finds a way to help them to help themselves. For those who would attempt to criticize her, I have the following words, sometimes you have to look a little deeper, not only at those you are trying to help but within yourself as well and the people trying to make it all happen.

Kathleen understands people. Some people have no idea of how many lives she and her volunteers have changed. So, for those who don't understand that you can't visit a place or a person for a few moments and have it all figured out, nor can you take your ideas, values and beliefs to these places and expect the people you meet to fit in the box that you brought for them. There is an old Native American saying that sums it all up. "***Don't criticize your neighbor until you have walked a thousand miles in their moccasins.***" In Kathleen's case of service to humanity – you would have to walk billions of miles in her moccasins to even begin to attempt to fathom the impact that she has made on countless lives.

This experience has changed my reality and the course of my life because people showed up. A Navajo electrician, Yazzie was the first electrician in two years who showed up, came back, and actually got some re-wiring done the same day. It was amazing because he was injured and had a cast on his foot and he still was able to accomplish in one day what I couldn't get done in two years. More amazing, it was revealed to me that Yazzie was the step father of one of my former students. I realize how critical connections are formed through these types of volunteer efforts. Yazzie only lives 40 miles away from me and I know I wouldn't have met him, if it weren't for the Mission of Love.

"**Never give up**" are the words of wisdom that seasoned volunteer, Bob, revealed to me. I will always remember the words of wisdom that Bob told me, as he relayed a story about the message that was given to Joseph Marshall by his grandfather. Keep going and never give up, you must keep going through times of difficulty. Bob, Tom, and Kathy were the voice of reason and experience and people that I learned from throughout this experience. Each one of them gives of themselves freely without complaints nor voicing their own needs or wants. They are role models of how service to humanity can be a true labor of love and how sharing words and experience can help rebuild the human spirit.

This is to express my gratitude and thanks to The Mission of Love, Kathleen Price and all of the volunteers. Your efforts gave me hope and courage that one day, I too, will be able to walk



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the impossible dream and find a place to where unique talents can find expression in the world. Inner peace, focus, strength and belief that it one day will happen were gifts of restoration. One person can make a difference but people working together toward a common goal can produce miracles.

The real education of this experience is about belief, faith and my personal struggle with "being alone in the world" and finding people who do amazing things with their energy and talent, who chose to walk with me on my journey for a time. The spirit of Kathleen price is phenomenal with a "can do" and "let's make it happen" attitude. Her sense of immediacy is contagious. Connections were made between people who could help each other and did by choice.

Presence means taking the time to be there in the moment and choosing to make a difference. Not all gifts are tangible, ones that you can touch with your hands, live in, put in your pocket nor place on a shelf. In the short time they were here with me, they altered the course of my destiny and changed how I view the world. The Mission of Love is a group of life changers at the most basic sense of the words. The idea that someone may come to help and their consideration was just enough to spark the hope that it would happen. This is to thank Kathleen Price and her "priceless" spirit, "can do" attitude and her volunteers. The Mission of Love restored faith, hope, strength and courage.

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