

Mp3 Kareen King - The Person In The Picture Ain't Me



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Lovely folk, jazz and pop mixture. 14 MP3 Songs in this album (37:48) ! Related styles: FOLK: Modern Folk, FOLK: Folk-Jazz Details: Ever been lonely, lost, or unloved? Ever felt displaced, disoriented, discarded? Ever dreamed big, fought hard, loved with intensity? This album provides the listener an opportunity to walk in the shoes of those who have spent the last season of their lives in a nursing home. The Person in the Picture Ain't Me features singer/songwriter Kareen King's original songs inspired by her work as a drama therapist at Brookside Retirement Community in Overbrook, KS. It shatters the negative stereotypes of older adults, and gives voice to the human spirit no matter how aged the skin. Listen closely, you might find that you are them and they are you. For more about me, read on . . . On September 1, 2005, the Today Show featured an interview with an African American family who survived the trauma of waiting out Hurricane Katrina. When asked how the family dealt with the nightmarish events that unfolded around them, the adolescent grandson commented, We tried to play games to get our minds off of drowning. I discovered this to be a profound metaphor for dealing with lifes difficulties, a metaphor which captures the essence of my work as a drama therapist. I worked as Ulyssean Program Director/Activities Professional at Brookside Retirement Community, a long-term care facility which offers skilled nursing care, assisted living, and catered living units. I oversaw the activity program at the Manor, which during my season of employment (May, 2006 - January, 2009), had a census of 70 residents, ranging in ages 52 to 100 and who suffered from a variety of physical and mental limitations. My drama therapy training equipped me to introduce the value of play to not only the residents, but also my coworkers. Conventional nursing home activities such as exercise and current events were transformed into theatrical productions. Quality of life for both residents and coworkers improved through drama therapy exercises that facilitate self expression and contribute to a sense of community and belonging. I

believe these were contributing factors toward Brookside earning the 2008 PEAK award (Promoting Excellent in Alternatives in Kansas Nursing Homes). For example, a weekly gathering called Java Jive, which was once a coffee and news gathering, became a platform for storytelling, puppetry, group poetry, sing-alongs, and improvisational theater games. Exercise, which normally consisted of nothing more than traditional stretching and strengthening, was transformed into a showcase of movement with streamers, colorful paper plates, rhythm instruments, balloons, and improvisational brain stretches. Additional examples of my work are located in my blog at kareenking.com. Typical bus outings became imaginative adventures. I also developed the Ulyssean Philosophy (UP) training program which borrows its concepts from Dr. John McLeish, author of *The Challenge of Aging*. The program, which met one hour weekly for twelve weeks a session, was offered to Brookside's employees who were selected through an application process. The Ulyssean elements which include 1) learning, insight and creativity, 2) exploration of the self, 3) growth and development in the later years, 4) meeting change pro-actively, and 5) a zest for living; were introduced through various drama exercises and assignments. The program produced several UP graduates who were transformed by the process. They not only experienced a higher level of vitality both personally and in the workplace, but also played a more significant role in contributing to the activity life of each resident. And finally, I have applied principles of non-fiction playwriting by developing a collection of story songs which were released in a CD entitled, *The Person in the Picture Aint Me*. The purpose of the album is to empower current and potential caregivers to embrace the humanity of individuals who reside in long-term care facilities and to provide them with more quality care. The songs serve to increase the listeners role repertoire by inviting the listener to place himself in the shoes of another. The album is an account of the extraordinary journey I have with many elders I fell in love with. In short, who I am is about compassionate care-giving and adventurous aging. My mission is to inspire others to take a second look. Second glances lead to second chances.

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