

# KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

Ken and the Practice of Tkkun Olam

*Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.  
To keep our faces towards change and  
behave like free spirits in the presence of fate  
is strength undefeatable. Let us have faith.*

*—Helen Keller*



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This image honors Ken Berg and his family who have created a world that works for Ken in defiance of so many obstacles stacked against him.

This is Ken in a playful dance with the chickens and eggs at the Adriance Farm in Queens where he is responsible for the gathering, washing, drying and packaging of the eggs produced by the farm hens and other jobs required on a busy farm.

Like the blossoming trees outside of his window at home and work, Ken is growing strong in alignment with his purpose: to make a difference in a place that needs his gifts. Ken and his family have created the keys to his kingdom, a beloved community filled with allies who align their energy to serve the earth and each other. On this 200 year old working farm in New York City, Ken practices the art of *tikkum olam* with his co-workers.

The most broadly understood notion of *tikkun olam* is that of repairing the world through human actions. Humanity's responsibility to change, improve, and fix its earthly surroundings is powerful. It implies that each person has a hand in working towards the betterment of his or her own existence as well as the lives of future generations. *Tikkun olam* encourages people to take ownership of their world. Ken contributes his part.

At every stage of his life, Ken continues to surprise everyone with his growing capacity to be included in community life. His story inspires. He has continually defied the odds stacked against him.

101" X 79"

2011

LIVES OF DISTINCTION:  
ALL OF US COUNT AND ALL OF US FIT  
SOMEWHERE

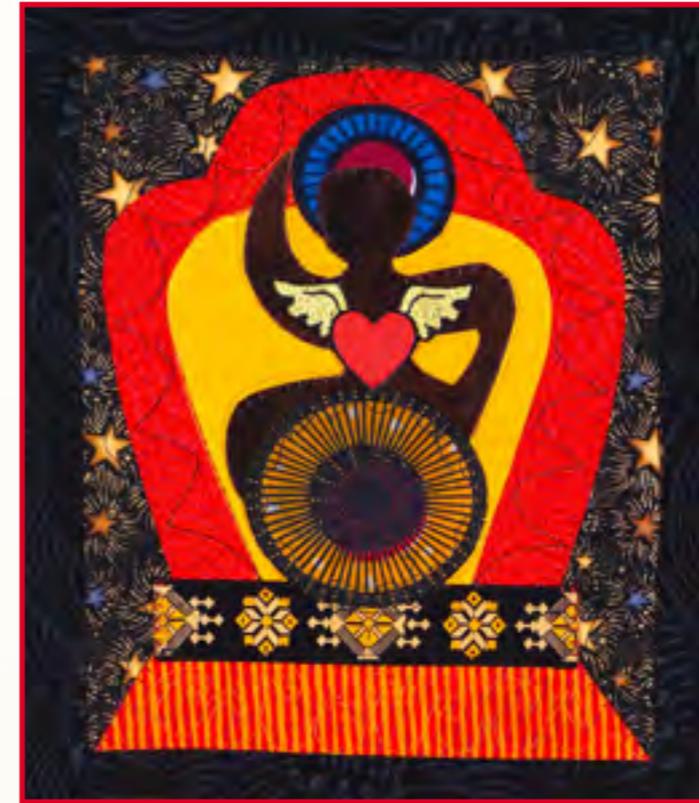
*Each single one of us is said to be of infinite worth....  
each single one of us is a God carrier,  
each one of us God's viceroy.  
Can you imagine if we really believed that?*

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*



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Lives of Distinction puts forth the vision that every person has a distinctive contribution to make to the world. When we discover and develop these contributions, and make connections between people and places in the community, these contributions become visible, and people's lives are enriched. Consequently, people marginalized by others are no longer seen as different. Instead, they can live lives of distinction, as people admired and respected by others.



[Read a booklet about supporting lives of distinction.](#)

*120" x 77.5"*

*2007*

# WAYMARKS TO HOPE

*I can hardly imagine living without hope. As for the future of the world, there is a colorful spectrum of possibilities, from the worst to the best. What will happen, I do not know. Hope forces me to believe that those better alternatives will prevail, and above all it forces me to do something to make them happen.*

*Vaclav Havel*



Water is an eternal symbol of regeneration, renewal, and hope. Self-advocates with developmental disabilities in Westchester, New York, made these images to describe ways that they bring hope and renewal to their communities when they have the support to contribute. Waymarks are signs and symbols to help one stay on the right path. These artists have become guardians of hopeful journeys for each other, and they are holding the organization that supports them to a covenant of hope.

*In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed... It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.*

—Ella Baker

77" x 86.5"

2007



# BE DETERMINED TO LIVE YOUR DREAMS

*In my vision I imagine I am a person who looks like a gospel singer and a holy person. I see a big sun in the sky with rays shining down on the man. He has a cross around his neck and a Bible in his hand. His other hand is a fist of power, like the “in your face” power people have in the National Action Network. The man has sandals on his feet, because like Moses, God says to take off your shoes when you are walking on holy ground. He is walking on holy ground which is nice and filled with flowers, but it also has rocks on it, because the journey is a rough one. This is an image of me holding onto my dream, and leading others on the path of self-determination.*

—Tony Phillips



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Creating a vision together can wake up the imagination, commitment, and voice of small circles of people and guide their action to shape a community that recognizes and receives the gifts that people bring.



60" x 45"

2003

Read Tony's thoughts on *Standing Up For Myself*

<http://tinyurl.com/Standing-Up-for-Myself>

ADDIE'S GLORY SHAWL

*Give people light and they will find a way.*  
—Ella Baker



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Addie Banks is the first African American Woman to be ordained in the Mennonite church. Addie builds a Beloved Community through her service to the King of Glory Tabernacle Church in the South Bronx, New York City. A circle of women from the Bronx and Mennonite churches transformed a thrift shop skirt into the Glory Shaw which was presented to Addie at her ordination in 2011. The reshaping of the skirt into the Glory Shawl serves as metaphor for the powerful ways that Addie helps others revision their lives from trauma towards grace.

