



**Reagan Liebovitz-Smith
Maryland, USA
Peace Journey**

**Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation
www.MattieOnline.com**



Begin the Journey – Peace Club Teen (and)

Choice 1:

Peace Seeker – Reflect on Mattie's Message

August 2013 -- Beginning Peace Thought (and) Peace Post on *Just Peace: A Message of Hope*

Dear Mama Peace,

When I think of a Peace Plan or a project I would like to do there are so many wonderful projects that people are doing. I have helped bring fresh water to Africa, I have fed the poor, I have volunteered at inner city childcare centers. You hear so much about breast cancer or Juvenile Diabetes. Again, these are worthy causes but I want to do something that doesn't get much attention. And I decided I want to help people and raise awareness about people with disabilities. It is not just because of my sister (who has a disability). I would choose this anyway.

I am not sure what this project will look like yet, but I thought about having a fundraiser and having "influential " people sponsored and they'd have to spend a day in a wheelchair. Or maybe something like Habitat for Humanity – gather volunteers to build ramps in the most needed places. I came to Maryland from Texas. The buildings there are newer and there seems to be so many things built in so people with wheelchairs can easily enter restaurants, stores, schools, etc. Up here in Bethesda, I was shocked that I had to open the door for my sister or sometimes we would not go someplace because of stairs. Sometimes we couldn't get to a public restroom!

When we ride the metro we do not get to stay with the mainstream riders. We have to walk down a long dark corridor to get to the elevator so we can get to the metro level. One time a bus driver turned us away because Katie's wheelchair didn't collapse. Ignoring people and their basic needs like transportation or not being able to enter the building you live in creates even more shame – like you're not worthy enough or worth the extra effort just because you are in a wheelchair. You are a human being just like everyone else.

I say all this because in Mattie's poem "**I Am...**" in his *Celebrate Through Heartsongs* book and in his *Just Peace: A Message for Hope* book, there was a line that said "I am hiding from my shame"

Let's bring it out in the open so there is no shame.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE →

I want to create better ramps, pass mandatory laws that build and serve those with disabilities, especially for those in wheelchairs and parks for children who are in wheelchairs. Bring it all out in the open so there is no shame. Each and every person treat each other more humanistically, and equally.

I am going to continue to consider my project but I think I am going to start soliciting "influencers" to spend some time in a wheelchair.

I am very enthusiastic about the Teen Peace Journey and cannot wait to get even more involved. I am still settling into school but hope to be more settled soon so that I can do even more.

My Peace Journey begins today 8/29/13.

**Peace,
Reagan**



UPDATE – April 2015



I am sending lots of love.(from the photo-is for you) After living on the east coast now for 3 years, I finally visited NYC! I thought these signs in the city are so cool:) I had Mattie's heart songs in my heart while I was there.



UPDATE – May 2015



I am working on my project, and it is dedicated to Mattie J.T. Stepanek.

Why do I want to be a social entrepreneur?

Living with a sister suffering from a chronic disease, I often feel helpless and wonder what I can do to help. It's overwhelming to think about all the children in the world affected by various health problems, as well as the grief and hardship their families' experience.

Most of the time my excuse for inaction is that I'm not a doctor and that the only solution for my sister is in a medicine. However, my reasoning is incorrect because there is so much more I do for her every day.

I'm patient, supportive, loving, and hopeful. Still there is more I can do for her and others, and I would like to explore my options and eventually make a plan that leads to action. Whether I help locals or people across the world, I will be satisfied knowing that I am somehow making a difference. I'd like to explore all different kinds of medical problems and work on supporting both the family and the one suffering, emotionally and physically.

I am ready to give my time and effort to helping those in need. I would love to do it with the guidance and support of Holton Social Entrepreneurs next year and dedicate what I learn to helping people for the rest of my life.

Please see the video introduction my mom sent to learn more.



Choice 2:

Peace Maker – Respond to Mattie’s Message

Month Year -- Project Plan: **TITLE**

Choice 3:

Peace Bringer – Reach Out with Mattie’s Message, and Yours!

Month Year -- Project Plan: **TITLE**

Celebrate the Journey – Teen Peace Ambassador

Month Year -- Celebration Peace Thought: