

## Every Day Miracles A Purple Heart

She walked in the door and looked around, trying to remember. She knew she had been here once before and she looked for something that would jog her memory, but it had been so long ago.

Lanie hung up her coat and put her shoes on the rack, then sat quietly while the papers were filled out. She smiled shyly for her picture, then giggled when she saw her image reflected in the camera screen. She was glad she didn't have to answer any questions, though. She wasn't ready for that.

When Lanie walked into the playroom, Jazzy ran to greet her. She was excited to make a new friend and it didn't take long for the two girls to settle in with a stack of books. Lanie was perfectly content to read story after story to the children who gathered around her.

Lanie loved school, she loved to read and she loved to learn. She was only nine years old, but already was making plans to be a vet when she grew up. When someone asked her what grade she was in, she quietly answered that she was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but she was reading at a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.

Lanie would be at Blessing House a couple of weeks. She came to stay with us because of a difficult situation that occurred in her home. Lanie had experienced something that no child should have to experience and at least for a little while, she would need to be separated from her family.

Every morning, Lanie woke up with a smile and asked who would be doing her hair. She loved to have her hair done and being fussed over. She was one of those children who never argued, never said a cross word to anyone and did everything she was asked to do.

The perfect child.

But this young girl who loved to play with dolls, color pictures and make crafts had been forced to abandon her childhood at times, and enter a world that was confusing and frightening. Her mom was trying to raise her and her siblings with little help and so Lanie often found herself being the mom and trying to keep everything in order. She loved her mom so much and just wanted to make her happy.

But now here she was at Blessing House. Sr. Mary showed Lanie the picture they took of her when she was just three years old and had stayed at the house. Lanie was fascinated because she had not seen very many pictures of herself when she was little. She told Ms. Ethel she really liked being at Blessing House and hoped she could stay a long time.

Lanie arrived back at Blessing House after a long week of school and a meeting with her counselor. She was hungry and happy to see Miss Pat working in the kitchen. She knew that meant another good meal.

"Miss Donna, look at my pictures. Which do you like better, the purple one or the red one?"

I looked at my choices and picked the purple one and Lanie agreed she liked that one, too.

Then I looked more closely and noticed that the picture had a heart that she colored purple.

A purple heart.  
A heart that was wounded.  
But is strong and is hopefully now on the mend.

Lanie still wasn't ready to talk and still didn't want to be asked questions. But that's OK.  
For now, it's just good enough that she can relax and tease Miss Pat while everyone sits around the table putting puzzles together. For now, it's ok to just be a kid.

The picture with the purple heart would go in her go home bag with the rest of the things Lanie made while she was at Blessing House.

Maybe she will keep it to remind her of happy times with new friends.  
Maybe it will remind her of a place where people laugh and tell her she is beautiful.

Maybe it will help her heal.