

February 14, 2006

Dear Clients, Friends and Family,

A New Year! I now start every year with personal reflections and a little inspiration. This year I've been musing on the "heroes" in my life, and people who make a difference in the world.

The amazing thing is that my personal heroes and heroines aren't the larger than life folks that are on TV or in the papers. The heroines in my life turned out to be those people close to me, who have made a difference in a quiet, daily way. Yes, Oprah touches many lives. Yes, Bono from U2, who received Time magazine's "Man of the Year" award, uses his fame to make a difference in the world. However, it is those people who I know personally, the ones that have the courage and vision to make a difference in the world daily, that I am the most touched by.

Gina La Cerva, Victor's (my fiancé) eldest daughter, went to Indonesia after the Tsunami with a research team to study villages that survived and create evacuation plans so that more people might survive the next one. Rosa (Victor's younger daughter) is a cross country, state champion, despite debilitating asthma.

It is my father, Manuel Garcia, who has steadily and consistently has been there for my son, who lost his father when he was only 3. My father's love and presence has helped fill the gap for Isaac, in helping him navigate the journey to becoming a man.

Pat French, the previous owner of French & French Fine Properties, now devotes her real estate expertise to a good cause. She is using the funds from homes she is selling towards rebuilding homes in Indonesia. Pat has built 9 homes already, and has plans to build many more.... It has changed her life and filled it with gratitude.

To my friends who have fought cancer, or are fighting it with dignity and grace; to my friends and family members who have lost a loved one, and have the courage to continue living with hope and love, despite the enduring loss; to my fellow business associates who walk in the world offering warmth and kindness in addition to professionalism, and simply to those who get up everyday with a desire to make a difference. I give my thanks to all for their inspiration.

As the Dalai Lama says, **"If we can all work to make a difference in our 5 mile radius, we will change the world."** I salute the people in my 5 mile radius who try to do this every day. It is by taking one step at a time that we reach the mountain top. I've also enclosed an article from Outside Magazine with stories about 25 people who did make a difference in 2005 that was great.

Hope and blessings,

Emily Ivette Garcia