

Marie's Gift

Eve Birch

<https://www.facebook.com/Rubyat62>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102961694>

A Project called 'My Friends House'

An intersectionally oriented intercommunity community base and day camp providing various venues where anyone can and network and improve their life skills in a safe and empowering environment. This in combination with a night shelter for short term goal seekers (21 and up) who identify and live as female.

Supporting itself with pay-as-you-may recycled art and craft classes, day labor, odd jobs, and connecting people with suitable mentors from all available faiths (and mission-compatible ideologies and practices).

Hosting support groups and offering spirituality, health, and life skills classes.

I am asking for a \$30,000. pot.

Here's my reasoning;

*Fund raising happens much more successfully in a welcoming and safe environment, so a ghetto location is not conducive to survival, and nicer neighborhoods have fewer police brutality/misconduct incidents.

*I can't run a house and go out for multiple supportive jobs at the same time - too difficult. I need mentoring, a weekly bookkeeper, a small stipend for myself, and a few hours of attorney time to do the non-profit stuff and fix my taxes.

*A bigger group leans more toward democratic behaviors, and so is safer from violence or thuggery. Having enough to install a security system, and a safe.

*More bodies assures that all the major players in a group dynamic would be represented, meaning more people who clean and work. Bigger groups are more troll proof.

*With a bigger place I have room to host income generating classes and support groups.

*I can rework that money in under a year to a point where the program is supporting itself. Providing not just emergency temporary shelter, support groups, and life skills and enrichment classes, but also the important spiritual enrichment and personal empowerment that guest teachers and mentors would bring.

*In a privately held place (rented or owned), I can control the vetting of who comes in the door. This is very important, as the wrong person coming in can go from stupid to dangerous in an instant.

*I want it to be the house that Love built, and almost all I know about that started with NOVA and my parents. I know now that I would have ended up wretched if you guys and your approach of generosity, social justice and love hadn't been there on some of my rougher times.

I've handled this job alone, and under dire and broke circumstances. With enough help to do it right, we could really make a difference in the local population.

In a year;

I can have the operation sustaining itself through classes, donations, grants (for example; Bisquick is willing to talk about a small sponsorship for product inclusion in a couple cooking classes, and the United Way makes small contributions to tutoring hosts.

I can gain help from local artists, mechanics, etc, who've shown interest in teaching the odd class, and a few clergy have offered to teach and mentor free, with lots of interest in the low cost classes. If I build it, they'll show up. I will need a ready pool of helpers, mentors and teachers as we add classes and groups at the beginning, that's also where NOVA comes in.

When you're homeless, it's because either everything in your life has collapsed, or it feels like that in your head, so "the reality" doesn't apply. The very best start is a safe place to catch one's breath and make a realistic plan where the food is awesome, the lifestyle is calm simplicity, and the game is simpler still; Cherish each other.

With a very thick background in crisis and social work (several stints at womens' shelters in Va and Mo), and a fair one in education - adult ed (WV), training support group facilitators at Whitman-Walker Clinic (DC), and 7 years of ESOL (MO & WV); I see this as a way of putting all my best skills together into one fantastic job, and to help, as I've always loved to do. It's the only way I want to live.

My philosophy is easy; help them evaluate their current situation, tweak that to best possible scenario (in health and habits), assist in making their goals into realistic plans, and to prepare them with enough knowledge and access to information and services to make it a reality, in under 3 months if possible. If people are making money in house; they have to put 75% into savings (in house safe, available on exit), and donate 10% to the house.

I think you have to be an infinitely flexible conduit to be a good helper.

Free hugs - my kids still do this.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr3x_RRjdd4

Intersectionality is a concept often used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. Black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in her insightful 1989 essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" helped me see my mission much better.

But reminding those opposed to intersectionality that there are smaller yet very very important groups that will never have a voice as loud as yours, just by straight numbers. And we can't NOT KNOW now, after the last few years of heavy protesting and the media coverage it's managed to gain, there there is and always has been racism and sexism built into our system of government, and that a vast majority of citizens no longer want that. We also do not want war. It's not good for our lives.

Science and history show that when left to their own devices; dog soldiers and regular citizens would rather get along. The worst violence against groups/numbers happens when it's ordered from above.

The Measure of our Success

- *Leaving the House successfully means that, if all went well, this person has or knows;
- *Problem solving, networking, and info gathering skills
- *Basic kitchen and nutrition knowledge
- *How to make and keep a budget (bank account, etc)
- *A place to land
- *A realistic plan
- *A fantastic support system
- *Steely-eyed determination to make life better
- *A list to work when things get tough
- *A sense of home INSIDE themselves
- *A spiritual, religious, or ethics mentor they can call for after-care

Money Breakdown

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What	One time cost/deposits	Monthly	1 yr Total
Rent	1,000.	1,000. (x11)	13,000.
Electric	200.	200. (x11)	2,400.
Phone	-0-	45. (x12)	540.
Water	170.	80. (x11)	1,050.
Truck Insurance	300.	80. (x11)	1,180.
Misc food (mostly donations)		60. (x12)	720.
Misc house (mostly donations)		20. (x12)	240.
Security system	700.		700.
Safe	200.		200.

Office setup	100.		100.
Furniture -beds, lockers, locks, shelf lumber, hardware	3,000.		3,000.
Appliances	200.		200.
Eve stipend		300. (x12)	3,600.

Total \: \$26,390.

Benefits to the Community

*A resource and peer counseling venue that focuses on the unique issues of the under-privileged whose homelessness poses particular harms to their mental and physical well-being, ie; women and transgender females.

*With a spiritual accent on healing and empowering self and community; we can work with those who - for whatever reason - are fearful or unsuccessful in the established human resources forums.

*Where as soon as you are inside, you are one less person standing on the street with nowhere to go and nothing to do.

*If the classes are free for the residents and the local homeless and or broke, and between 5 and 35 for the employed (depending on the supply list for that class), thus bringing people together who otherwise would never meet.

*Mental health and Nutrition will soon be National Health issues, so I'm bringing that into the guests faces first day in the program, and into every aspect of the project in general.

*Seeking relationships across all the barriers of class, race, gender, ability and faiths is critical to world peace and community success.

*Providing access to mentors and spiritual guardians (from all walks), in a place of no judgement and no prejudice.

*Teaching the values of community, creativity, simplicity, frugality, earth stewardship, and human service.

*To teach that Love - the unconditional concern for another's well-being - is a powerful and empowering ingredient in bringing people together for peace and justice in a more nurturing and egalitarian world view.

Soft Resume

[Potomac State College of West Virginia University](#)

BS (pending), [Sociology](#) 1993 – 1995

[UDC](#)

Hospice, [Long Term Care](#)

1985 – 1988

Activities and Societies: [In home hospice care for AIDS patients.](#)

Literacy Tutor

[United Way of America](#)

Education

[Boss Mama](#)

[Butterfly Project](#)

October 2006 – Present (10 years)

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- providing goods and services for the troubled and homeless as needed and as we can.
- trash to treasures arts and crafts projects
- making life better.

(Open)1 project

[Cybrarian; Librarian, Computer Teacher, Researcher](#)

[Martinsburg Public Library](#)

April 2008 – July 2014 (6 years 4 months)25401

I hooked people up with the things, articles, ideas, books, sites, support, and people they needed. No pressure.

[Crisis Counselor](#)

[several women's shelters in MA, MO, VA, and WV](#)

1985 – August 2010 (25 years)

Empower them to evolve into a strong self view and an independent life.

[ESOL and Literacy Tutor](#)

[Literacy Volunteers of the Eastern Panhandle](#)

2004 – 2010 (6 years)

I learned what a real hero is, and met many of them every week. And I helped them learn English.

[Grief and Crisis Counselor](#)

[The Red Cross](#)

1986 – 1997 (11 years)

Hotline< which was anything from 411 to cold crisis calls. Loved it, got good at it and handled the tougher calls for the staff.

Worker

Whitman-Walker Clinic

1986 – 1989 (3 years) 1701 14th St, NW Washington, DC 20009

In-home Hospice Care, Support group organizer and facilitator, Facilitator Trainer, Public Speaker, Advocate

Worked at/volunteered or did the Hotline or Ran several women's shelters in MA, MO, VA, and WV.

Lots of restaurant work...

* busboy in 1986 at a bistro in Falls Church.

*Went to Waitress, then to

*Sous Chef, then on to

*waitress,

*cook again,

*waitressed a lot

*Baker at a Grocery and then a Deli,

*Baker out of my kitchen (breads, strombolis, meat pies and fruit pies).

*Expediter, Kitchen Manager then Head Chef at two resorts.

The food business taught me to finish chores, work in a team, wash up well, and pay attention to detail.

But I'm not interested in the Food business, just the Feeding business.

... maybe a Pay What You Can diner for fund raising ...

Another strong background in Construction; Started as a laborer in around 1979.

* I am not a great Carpenter, but I can

*run a job site and crew,

* handle and educate the property owners,

*am a fair decorator, and

*a good painter, and

*make it pretty, sturdy, and in budget..

I try to find jobs I can take helpers to, so I can teach other women how to do these traditionally male jobs. There's more money in it. I learned why safety rules are important, about heavy teamwork, and that busted knuckles suck, but they heal.

Master Candle Maker - I've had 4 apprentices. I miss it.

Love notes (excerpted)

*I think this woman is an amazingly gifted teacher and helper and healer of the spirit. Through trials and troubles she is always there when called and even sometimes when she is not. Intelligent person who is a born teacher she is also born to lead. Cares more for others than herself and will tirelessly fight for those who are downtrodden and who have given up hope.

She is a light in the darkness for many and by hiring her you will find a dedicated person who will forever selflessly work for you and for all you stand for. -[Shawna Bowman](#)

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Aaron Lennox -Librarian  
Went to Martinsburg High School  
Lives in Seville, Ohio

I would like to take the time out to say how you changed my outlook on life and humanity. You take your time and help everybody you can with everything you can and don't expect anything in return except to see somebody you help have a positive attitude and help others the way you help them. You keep going regardless of a bump turning into a mountain. You don't just survive, you persevere and prosper good works to not only our youth but to homeless as well. Teaching people new things and guiding them down a good humble path. You don't break down you build.

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[Dale Killingsworth](#) you represent great value per investment especially in the realm of caring and providing for people and the felling of trees.

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[John Wason](#) "If caring for people was an Olympic sport, Eve would unquestionably be on the podium. She is no neophyte; she has trained long and hard for this event. She has walked the walk of the poor and disenfranchised. No stranger to adversity, she has a proven track record of overcoming obstacles, and helping others to overcome as well."

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[Al Gaige](#) I've only known Ruby a couple of years, but I know very few people who have the passion, the drive, and the "sticktuitiveness" of this young lady for those who fall through society's cracks. In other areas I have worked with rescue mission directors who (while doing a great job) simply don't have the intuitive ability to help people. Good luck with this project, Ruby, and continue your positive journey.

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My name is Abby McCullough. I met Mama Eve in October of 2011. At that point I was a spoiled 16 year old and my father gave me everything I wanted. I gave no thought to anything about my life in the future. I had no idea how to take care of myself. I didn't learn anything about the real world.

When i turned 18 years old, I thought I was ready to quit school and go out on my own. I was wrong. Eve took me in and provided me with different routes of work where i could start a career. While generosity is one of her favorite policies, she also encourages us to work for the things we have, because it feels more satisfying that way. She provides a nice warm home, while i work in anyway possible to better myself. While we're at home, learning how to spread our wings, she's out working long hours to keep the roof over our heads.

Today I'm 19 years of age and have lived with Mama for around a year. I'm certified for daycare positions and will be working full time soon. My time to fly is getting closer

every week, but if I didn't have Eve, i would have never come to this. I would have never had the motivation or stability to follow through in anything i start. This is a home away from home and she's everyone's Mama.

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My name is Jon Morgan.

I met Mrs. Eve at the Martinsburg Public Library during my 8th grade year at Martinsburg South Middle School. Here is how I met this amazing, outstanding, and radiant woman. I was attending summer school at Martinsburg High school due to my grades being lower than expected. When I was released from summer school, I would walk over to the library whenever she worked. When I walk inside the computer lab, all of my worries evaporated when I handed her my library card. She would then proceed to ask me how my day was and I would reply "It went well". She and I would have a conversation about a lot of amazing things. When I was on the computer, she would give me extra time on it. When the library was closing up for the day, she would walk me outside the library, and I would walk her to her car. She has had a major impact on my life as well as many others. She is a hard worker and a caring person. If I didn't walk out to the library, I would have never met Mrs. Eve Birch. I am overjoyed that I met her. So, I asked her if I could stay at her house for a while. She smiled at me and said "yes". I now live with her along with a few others whom I would call my family. These guys are my rock and they are my life. When we receive clothes, we get to go through them and pick out the things we need. An example of this would be when the weather was growing colder. There was this black bag of jackets, coats, and scarfs. We each picked out one of everything and all of us decided to give out the rest to anyone who needed one. It was making others happy and keeping them warm from the cold. In addition to receiving clothes, Mrs. Eve also teaches us how to cook and shares some amazing recipes. About three weeks ago, She taught us how to make Matzo Ball soup.

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My name is David Fluke. I was diagnosed with MS in 1997. Shortly thereafter I met Eve. At first, I helped her with her projects, and she was my handyman, but now she is my 24/7 caregiver. When she is unable to be with with me herself, she arranges for her qualified friends to be with me. While Eve is not perfect at the job, in 17 years I have not found anyone better. I trust her with finances and my life.