

Just A Passing Moment

by Daniel Cox

The sands of time are blown throughout the ages forever lost in the linear flow scattered abroad in a bigger picture. Who knows what accounts of our actions that dictates its course or our own outcome Or are our lives skewed in the web of destiny Woven long ago in ancient history In your younger age, Fate kissed upon your endeavors And coaxed you along in her mysterious night of fancy. Dragged us through the doldrums on a windless day only to deliver us to our graves.

Answers to puzzles on page 15

E	D	O	A	C	M	E	B	O	R	E	S	B	E	A	U	P	L	O	T	E	V	E	N	T	B	E	N	T	N	A	V	A	N	H	E	A	D	Y	M	A	S	T	E	R	S	A	T	A	R	M	S	E	R	I	E	A	L	P	C	O	L	L	E	C	T	I	V	E	F	A	R	M	S	O	P	A	L	S	N	I	L	Y	E	A	H	N	I	P	S	A	D	N	E	S	U	S	A	K	N	E	E	D	I	E	M	E	S	O	N	S	E	L	F	I	M	P	R	O	V	E	M	E	N	T	F	B	I	N	E	A	P	P	R	E	I	N	D	U	S	T	R	I	A	L	F	I	E	N	D	R	E	O	R	E	D	F	I	E	N	D	Y	L	V	E	N	D	E	L	I	D	E	R	E	T	E	N	V	Y	D	E	N	I	M	M	A	S	S	S	T	Y	E
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VENDOR PROFILE Melissa Sayson

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

Melissa Sayson came to Oregon to pay it forward. "I was in the process of getting spinal surgery," Melissa says. "They told me I had a 70 percent chance I wouldn't speak or walk again."

At the same time, her relatives told her about their difficult jobs at a Tualatin home for people with disabilities. When her surgery was a success, Melissa explains, "I specifically came out here to work at that home. To give back to the people who couldn't walk or speak because that could have been me."

Through her initiative, Melissa set about improving the conditions for the residents at the home.

She describes one example: "Before I walked in, they were parked in front of the TV, eating micro-meals. I taught all of my staff how to cook. No more fast food. No more micro-meals. I made a specific menu for the whole company so people could be eating healthy food."

When the area director was fired, Melissa took on even more responsibilities and oversaw company homes from Estacada to Hillsboro. The job was satisfying and stressful.

She says, "I came back to pay it forward and I did well, but I got sick."

With multiple health issues, Melissa eventually landed on the streets.

In spite of setbacks, Melissa says, "I don't let my conditions define who I am. I don't let them determine how my day is going to be. I try to brighten other people's days — it makes me feel good, too."

Melissa describes her life on the streets: "I'm the protector.

"And I make sure that the people who

were heavily on drugs weren't around us. Especially when everybody got pneumonia at the same time. We were all sick. I was making sure everybody had medicine. You know, that's a big job just protecting them. And they get hurt, they get hurt. It's pretty scary out there."

"Street Roots is a good thing because I was considering 'spanging', where people go out to get spare change," Melissa says. "I just couldn't do it. It was just so sad and heartbreaking for me to have to do that because I needed a few dollars."

Melissa and her boyfriend, Brian, began selling Street Roots newspapers. Melissa sells them at Cool Moon near Jamison Square on the corner of Northwest 11th Avenue and Johnson Street. The proximity to the park and ice cream bring a lot of children by Melissa's spot.

"The



children are curious and they want to know what I'm selling," says Melissa. "I tell them it's a paper where people can express their thoughts, and about what's going on in our world and our community. I tell them there are great stories about people just like you, like your mom, like me. I get to tell them, and the parents listen. The parents will give the children the dollar to buy the paper, and I think that is so special."

"We've met a lot of nice people — especially selling Street Roots."

Melissa has hopes for the future.

"I'm looking forward to being housed and taking care of my health," she says. "I'm looking forward to having that safety again and not worrying about who's going to come because we're out in the open."

To that end, Melissa and Brian applied for housing eight months ago with the Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives. They are seeking additional help from the Native American Rehabilitation Association and MacDonald Center.

Melissa also hopes that the housing will allow her 11-year-old son to live with them.

In the meantime, Melissa is volunteering with the Sisters Of The Road Café. She is on their development team as a representative from the community.

"Sisters is a great place," she says. "I love going in there, when it's safe and peaceful. And if it's not, I try to help it become that way."

Melissa sums it up: "I like to make a difference."

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