



*"Mankind was my business..." - Marley's Ghost (A Christmas Carol)*

### **With inspiration from Emma,**

During her short time in Richmond, Emma began to develop relationships with some of the homeless in her new community. We are told by friends that they she knew their names and they knew hers. She was beginning to make connections with those that were in need and we're sure would have helped them in some way with her kindness and love.

*I believe that Emma's affinity for the homeless began in 2001 when our family relocated to London for a short term work assignment. Having spent her first years in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, we were thrust into the capital city of the United Kingdom and lived just outside of the 'square mile'. We had no car and, like most Londoners, relied on their transportation system to get us around the city and country.*

*Near our subway stop in Hampstead (Tube stop was Belsize Park), we would shop at a small market called Budgens which was within walking distance of our rental home. On one occasion, Emma asked about the street person sitting outside of the store and why they were asking for food/money. Surely, she thought, people should have enough to eat. She wanted to do more and we went in to buy a sandwich/drink for this new friend and had a brief chat before heading home. I'm convinced this was the beginning of her belief that we should all have enough to eat and a place to live.*

*During the weeks after her death, Griffin (her boyfriend) told us with amazement of Emma's connection to those in need in Richmond. He noted that "she knew the names of the homeless and they knew her - and they wouldn't ask for money or food, but instead had a genuine interest in what Emma had going on and she provided a connection with all walks of people that is rarely seen." Her friends at VCU would add that she would take any extra food from a meal out with her and most times found someone that was hungry to share her excess - spreading the love in her heart with others that she didn't know.*

*Emma, like her Grandfather Chuck, collected people - and built a circle of friends and strangers by touching their hearts through her actions.*

### **And sharing some of the love that has poured in,**

We made a financial donation in Emma's name to CARITAS (Congregations Around Richmond Involved To Assure Shelter) to help them in their mission to "break the cycle of homelessness and addiction." The gift represents the generosity of those countless friends of ours that have contributed to Emma's memorial site since her death in October. We toured their facilities in Richmond and were touched by the enormity of their service to those in need, they are clearly doing God's work.

*We were so deeply touched by the 'new stories' of our Sweet Emma's life that we knew we had to find an organization that helps those looking for a meal and a way to change their life. CARITAS is an amazing organization and it didn't take us long to see that they live the inspiration that Emma has left for us.*

*We met Karen Stanley as she was working with volunteers in The Furniture Bank, the organization's warehouse on Saturday November 2, 2013 during our first visit to Richmond since laying Emma to rest. Being touched by the stories that we shared in advance, Karen took us on a tour of their facilities a few short miles from VCU's campus south of Richmond. She spent time with us sharing how CARITAS worked to help shelter but more importantly give purpose back to the lives of many men and families impacted by addiction. The scale of their organization was so impressive to us as was the 'limited' federal assistance that they received. They are doing God's work and funded by donations of His people.*

*We know that the money will be used to feed, clothe and educate those willing to 'restart' their lives. CARITAS will make a difference with the love that our friends have entrusted to us.*



*"Mankind was my business..." - Marley's Ghost (A Christmas Carol)*

### And a little of our own,

As we prepared for a weekend visit to Richmond, we loaded our car with over 250 pounds of food staples that we know will help feed those in need in Emma's new community. The donation was from our Family in a small way to help support CARITAS as the cold weather approaches. We saw firsthand how this donation would be used by "The Healing Place", the transition program that helps troubled Men begin their long journeys back to mainstream productive life.



*The food was our way of joining the many friends and family (and some strangers) that have donated financially to Emma's memorial site. It was our way of putting some skin in the game and part of what we hope will be more living the inspirations that Emma has left for us.*

*While we have donated to Food Drives in the past, we hope to do this a bit more as we consider the impact that this has on those in need. It helps lighten their load and help fill their belly, and make us feel good in the process.*

*We have seen how CARITAS will use our food donation to feed those in need - but as important as that - they will help feed the souls of those that need love to get back their lives. They will help those in need.*

### And some action on our part

While the money and food were needed, Emma has inspired us to do more by our actions. After touring the facility, we volunteered in their warehouse helping to take donated goods from the community and prepare them for distribution to those in need. It was touching to see how some local businesses donated their surplus items (in our case, a whole hotel full of comforters) which will now be used to help build new beginnings with individuals and families in need.

*But the donations were the easy part, we have been given love from our friends and blessed with the ability to buy food for others - but it didn't feel like enough.*

*During our visit to Richmond, after the tour of the wonderful organization that is CARITAS, Denise, Noah and I rolled up our sleeves and helped with some action on our part. The warehouse in the 'Furniture Bank' receives donations from individuals and corporations that want to help; the volunteers help to sort through this love and prepare it for further distribution. They have a system at CARITAS to help the individuals and families that are struggling with taking care of their home needs (dishes, linens and clothes) - but it's all fueled by volunteers.*

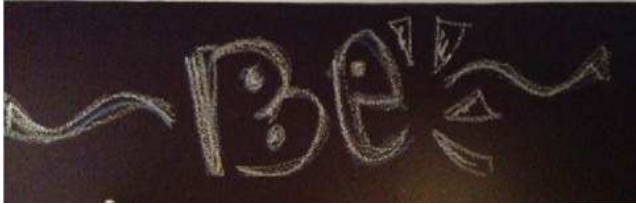
*Our simple task that morning was to take a donation from a local hotel (in this case, comforters which were 'swapped out' as part of a hotel-wide refresh) and prepare them for distribution to those in need. Simply put, we rolled and taped these donated items and helped organize them to allow the recipients to 'shop' at the warehouse to furnish their new (or existing) home.*



*"Mankind was my business..." - Marley's Ghost (A Christmas Carol)*

---

*What we didn't expect was a message from our Sweet Emma.*



*After folding a few dozen comforters, Denise looked at the design of the fabric that we had previously ignored. Now for those of you that knew Emma, you have seen the inspirational messages that she has chalked, painted or drawn around her living space.*

*The one that we shared with our friends during Emma's funeral home visitation was "Be".*

*Emma had this chalked above her mirror, something that she must have looked at each day as she prepared to venture out into the world. This simple phrase has, we hoped, helped to inspire our many family and friends to 'Be.'*

*When Denise looked at one of the many comforters that we rolled, we got the message from Emma.*

*Be the change you wish to see in the world*

*We're going to keep trying.*

*-Much Love from our family to yours*

*Denise, Michael,  
Alec, Olivia and Noah (\*And our angel Emma)*

