



A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi

A Holiday Story

Two women, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One woman was allowed to sit up in her bed for an hour each afternoon. Her bed was next to the room's only window. The other woman had to spend all her time flat on her back.

The women talked for hours on end. They spoke of their husbands and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in community service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon, when the woman in the bed by the window could sit up, she would pass the time by describing to her roommate all the things she could see outside the window.

The woman in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where her world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

She talked about how the window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the woman by the window described all this in exquisite details, the woman on the other side of the room would close her eyes and imagine this picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon, the woman by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other woman could not hear the band – she could see it in her mind's eye as the woman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed by.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the woman by the window, who had died peacefully in her sleep. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other woman asked if she could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure she was comfortable, she left her alone.

Slowly, painfully, she propped herself up on one elbow to take her first look at the real world outside. She strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed.

The window faced a blank wall.

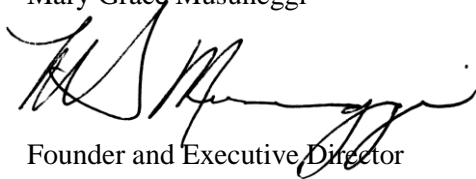
The woman asked the nurse what could have compelled her deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside. The nurse responded that the woman was blind and could not even see the wall.

She said, "Perhaps she just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations.

As we enter this holiday season of thankfulness, joy, sharing, lights, family, gift-giving and gift-getting, we are reminded that the true beauty of the season comes from what we give, not what we get. And we thank you for giving us the opportunity of knowing you, and having you as part of our world.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Founder and Executive Director

November-December 2011