

Terry Grahl's Story

Written by Angela Newman



Terry Grahl is the founder of Enchanted Makeovers; a non-profit organization focused on transforming shelters for women and children into heartwarming havens. Prior to devoting all her time to the charitable organization in January 2009, she had a thriving for-profit decorating business. Terry says, *"I always knew that transforming one's surroundings had the power of transforming one's soul. In a subtle way I knew that when I started decorating that it was going to become more than receiving a paycheck for doing something I loved and had a natural ability."*

Terry devotes her time and talent to making a better place for women and children that have no other choice but to live in a shelter until they learn to become independent and self-sufficient. For those of you who have never been in a shelter, the best way I can describe it is to imagine rooms of less than sterile walls, beds that look like hand me downs from the local Goodwill store or worse yet like those in prison cells, sheets and comforters torn, worn, stained and unmatched, dressers falling apart and furniture mixed-matched. As these women and children go through traumatic events in their lives and find shelter in these homes, they are safe from their otherwise threatening environment and learn how to care for themselves, which is the most important thing. However their environment is not typically conducive to peace and tranquility during their time of turmoil. That's where Terry comes in; she transforms shelters into beautiful, peaceful temporary homes.

But how did Terry get involved in this charitable endeavor and why since her decorating business was thriving and she was content in her career? Terry was running her own successful decorating business when she was approached by a man asking for help for a local shelter. He said, "We would be so grateful if you just painted one wall." She was somewhat apprehensive at first, because she had never visited a shelter and wasn't sure what to expect, but she

approached the project as though it was a paying client and went ready to take pictures for visualization and planning.

“With some fear and hopeful anticipation I not only accepted the request to paint some walls at this shelter, I vowed to transform all the bedrooms into havens of hope for the women and children who lived there. With no funds or volunteers lining up at the door I had to shed every ounce of fear inside myself by trusting in God and believing that others would also want to help these women and children.” And that’s exactly what she did. The shelter was transformed into a beautiful place for women and children and now she devotes all her time to her non-profit organization, Enchanted Makeovers. Terry’s projects of transformation are listed on her website and I encourage everyone to take a look and donate to her organization if you can. You will be touching the lives of so many women and children that are far less fortunate than many of us.

One of Terry’s favorite songs is by Miley Cyrus, ‘The Climb’. She says, *“Whether you imagine it as a pink ladder or a majestic mountain, my motivation isn’t about reaching the top, but rather the opportunity to climb.”* As Terry climbs her ladder, she has many people that support her throughout her climb including her husband and children and many that have been great examples as they walk next to her through her journey of life. She says, *“By sharing my hopes and dreams, allowing others to achieve their own and putting footsteps to my prayers, many amazing people have come into my life, each sharing their own special talents. We support each other in our dreams. That’s where the magic lies. Stepping outside of yourself and realizing it’s not all about you.”*

Climbing one’s ladder takes vision and goals to help us get to the next rung regardless of whether that climb is for-profit or non-profit and Terry knows that well. She believes, *“A key part of goal setting is imagining the feeling you will receive when you achieve your goals, which creates the belief that you could actually realize them and drives you to action. I have goals, but I give it a different language. I visualize my dreams by putting them on my vision board. Combining written goals with pictures and colors provides that extra something that gives the feeling of obtaining your goal.”*

In addition, *“I find that a constant flow of positive energy has been a key component to achieving my goals. It has also been very important to avoid negativity whenever possible. Providing positive energy has a double bonus because as you extend it into the world you*

attract it back to you. Soon you find you are surrounded by the most amazing people which fuels you to fulfill your purpose. This kind of fuel is the most eco-friendly, renewable resource available in the universe. The beauty is that there is enough for everyone."

Terry has found the transition from a thriving for-profit business to a non-profit to be very satisfying and partners with organizations to provide products and funding so she can continue her vision of giving women and children a safe haven of love and beauty. She is currently working to transform the bedrooms for 20 girls and young women at the Myriam House in Dearborn Heights, Michigan. What a phenomenal service you provide!

When asked if Terry had anything else she would like to share with the Pink Ladders readers, she provided a poem that was written by her mother which she says gives her wisdom and guidance each day.

DRIVING BY QUITE FAST

Did Someone Wave ? No. Just the reflection off a tired for sale sign. Turn around.

Go see. An overgrown yard and empty house.

My feet touch the dirt of the driveway. I am filled with an inner trembling. It excites and frightens me.

I walk through weeds and knee deep dried grass. I am overwhelmed with pity for this lonely house. I climb the porch steps. Shrubbery long untended blocks my way. I push through. I peek through the dirty windows.

My soul groans.

I touch the door frame. Hot tears sting my eyes.

*Who abandoned you?
Who took laughter from your rooms?
Who left you to decay?
Why?*

I lay my forehead on the door. I whisper, I will save you, I will wash you and dress you, I will love you.

I have kept my promise. She is reborn.

Her windows sparkle, sunshine fills her rooms. Paint and polish have made her young again.

At night I feel her sighs of contentment. Her happiness brings me peace. I touch her walls. I feel her strength.

She says, I will protect you. I say I will never leave you.

We are friends My House and I.

-- Mom 1978--



A Transformed Shelter

Terry Grahl can be contacted at www.enchantedmakeovers.org