

Honestly, I Want to See Us Be Brave

This has been a joyful year. Vacation rentals leading to RV Trips —
One through 8 states to the Final Four – taking things off The List!
My amazing mother turned 90, surrounded by friends and family.

My wonderful James turned 70 in November in Las Vegas
with all five of our amazing kids, their dear spouses and
our four adorable grandkids – I know I am blessed.

But it has been a terrible year for so many – I feel guilty and
heartbroken when I watch the news. And I can't read the paper.

But through it all, I know we have all been astounded
by the amazing courage of firefighters, first responders, rescuers and
volunteers who have restored our faith in each other.

To those bravely keeping us safe, and their families: our thanks.

Bravery...maybe that is what saves us and shakes us free
from our malaise, filling our hearts with hope.

It is in the eyes of my 13-year old dog who struggles to stand up,
but she does because she knows I'm not ready to let her go.

It is the voice of my 90-year old mother who dusts herself off
when I call so we can pretend she is not in pain and all is well.

It is the heart of James' 96-year old mom who smiles as she moves
between kids so she can stay vibrant, active and alive.

It is the eyes of a young mother who enters WINGS the day
before her baby is due – anything to keep him safe.

It is a young mother reaching out to flee an abusive, drug-supplying
boyfriend – doing it to finally save herself and her daughter.

It is asking for help from behind the glass in jail – and meaning it.
Accepting we are powerless against addiction if we are alone.

It is in confidence of a young woman putting aside fear to
take her driving test, her first GED test, or get her diploma.

It is buying a first home for a couple who struggled with addiction.

It is graduating to your own apartment. Bravely leaving the nest.

It is in the eyes of the families stopped at the border. Praying
for a miracle of safety and acceptance in the United States.

It beats in the heart of Beto O'Rourke, who rolled up his
sleeves and took on the Republican machine – in Texas!

It is on the face of a wife whose husband is battling cancer.
And the "I'll be ok" of those who have lost family and friends.

Next year I will take the lessons from the bravery I've seen,
I'll try to be braver and begin and end each day with gratitude.

Maybe we can make small brave steps; speak up, take a stand, reach out.

One person can make such a difference. It is up to us.

As Winnie-The-Pooh says, "You are braver than you believe,
stronger than you feel and smarter than you think."

Allyson & F (James)



For more information on WINGS or to make a donation, please go to www.getwings.net.

WINGS • 2149 W Cascade, #106A, PMB 48 Hood River OR 97031 • www.getwings.net • allyson@getwings.net • www.facebook.com/getwings