



Brothers Redevelopment Paint-A-Thon

What a “Thank You” Really Means

Imagine you are 74 years old. You live completely off of a social security stipend of \$1400 that must provide for all your food, electric, gas, water bills and largest of all, your medical expenses. The wear and tear of life has taken its toll on your body, and pain nags at you constantly. Living by yourself isn't easy however you cherish your independence and in a lot of ways it helps keep you going. Losing your husband was the most difficult challenge you have ever faced. You knew that life would be different without him but never realized how much work he put in, just to maintain your life together; for instance taking care of the house. You stare at your home with its worn edges, failing gutters, neglected yard and peeling, faded paint and think of how good it used to look. How it used to bring such pride, such joy. You feel that ache. The hard pain of knowing that life seems to be taking away more than it gives lately. You really want to get the house taken care of, but with no money, there is no way. If you could work for longer than a few minutes without getting your heart rate up, it might be possible to chip away at it. Who are you kidding, there is no way.

One day while reading the paper you notice an advertisement for something called the Paint-A-Thon. It says that volunteers from your community will paint houses for people like you...and it is FREE. Your first impulse is that it must be some type of scam, everyone wants something these days; but still you think it might be worth calling about. At this point anything is worth a shot. After you make the call and get an application in the mail, a Brothers Redevelopment staff visits you and even asks you what color you want to paint the house. You are skeptical, and rightly so, but then, when you get a phone call informing you volunteers have committed to painting your house it seems like this might be different. This might actually happen.

Then the painting day comes and you see 15 real people gather on your driveway, brushes and rollers in hand, ladders are set against the home, the clack and scrape of work chimes through the air. They paint so quickly and efficiently! All those years of watching the house deteriorate and now it is transforming back into the glorious home you remember. The place you were so proud to have lived and raised a family in. By the afternoon the volunteers have completely transformed your house. It looks brand new! You are still searching for words to express your gratitude, to explain what this means to you, to your life. All that comes is a thank you, and it seems to be enough. After the volunteers leave, you wander around your home; the place where you belong, this new hopeful place. Those volunteers haven't just painted your home, they have renewed you. They have given you hope for society. Hope for community. Hope for future generations. You think of how pleased your late husband would have been to see the house restored to its proper, former glory and you feel something you haven't in a long time, joy.