

Mockingbird Times

Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth.



October 2005

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Volume V, Issue 10

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-KIDS (5437)

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Barbara Bush, Hurricane Katrina and the Power of Words

MISTY
LOU COOK



Barbara Bush recently stated that the relocation of some of the Hurricane Katrina victims to the Houston Astrodome is "working very well" (1) for some of the thousands of poor people who lost their homes and livelihoods and had to relocate to Texas. She stated, during a radio interview with the American Media program that, "so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them." (2) Yeah Barbara, I'm sure that some of the 23,600 hurricane refugees and poor people forced out of New Orleans, their homes and livelihoods they worked all their lives for are having a great time starting all over again in Houston, Texas ... but it's not very likely. Barbara's unsympathetic comments were made public while she, **George H.W. Bush** and **Bill Clinton** were visiting some of the Hurricane Katrina refugees at the Houston Astrodome.

Barbara Bush's commentaries regarding the victims of Hurricane Katrina got me all fired up ... how could a former first lady be so uncompassionate?? I started thinking about the power of words, how they can be used for positive change and inspiration or how they can be manipulated to install fear, hate, apathy or dangerous emotions. Words are so powerful, so potent, and they carry strong messages that can make you hate or love yourself, make you cry or laugh or sing or dance. Words can make people insecure or help an individual heal, depending on how a person uses them. I started thinking about strong media figures,

both using words for good and positive things and those that are using words for control and hatred of people that are not like them. Here are some of the examples of positive and negative influences that I researched.

Pat Robertson is a religious right leader and seems to have caught the torch of bigotry from such diversity-haters as James Dobson and Adolph Hitler. These are strong words, but rightly so, because Mr. Robertson has used his platform from "The 700 Club" to reach out to mil-

lions of people and spread hate and fear of people who choose alternative lifestyles through words and deception. You might be asking yourself, "but what can words do?" Words are weapons of mass destruction if used to spread fear and hate. After all, Adolf Hitler used words to plant seeds of fear in the minds and hearts of Germany, and we all know what happened once those seeds of fear bloomed into full-fledged hate.

The Holocaust of hatred that bigoted religious right leaders spread leads to anti-queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, etc.) hate crimes, queer youth suicides, bullying in schools and more and more **Brandon Teena** and **Matthew Shephard** cases across the country. When you invalidate someone's very being, tell them that they are sick, wrong, morally corrupt, going to hell for who they are and then tell everyone else to hate and fear them, you cause a Hate Holocaust. Mr. Robertson reaches out to millions of people through his popular television show, "The 700 Club", and tells them that gay people are bad and perverted. What kind of effect do you think this has on the parents of queer young people and indeed, the effect on queer young people themselves?

"Words are weapons of mass destruction if used to spread fear and hate."

Pat Robertson once said that, "Feminism is a socialist, anti-family, political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." (3) He also has been quoted as saying, "It is the Democratic Congress, the liberal-biased media and the homosexuals who want to destroy all Christians" (4). Pat Robertson was also quoted for saying, "I know one man who was impotent who gave AIDS to his wife and the only thing they did was kiss" (4). Mr. Robertson is blatantly planting seeds of fear, hate and lies! According to the

American Red Cross, "The body fluids that transmit HIV are blood, semen, vaginal fluids, breast milk and other body fluids containing blood." (5) Saliva cannot transmit HIV or the advanced stage of HIV (AIDS) and to spread this kind of misinformation is immoral and wrong. Pat Robertson tells his millions of viewers and listeners that "homosexuality is an abomination" and that "It is unnatural". He imposes his own discrimination and prejudice on millions of people who trust him, and that is wrong. The results of homophobia and misogyny are ugly, really, really ugly, and yet Pat Robertson continues to spread his words of hatred in regards to queer people and women's rights. The only cure to negative forces and words are positive energy and hopeful words.

A prime example of a first lady who cares about people, their struggles and visions is former first lady **Eleanor Roosevelt**. Mrs. Roosevelt was married to **Franklin D.**

KATRINA CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

My Summer Experience in the Hospitals

JAMICA
HENDERSON



When I graduated from high school my summer goal was to get a chance to work in the health field. I am going to college to be a registered nurse. I want to work in trauma when I become a nurse. So I decided to look into the other positions that are offered to nurses. I applied to three internships and I had to let one go because it interfered with my job. I applied for a nursing camp at Children's Hospital and for a week everything was paid; I applied for a six week internship with the Project Hope Program where I would work at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the nursing home area helping nursing assistant-certifieds (NAC's); the third internship I applied for was at the Leon Sullivan Health Center. At this job I would be a recreational therapist.

I was accepted to all three but I had to choose two, so I chose the job at the VA and

Leon Sullivan health center. I wanted to do the camp but it interfered with my jobs. I worked everyday of the week except Sundays. This summer was fun but hard work at the same time. I was in a transition of moving from home into my own place. I had to save money to buy things for the house. I felt that I was doing too much, but once you get older you have to do whatever it takes to make things comfortable for you.

I was happy to have worked at those two jobs, because I got to see what it was like to be NAC and a Recreational Therapist. At the VA I was partnered up with a NAC who did a great job everyday. I worked at this job on Mondays, Tuesdays, and sometimes Sundays. The days I was there, I learned how to change the beds, learned about the patients that my mentor worked with, and how to put the information in the computer. The days that I worked I would make the beds, fill the water containers, empty and refill the gloves cases, then around 12:00 I would feed a patient. The majority of the patients were male. In the afternoons it was pretty mellow. Once a day we got a returning patient. They always sent them down before or after lunch. When we had a patient come back before lunch it was really busy because, I had to

find them a room and make sure the beds are made up. Then, I had to bring in all their belongings and tell them the rules again. When I finished that, I had to put all the information on the computer. Then once it's really settled we put up files and answer call lights.

Now, the other internship was more of a fun job. It was a nursing home setting but with people who can walk and talk more. I was a recreational therapist who does activities and gets to know the residents one on one. It was fun just hearing them laugh and talk to you about their life stories. Everyday we did something different. That was a pretty busy job too. The hardest working days were Fridays because every Friday we had some kind of party. The residents loved Fridays. One Friday we had Hawaiian and birthday celebrations. On this day we gathered all the residents and brought them down to the basement, where it was all decorated, and we had food, ice cream and cake. We sang happy birthday to those who had a birthday in that month, played games, danced, and ate. By the end of the day everyone was tired and ready to sleep.

HOSPITALS CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Letter from the Editor

JIM THEOFELIS



This issue of the Mockingbird Times is another amazing example of the passion, resilience and indeed brilliance of the youth reporters. One of our main goals is to raise public awareness regarding the youth who are in foster care or have experience with homelessness and dispel the many myths about who these young people are. In this issue you will see Misty's article on the power of words particularly when they come from individuals in authority positions. I can't tell you how many times I've heard survivors of abuse refer to the difference between physical and emotional harm almost always referencing the fact that the physical bruises go away but the deep wound associated with verbal condemnation remains. Misty closes her essay with "...I believe that love is powerful, one of the most powerful forces of energy...and that it can heal, transform lives, inspire, bring hope, laughter, singing and dancing." And then there is Jamica Henderson's piece on her determination to create not just a job for herself but a career. She worked the entire summer including internships at Seattle based health care facilities where she learned new employment

skills while giving fresh energy to the patients she cared for. She did all of this during following her June high school graduation and transitioning into new housing. As she so eloquently states: "...I felt I was doing too much, but once you get older you have to do whatever it takes to make things comfortable for you". Zachary's article and songwriting, Jacob's reminder to value the innocent play and fun of kids being kids and the other articles in this issue are full of powerful words and reminders of youth demonstrating their passion for life, commitment to humanity and willingness to work hard and take responsibility. I would like to give a very special welcome to Dietra Clayton our very special Ameri-corp worker who will be working with our Youth LEAD program. I also want to add a my own Thank You to Representative Jim McDermott and the entire Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute for Mockingbird Society being selected as an Angel in Adoption. The honor is just that: an amazing honor and the events in Washington D.C. were truly fantastic! In closing I offer a heartfelt thank you to all of you who donate to the Mockingbird Society which allows us to continue to support these brilliant young people and their chosen path.

 Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org



Mockingbird Society Executive Director Jim Theofelis and Representative Jim McDermott at the Angels in Adoption gala.

"There is no such thing as an unwanted child – only unfound families."

Senator Mary Landrieu, Louisiana, Press Conference for Angels in Adoption.

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The Mockingbird Times is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The Mockingbird Times has a monthly circulation of 40,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the U.S.A, through a private distribution list and as an insert in Real Change, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the Mockingbird Times may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2005 The Mockingbird Society.

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth and support the Mockingbird Society!

Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$ _____

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Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South Suite 240, Seattle WA 98144

Letters to the Editor

Today the Mockingbird Society is receiving national recognition in Washington D.C. We who have been amazed by your excellent work and professionally outstanding newspaper, that speaks from the heart and the spirit, congratulate you. We hope this is the beginning of yet another set outward in empowering and encouraging young people all over the state of Washington and the United States of America.

Sincerely,
 Chevy Kniesley
 North Central Washington

Jim, How are you doing??? It has been a while since we have seen each other and I know things are busy for you and the staff at Mockingbird Times. I wrote to tell you and whole crew at MB Society CONGRATULATIONS on being recognized as an Angel. I guess some of us always knew you and Mockingbird were angles and now the Nation knows! Kudos to you my friend...you deserve it and much more for what you do.

Kikora Dorsey
 Director, Practice Implementation and Support
 Child Welfare Practice Improvement Team/Systems Improvement

Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for

us." What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds? Join the Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

Thank You's

Virginia Blayney; Kathryn Brooks; Cherry Johnson; Henry and Jennifer Gordon; Lloyd Cox, Nic Hage and Peg Giffels from NPower; Mark Wittow from Preston, Gates, & Ellis; Bruce Cross from Perkins Coie; Scott Davis; Kevin Peterson and Rory from Sellen; Anne, Louie, Patty Theofelis and Family; Craig Norris, Washington Mutual Bank; Rollie Munger, Moss Adams LLP; Chevy Kniesley; Kikora Dorsey

Mockingbird Society is honored to have received the prestigious national Angels in Adoption Award from the Congressional

Coalition on Adoption Institute and extends a special thank you to: Representative Jim McDermott for nominating Mockingbird Society

Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) Executive Director Deanna Carlson Stacy and Staff

CCAI Board of Directors: Representative Dave Camp (MI), Senator Mary Landrieu (LA), Senator Larry Craig (ID), Representative James Oberstar (MN), Rita Soronen (Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption), Paul Singer (Target), Valdur Koha, Philanthropist, Barbara W. Walzer, Philanthropist

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Seattle Poetry Project Helps Homeless Youth be Heard

COURTNEY KONIETZKO



I got the chance to interview Zachary Prillhart, a green-mohawked 22-year-old young man who is a homeless poet that writes poems that sound like songs. Zach was involved in The Poetry Project as a core player. The project's name is simply The Poetry Project and was a collaborative work between the **Sanctuary Arts Center**; a safe space where youth can go to express themselves creatively, **Partnership for Youth**, an advocacy and social service agency, and 6 homeless young adults. The poetry project lasted for 6 weeks and the final result was a solid product; 12 poems published in a chap book and a spoken word CD which is amazing. Youth involved in the poetry project will get half of the proceeds from the chap book and spoken word CD. The other half of the proceeds will go towards funding more workshops for other homeless youth.

Zach has been seriously writing songs and poetry for 3 years. "Most of my songs are based about real life stuff that could happen to people - I hope that my songs will inspire people to not do bad stuff like suicide drinking. I would like to learn how to write poems better and add more detail to them so the reader can actually see the poem like they are there."

Zach is also instrumental in creating opportunities for homeless youth in the Seattle community. For example, Zach organized a fundraiser for Sports for Life which raised close to \$300. Sports for Life is the name of Partnership for Youth's (PFY) sports activities program, including the open gym and outdoor games. The open gym is a basketball program that Zach started for homeless youth, which was featured on King 5

TV as a program called Homeless Hoops. Zach mentioned jokingly, "I'm famous I've been on TV!"



Zachary Prillhart, from the Poetry Project

The Open Gym was instrumental in helping homeless youth move on and get jobs. **Rick Eberhardt**, the head of PFY stated, "we are trying to provide opportunities that homeless youth would not get to experience [otherwise]." Sports for Life was the name of Zach's PE class in high school, that's how he came up with the name for PFY's sports program. According to Eberhardt the three hundred dollars will be used "to create more Sports for Life activities, including BBQs, softball and flag football games on Saturday afternoons (I think this is really cool because not many activities are offered for youth on the weekend and when you are bored you are less likely to get in trouble - at least that's my experience when I was

living on the streets.) an all-day sports mini-camp at the UW Intramurals Activities Center; and attending an upcoming Seahawks games. The Seattle Foundation also recently awarded PFY a grant to be used for purchasing athletic equipment like footballs, athletic shoes, towels, etc."

The Sanctuary Arts Center had a music program for awhile and one of Zach's poems was put to music. (Zach smiles big while he talks about this) There is hope for the future that this can be done with more youth's work. Zach's poems have been described as having melody. Zach said the poetry project was fun and interesting and it was a good experience getting the chance to say what you liked about other people's writing and write more than you normally would. Zach says he "really hopes that another poetry project will happen again."

Some of the youth involved with the project were writers to begin with. Writers got paid a stipend as recognition for their work because "writing is valuable! Your work is important! Writing is work!" In the eyes of Rick Eberhardt, this is the reason there was a stipend, but nobody really needed an incentive to be there because they wanted to be there and write.

Trick or Treat?

JACOB HARRISON



I never really stopped to think about how Halloween actually started and where it came from. That's because I never really cared to. Even though I know the details now, I still couldn't care less because to me, it's all about candy and parties. Halloween started in the U.S in the 1840's. Irish immigrants brought the customs

over to America. Halloween comes from "All Souls Day". What is called, "Trick-or-Treating" today was once called "Soul-ing". The only difference is that instead of getting candy from people, people begged for soul cakes. It was a Christian celebration when Christians would beg different people for soul cakes that were made of bread. The deal was however many you got, you would have to pray for that amount of dead Christians.

The legend of the Jack-o-Lantern has the most unrealistic story behind it. A man named Jack was known around his village as a real prankster. He tricked Satan into climbing a tree then carved a cross into a tree. Then he carved his face into the tree. Because of Jack's acts, he was denied ac-

ceptance to Heaven and to Hell for tricking Satan. So instead, God turned him into a pumpkin and carved his mean harsh smile and eyes into a pumpkin and now every October 31st Jack sits on peoples doorsteps while kids knock on the doors for that thing that makes a kid happy, candy.

I was Trick-or-Treating a couple years ago with my friends. We got to one house just as the owners were leaving. They were so generous for leaving that big bucket of candy on their porch and expecting people to come by and only take a few pieces. They waved at us while pulling out of their driveway. We waved back and acted like we were just taking a couple pieces and started walking toward the next house. Right when they turned

the corner, we were at full speed heading back to that bucket and splittin' that candy up. I haven't missed a single year of Trick-or-Treating since then because I just love candy. I think this year it's time for a change. I think I'll just stop and raid a party or to for candy instead of wasting my time walking around for nothing.

Remember Us!

United Way is conducting their annual campaign during September-December. Please remember that you can designate that your donation to United Way be directed to the Mockingbird Society. Thanks for all your continued support.

Creative Corner

Life on the Streets

By ZACHARY PRILLHART

Verse 1: Living on the streets you always could use some help. Other times you feel like you want to end it for yourself. People may ask you how you gonna do it my friend? If I'm having a bad day I'll answer, I'll take myself out of this world for good.

Chorus: Everyone living on the streets needs a place to live. Not a lot of people want to take the time to give. Everyday young people go out on the streets and spange. You see people passing by saying they have no change.

Verse 2: As I walk around I look at all the drama I see. I just sometimes want to put myself in jail and throw away the key. I know that some kids don't like the cops out on the streets. All you have to do is keep your mind clear and keep on moving your feet.

Chorus

Verse 3: As I walk around the streets people try to sell me their weed. Even though it's so tempting, that killer drug will mess with your mind indeed. Crack, cocaine, meth, and PCP. All those crazy

drugs will make you want to mess up everything that you see.

Chorus

Verse 4: When I am out on the street, I wonder why other youth are out here. Then I say to myself don't worry about them because you have your own problems to fear. I really need to get my life back on track. I don't want to live my life out here all the time and that's a fact.

Chorus

Verse 5: No more drugs for me, they will just keep me down. If I do them, all the cops will be watching me all around town. Now there is a point to this song that I sing. Just get your life together and you'll soon feel like a king.

Chorus

Zach is currently staying at the ROOTS Young Adult Shelter. He organized basketball for homeless youth in the U-District and now works for the Partnership for Youth's advocacy table project.

Don't You Wonder?

By BRIDGINAE GREEN

She was the one who birth me.
And she let them take me away from her.
She knew what she was doing
When she was on those drugs.
All I wanted was a simple hug.
she wasent even there to give me that.
What was going through her head.
If she didn't want me she shouldn't have
Laid in the bed.
Now I'm not tryin to be disrespectful.
But I'm just sayin whats on my mind
Since she doesn't have the time to call
Not even once.
Don't she ever wonder what it would be like
just to hear my voice ?
And know that I'm alright
All she has to do is make a simple choice.
She has kept it pushin this far,
So she can just keep on moving
Because I don't need her now
And I think Ive already proved it
But people say I'm not old enough to say
things like this
So I get told to "stay in a little kids place"
But I'm not a little kid
I'm a mature teen who has been through
things in my life
And its all my biological moms fault

She the reason my aunt had to take care of me
She the reason why I have counselors on my jock
Its her fault that people always wanna treat me different because they feel sorry about what I've been through
But I don't need no pity
And yes everything you think is true
Yea my mom lost me at birth
Yea I lived with my aunt who I called mom
And yes she is deceased now
But I just hold all my anger and pain inside because I don't have no time for my feelings
So I just brush it off like nothing is hurting
But people say "B-Nae' you shouldn't hold things inside like that"
O well because I do
And there is nothing anyone can do because I'm bruised for life
And statistically I'll be the type who grows up and stabs people with knives
But guess what
I'm gonna prove them statistically wrong and be what I wanna be
But no matter what
I'm going to always be the same old B!!!

Mockingbird's Americorps Says Hello

DIETRA
CLAYTON



I was asked to introduce myself, and in all honesty I don't know where to begin. My name is Dietra Clayton a self identified ally to every minority. The previous job endeavors I have had vary from working with women who have been brutalized to working with homeless teens identified as queer, sexual minorities find there place with jobs, shelter and themselves. Another big part of my background is serving underserved portions of society as a mentor that taught AIDS awareness and STD prevention. I've also done a lot of traveling for the last three years; I actually started here in Seattle for two months. I adore Seattle

and it's commitment to and richness of various artistic platforms.

When I decided to look in to becoming an Americorps member, in all honesty there weren't many programs that struck me. Then they mentioned on opening at Mockingbird Society working with youth that were disenfranchised through foster care and homelessness and I decided that was perfect. Being an avid writer myself with a lot of drive and complete openness to hearing and directing the voice of young people made this opportunity an excellent fit. The placement further struck me, because I would be given a chance to inspire youth and young adults through art (which is also a strong point of mine). I've never held a job I didn't love coming to, but even being here at Mockingbird Society this short time has surpassed my expectations.

I began my Americorps service here at Mockingbird the second week of September and have only been given 11

months to contribute in as many ways possible. Some of my goals while here at Mockingbird Society are to help support staff with public speaking via spoken word events as well assisting with development of creative ways for youth to have a stronger "verbal" voice. Also, I hope to increase Mockingbird's visibility in the community through multiple community/school activities and various multimedia events. We will be visiting local public schools and higher learning institutions in order to enlighten people and raise a unified sense of awareness about the reality of foster care, homelessness and their impact on youth in our communities. Again, I am extremely excited to be here and look forward to what is ahead of me this next ten months. Thank you for reading my blurb and I look forward to an amazing year here at Mockingbird Society via Americorps and hope to cross paths with some of you along the way.

For all those involved in the production of the Mockingbird Times and on behalf of the staff of Mockingbird Society we extend our deepest condolences for the families and individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina. The disaster separated thousands of families, as well as left devastating effects on the already disadvantaged youth and parents in the child welfare system.

Please visit the following websites to find out how you can help lessen the pain, suffering and loss that adolescents and adults are feeling due to the hurricanes destruction. Families are now faced with separation and death of loved ones, homelessness and the loss of belongings and the sense of a community. We reach out to those affected by the devastation as they begin to repair the damage and rebuild the communities that once supported them.

National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice & Permanency Planning, at the Hunter College School of Social Work
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/disaster_relief.html#funds

National Foster Parent Association (see Hurricane Relief Efforts)
<http://www.nfpainc.org/>
1-800-557-5238

HOSPITALS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In all I really enjoyed both jobs because I got to learn how to do things that I should be learning in college. The jobs that I worked with had internships for college students only. I was in training for a week at the VA learning how to do CPR, vital signs, charting and learning the oxygen tanks. A lot of the training from the VA helped me with the other job. The difference between the two jobs is: at the Leon Sullivan Health Center we got to build a bond with the residents. We helped them remember things and saw how long they could stay on the subject. We would read magazines with them and watch a little television. Every other day we would meet with the residents at least four a day for ten minutes. At the VA you are always doing something. The only way you would bond or know the patients is if they had family that came all the time or if they pressed the call light and started talking to you. So in all I got to see what a NAC actually does and what a recreational therapist does. Both jobs are different Recreational therapist is not a nurse. They're only there to keep the residents active. NAC's are nurses and they don't have time to play.

We are looking for articles, poetry, artwork and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or homelessness. If you want to be published in the Times, contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org. For more info and to check us out, go to www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

KATRINA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Roosevelt, the 32nd US President of the United States, and was known to be outspoken, a leader in protecting wildlife and Human Rights, a United Nations diplomat, a humanitarian and was, "in her time, one of the world's most widely admired and powerful women." (6). After Mr. Roosevelt's polio attack, Mrs. Roosevelt became very politically active. "As first lady (1933-45), she traveled around the U.S. to report on living conditions and public opinion for her husband, and she supported humanitarian causes such as child welfare, equal rights, and social reforms." (7) After Mr. Roosevelt's death, Mrs. Roosevelt was "appointed a delegate to the UN (1945, 1949-52, 1961), whose founding she had strongly advocated. As chair of its Commission on Human Rights (1946-51), she helped draft the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (1948). In the 1950s she traveled around the world for the UN and remained active in the Democratic Party" (8).

Mrs. Roosevelt, besides being chair of the Commission on Human Rights and one of the most powerful women of her era, also had a way with words. Eleanor Roosevelt has many inspirational and thought-provoking quotes, which can most likely be found in the several books that she wrote, as well as the internet. "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." (9), "You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... do the thing you think you cannot do." (10) and "The freedom of man, I contend, is the freedom to eat" (11) are some of the many quotes from the mind and heart of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Ani DiFranco was born in Buffalo,

New York, and started creating songs from her poetry as a young teenager. She wrote songs about "the things that mattered most to her: the power dynamics of romantic entanglements, the fragmentation of her family, the choices she watched her friends making, and the state of life in her hometown and her country." (12) DiFranco, "hit the road with increasing frequency and growing confidence, developing her signature percussive finger picking and dynamic range in order to grab and hold the attention of noisy bar crowds." The teenager, "Rather than waiting for some A&R bigwig to sign her ... simply created her own record label, Righteous Babe, eventually turning down legions of potential deals when she realized they had nothing to offer that she couldn't provide herself." (13) DiFranco started out with homemade recorded tapes, a whole lot of determination, passion and love, and crafted a name for herself as one of the World's most beloved and well-known folk artists of all time.

Ani DiFranco didn't sit around and wait for some big record executive to "discover" her talents and take advantage of her, she took her fate into her own hands, developed her own unique voice and personal style, and "Nearly a decade and a half of hard work, glowing word of mouth, and relentless touring later, the self-described 'Little Folksinger' is packing joints like Carnegie Hall and amphitheaters around the world, though she still makes each venue she plays feel as cozy as a living room and as sweaty as a neighborhood dive. That DIY label of hers, still based in Buffalo (with a European branch based in London), has now released 16 of Ani's own CDs and about a dozen more by an eclectic hand-picked roster of artists whose music is as unclassifiable and un-

predictable as hers." (14)

Ani DiFranco, the "songwriter, vocalist and guitarist perpetually on the move" (15), has been quoted as saying, "I have something to prove, as long as I know there's something that needs improvement, and you know that everytime I move, I make a woman's movement." (16), "I was blessed with a birth and a death, and I guess I just want some say in between." (17) and one of my favorites, "Any tool is a weapon if you hold it right." (18)

Ani DiFranco didn't stop making "women's movements" even after she became world famous. "Through her Righteous Babe Foundation, she's been able to support grassroots cultural and political organizations around the country, and she has repeatedly lent her time and her voice to such diverse pursuits as opposing the death penalty, upholding women's reproductive rights, promoting queer visibility, and preserving historic buildings back in Buffalo (including a long-neglected church currently being transformed into the new headquarters of Righteous Babe)." (19)

I have been meditating on the quote, "Verbal cuts do not heal as quickly as those made with a knife." all throughout the time it took to write this article, and I'd like to leave you with some hope for the future, some of my reflections and a piece of my innermost heart. **I believe that the Great Spirits/Gods/God/Goddesses/Deities that religions speak about are essentially all saying the same thing. I believe that all of the World Religions are saying that "God Is Love" and I believe that love doesn't discriminate between race, gender, class, background or any of the other things that we let divide us on a daily basis. I believe that love is powerful, one of the most powerful forces of energy on this planet, and that it can heal, transform**

lives, inspire, bring hope, laughter, singing and dancing.

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