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Lion Gail Hamilton is making a Difference

Lion Gail--author, speaker and performer—is making a difference in Colorado and in her Englewood Lions club. Gail is nudging her fellow lions to take up arms within the blind community as Helen Keller did eighty seven years ago. “We as Lions have a challenge to make a difference in the lives of our community and especially those who are visually impaired or blind. I challenge the lions to be the voice of the blind and reach out and make a difference in their communities. Some club projects which would have great significance are: \* Assist the blind with transportation; \* Employ a visually impaired person; \* Help lobby for new legislation to change the digital technology to add voice and make the world accessible to work and play.”

Lion Gail has not always been this outspoken. No, quite the opposite. Gail’s story begins when she was born two-and-a-half months premature. Weighing two and a half pounds, Lion Gail’s eyes were damaged by too much oxygen being placed into her incubator leaving her with Retrolental Fibro Plasia. Partially sighted, Gail grew up believing her Blindness was the fault of her doctors and her mother’s drinking and smoking. She was withdrawn, angry, fearful, and disconnected. Being abused by her father and becoming totally blind at eleven with cataracts, Gail had nothing to look forward to and closed her eyes to the world, not wanting to be a part of it.

Gail’s Grandmother provided love and hope while music grounded and allowed Gail to express her inner Self. After high school Gail embarked on a career as a concert singer and had scores of successful performances including the lead as Mimi in “La Boheme” and Violetta in “La Traviata”. Gail entered a doctorate program in voice and faced discrimination and negativity which stifled her creativity and she eventually left the program.

Gail’s life hit rock bottom when her romantic relationship crumbled. She gave up her music, dreams, and autonomy for the hopes of being loved. She was incapable of making decisions, stating her needs, saying “no” or speaking her truth. Gail gave away her body, mind, spirit, and emotions. When her life partner announced “separation,” she was devastated. With no reconciliation in sight, Gail became depressed and suicidal.

Through psychotherapy, Gail began to heal and to love her whole Self. She discovered she had a reason for being. She wanted to tell her story and speak her truth. As Gail chronicled, within three months her mother suddenly died, she had several surgeries including both her eyes removed, and had to sell her beloved house. Letting go of the old beliefs, visions, creativities and connections, Gail was forced to embrace the new.

Through her Life’s journey, Gail has learned to speak her truth, face her fears, and feel her feelings. Gail’s desire to fly is bigger than her fear of falling. She has choice about how she looks at life. She can be paralyzed and victimized by her circumstances, or empowered by them. Gail chooses empowerment. Vision is internal, not external, and is guided by her heart, not her eyes. In order to fly, Gail has to “live her dreams, and fly on her wings.”

Today, Gail lives in a Habitat for Humanity home which she helped build herself; she is months away from publishing her life’s story in a book entitled, “Wings to Fly, a Story of Truth, Determination and Victory;” and she has put together a CD and DVD entitled, “Singing on Wings of Love.” This summer she will give a professional speech/voice concert/book signing/celebration and welcomes all Lions to attend and bring their friends.

… Lion Gail has been a lion for seven months and is imploring all fellow lions to stand up and continue Helen Keller’s 1925 Lions International Convention quest. “Today, we the blind still implore Lions to assist us in achieving options, creativity, and spontaneity. We want equality and independence. \* Only thirty percent of the visually impaired population is employed. \* Transportation to work or for leisure is inconvenient and often time consuming. \* Devices which are digital (Surround sounds, DVDs, radios, stoves, etc. are inaccessible. These are issues for the ‘knights of the blind’ to take up arms and fight against. Let’s work together to make a world where the blind are truly on equal footing with their sighted peers. We the blind don’t want knights to rescue us, we want knights to walk with us in dignity and honor. Let’s all walk together, take action and make a difference in our communities. The question is what can each lion do Today to assist a visually impaired person? As Helen Keller said, ‘Will you not constitute yourselves as Knights of the blind in this crusade against darkness?’”