

Thank you, Anne and I thank you for this tremendous honor, an honor that really belongs to all of you whose life's work is one of healing and providing a safe place for those who, for whatever reason, are facing immense challenges.

Look around this room—the spirit of serving our neighbors is monumental. This speaks volumes about the caring and dedication of our community, people who work in concert with one another. Not one of us stands alone, or is isolated, or independent of the other, we are truly interdependent. We are fortunate to be part of a community that shares the vision that embraces serving humanity.

Yet, most of us sit in a comfort zone. We were born in a place and time that has insulated us, not just somewhat insulated, but *truly* insulated us from the pain of the world. It is removing that insulation that makes us who we are and at the end of the journey is what really matters.

It is a sobering experience for me when I allow myself to be vulnerable and think about those who whisper in the arms of social injustice, those who whisper in the arms of oppression, those who whisper in the arms of fear and hopelessness, and those who whisper in the arms of homelessness.

We are but a pilot light hoping to ignite the flame so that the voice of darkness will emerge and shout for the voices who are not, cannot, and will not be heard. If we can be a megaphone, amplifying the voices of those who suffer and if we offer our arms and embrace those challenging issues and energize those voices, our journey is with purpose.

If we use our voices well, loudly, and with intention, the echoes of compassion will reach far and we will no longer be estranged from pain of the world. That spirit will move us out of the darkness and into the light of day.

The work of Miriam's House is essential to improving the lives of those in our community who are most vulnerable. You not only stabilize lives, you provide access to other essential services while providing safety and security with dignity and respect to those who need it the most.

It is truly humbling for me to accept this honor named for Elizabeth Forsyth, one who exemplified the spirit of selfless service to community. Thank you!