

Dear Rebuilding Together, Friedman's and Rotary Club team members,

I think it's safe to say that Saturday, April 26th was a Great Day for all of us at 65 Ellie Drive! I'm still reeling from the effects of the amazing whirlwind that blew through here caused by the force of so many good hearted and hard-working people in one place at one time with one thing in mind-to help me! I keep peeking out my windows at various times of the day just to look at the brand new front porch, the mulch all around the happy looking pruned roses or at the dolphins on my garden pedestal jumping for joy in their new placement in my weed-free, agapanthus-decreased, creatively re-arranged back yard! I marvel at the green glow coming off of the spanking new siding to the back porch! It can never be enough to just say it, but say it I will-Thank you everyone! Thank you so much!

When everything came at once during my personal 'perfect storm' of injury at my job, aging making its presence known, and economic bubbles bursting, I descended to a level of material poverty that I had never known before. Since that time, I have had to learn many lessons in humility and patience, in faith and fortitude, and especially of gratitude. I am one of the lucky people who do have friends and family that love me and stepped in to help in whatever way they could to keep me from landing homeless on the street. But even with their support, the fears of how to survive without credit cards on a very limited income and without the ability to go out there and get a job to churn up more income as I used to be able to do, was often overwhelming. I am continually learning to adjust by discerning the difference between what I want and what I actually need to survive, and by returning again and again to gratitude for a perspective on all that I have, not what I don't have. When I see how hard it is for just one person like me to live when ends never really meet, I am in awe of the many people taking care of their families who are dealing with poverty and/ or illness while under what can be crushing financial pressure and yet still manage to somehow stay afloat. I now have more of a sense of understanding of how possible it is to be without shelter when I see those who are homeless. I know that in dire circumstances the world can start to seem like a very hostile and unsympathetic place and it isn't that unreasonable to enter into a downward spiral of despair. That is why I want to let the wonderful Rotary Club volunteers know how deeply appreciated their presence was, not only for the reasons I have expressed about the home improvements they made possible through their efforts, but for the encouragement and happiness they brought with them that went straight to my heart and soul. If ever I start to feel 'down', my faith in humanity and hope for myself and everyone on the whole planet will revive when I think about the day I was initiated into the spirit of volunteerism with its kindness and compassion that surrounded me on April 26th, 2014.

Thank you Rebuilding Together, for your expansive humanitarian vision that provided me with the opportunity to apply for my home repairs. It seems nothing short of a miracle that such a program exists. And many thanks to Friedman's Home Improvement for so generously adding their sponsorship, supplies and knowledge to make the vision a solid reality. And thank you to everyone involved in the project for the care and respect that was shown during the entire process. This was true from my first contact and meeting with Tom of Rebuilding Together to the walk-throughs and measurements taken by Ken of Friedman's to the expertise and energy of team Captain, Troy Carrington of Carrington

Construction who attended to the details of permits and bringing all the right equipment and materials and leading his fellow Rotarians through an awesome rebuilding transformation of my rickety front porch into a thing of strength and beauty. And I want to extend a very special 'thank you' to Rebecca Bautista, the Communications and Social Outreach Manager for Friedman's. Once I was an official chosen project, Rebecca stepped in to coordinate all the pieces of the project puzzle and kept me apprised of the picture that puzzle was making. She made herself available to me for every question, concern, or anxiety. She held my hand through it all with good humor, grace and incredible positive energy that was absolutely contagious and very reassuring. She also got out there with a big shovel and made mince-meat out of those pesky agapanthus. Kudos and thank you so much Rebecca.

I know it is said that it is better to give than to receive. But once you experience the 'get it done' mission of Rebuilding Together, Friedman's, and a feisty group of determined Rotarians showing up with hammers and rakes, you'd be hard put not to rethink that notion. Thank you again, for all that I have received.

Sincerely,

Miriam Ginden

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