Community-Wide Read

June – September 2019

— TOOLKIT —
MIFA, the 51-year-old nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the independence of vulnerable seniors and families in crisis, is proud to present its new event—Our City, Our Story. Based on the values of MIFA’s founders and the issues addressed by its programs, the annual public event is designed to inspire, foster unity, and forge community conversation.

For its inaugural year, Our City, Our Story is a suite of three related events that will offer our community the opportunity to explore the realities of homelessness and will highlight award-winning author and compelling advocate for the homeless Kathy Izard of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Community-Wide Read

The Hundred Story Home
A Memoir about Finding Faith in Ourselves and Something Bigger
BY KATHY IZARD

Book clubs, civic groups, congregations, classes, and individuals will read The Hundred Story Home and convene discussions on Kathy’s uplifting story of a call to social action and her personal struggle with faith, forgiveness, and fulfillment.

REGISTER
Join the Community-Wide Read by registering at community.mifa.org and we’ll send you periodic updates.

GET THE BOOK
Purchase The Hundred Story Home at a 10% discount at novel.
Laurelwood Shopping Center
novelmemphis.com

Borrow The Hundred Story Home from Memphis Public Library.
ABOUT THE BOOK

“Kathy Izard tells two compelling stories in one: About her journey toward fulfilling her life’s purpose and about Charlotte’s journey to finally treating its chronically homeless with compassion and dignity. Each has twists and turns, each has a happy ending, and Izard tells each with a style that will captivate readers far beyond her most natural audience.”

— Taylor Batten, The Charlotte Observer

“I LOVE The Hundred Story Home. Kathy Izard is a beautiful writer who has woven her personal life story into an account of her heroic effort to help the homeless. In her book of midlife discovery, she writes not only about creating a community for one hundred homeless adults but also inspires others to do so much more than what they ever thought possible.”

— Mary Dell Harrington, writer and cofounder, Grown & Flown

“Through the narrative of her life, we see Kathy’s triumphs, struggles, and ultimate commitment to something bigger than herself: the call to help those less fortunate. Kathy is a storyteller, philanthropist, and courageous writer throughout these pages and in her life.”

— Anne Neilson, artist and author, Angels in Our Midst and Strokes of Compassion

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathy Izard was a graphic designer, wife, mother of four daughters, and volunteer at Charlotte’s Urban Ministry Center when an unlikely meeting with formerly homeless Denver Moore changed the course of her life. Inspired by Denver’s challenge to do more than serve in this soup kitchen, Kathy quit her job to take on what seemed like an unimaginable task in her second half of life—to build housing for Charlotte’s homeless.

For more, watch Kathy Izard on The Today Show today.com/video (search “Kathy Izard”) and visit Kathy Izard’s website at kathyizard.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

To get your conversation going, here are a few sample questions recommended by Kathy Izard.

• Did getting to know the stories of how people like Coleman and Chilly Willy became homeless make you feel or think differently about homelessness or homeless people? Do you ever feel compelled to stop and talk to a homeless person and learn his or her story? Have you? If not, what holds you back?

• “The idea of renewal and rebirth recurs in the story, from the junkyard that became a home, to each homeless person housed, to my mother’s affinity with the symbol of the Phoenix,” said Kathy. Have you ever been given a second chance? Was there a time in your life when you felt you reinvented yourself to leave something old behind?
• “I often felt guilty for having lived a relatively privileged life,” Kathy admitted. How do you think our social class affects how we see the world? Have you felt uncomfortable with your class or perceived status of having too much or too little?

• “I didn’t want or expect homelessness to be my purpose because it seemed to be such a huge, overwhelming problem, explained Kathy. “I needed to connect with a community that was already doing something about it.” Are you passionate about a cause or an issue affecting your community? How have you acted on that interest? If you haven’t what’s holding you back? Is there a nonprofit you could help or a community you could join that is working for a goal that interests you?

RELATED INFORMATION ON HOMELESSNESS
MIFA’s approach to homelessness - community.mifa.org/mission
“Homelessness” by D. Chere Bradshaw, Executive Director, Community Alliance for the Homeless - community.mifa.org/homelessness
Point in Time Count - an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January - cafth.org/point-in-time
Types of homelessness - cafth.org/definitions

JOIN OUR CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA
@MIFAMemphis on Facebook
@MIFAMemphis on Twitter

If you or your book club participates in the read, please tell us about it!
Example: My book club (name of club or group) is joining with @MIFAMemphis in the Memphis Community-Wide Read of The Hundred Story Home by Kathy Izard.

Tag us using any or all of these hashtags:
#901readsthe100 #memphisreads #ourcityourstory

TRANSFORM YOURSELF AND OUR CITY
Volunteer opportunities are available at these nonprofit organizations that help our homeless population.
Room in the Inn - roomintheinn-memphis.org
Constance Abbey - constanceabbey.org
Door of Hope - doorofhopememphis.org
Dorothy Day House - dorothydaymemphis.org
Hospitality Hub - hospitalityhub.org
Manna House - mannahousememphis.org
Urban Bike Food Ministry - ubfm.net
Volunteer Odyssey - volunteerodyssey.org
KATHY IZARD’S BOOK FOR CHILDREN

With imaginative illustrations by Evelyn Hensen, A Good Night for Mr. Coleman is Kathy’s book for ages 6 to 12 based on the true story of Eugene Coleman, who was homeless for over 20 years in Charlotte, and a young girl determined to help him.

More events featuring Kathy Izard – you’re invited!

Homelessness Here and Now
Tuesday, September 10 at 6 p.m.
Second Baptist Church – 4680 Walnut Grove Rd.
Free admission – tickets required

This forum will feature Izard and a panel of local experts on Memphis-area homelessness, including Chere Bradshaw, executive director of Memphis and Shelby County Community Alliance for the Homeless; Reverend Lisa Anderson, director of Room in the Inn-Memphis; and Paul A. Young, director of the City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development.

Offering a variety of perspectives, the panel will share insight on the challenges, causes, and solutions to homelessness.

Do Good, Love Well Luncheon
Wednesday, September 11 at noon
Holiday Inn University of Memphis – 3700 Central Ave.
Tickets - $50

At this luncheon benefiting MIFA, Izard will share her journey of personal and community transformation that began with a question, “Where are the beds?” and ended with over one hundred formerly homeless people living in homes of their own.
Transform your life and our city
Visit community.mifa.org today.

Volunteer
Find year-round opportunities to serve at community.mifa.org/volunteeropportunities.

Learn
Visit our resource center at community.mifa.org/poverty to learn more about poverty, hunger, and homelessness in our community.

Give
See all the ways you can help make MIFA’s high-impact programs possible at community.mifa.org/ways-to-give.

Celebrate
Support all MIFA does for our vulnerable neighbors by donating your birthday at mifa.org/birthday.