Little Madhouse on the Prairie

A True-Life Story of Overcoming Abuse and Healing the Spirit

The Story Behind the Story by Marion Witte

I was one of the many children who grow up in abusive situations. I consider myself lucky, because although the odds were totally stacked against me, I escaped many of the afflictions that befall abused children. I did not wind up in a mental institution. I never spent any time in prison. I did not turn into a child abuser. I freely admit that I struggled with addictive behavior and major psychological issues as a direct result of my childhood experiences. And I spent a lot of time, energy and financial resources on my recovery.

It took me a long time to decide to tell my story, primarily because I was waiting for an answer to my question, "Do I have the right to publish this material?" Then one day, in a moment of absolute clarity, my concerns ended. I realized that if I could participate in saving one child's life, then I did not have the right to stay silent. At that moment, this book and my story became both my gift and my obligation.

As I began to relay my experiences in my memoir, I started to wonder if the lives of children were intended to involve this level of struggle. I decided the answer to that question was "no," and I gradually came to accept the responsibility I had to share my experiences with others in the spirit of education and in the hope for change.

And during the writing process, I made a promise to myself that I would do what I could to make the world a better place for all children. I sold my business to create **The Angel Heart Foundation** and devote the rest of my life to raising our consciousness about the rights of children.

My story started out about childhood abuse, the effects of that mistreatment, and the ways one can heal from those wounds. Ultimately it became so much more.

The events I chronicle in *Little Madhouse on the Prairie* are the reason I make my impassioned plea for everyone to get involved in insuring that the planet's youngest citizens are afforded their basic human rights. For I firmly believe that "All Children Deserve a Safe and Just World."