

Discovering White Privilege:

A Series of Difficult Stories

by

Tammy Blumhardt

A PROJECT

submitted to Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in English (Honors Scholar)

Presented June 6, 2006
Commencement June 18, 2006

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This project combines service learning with narrative writing (fiction and non-fiction) as an effective tool for the discovery and communication of social understanding; more specifically, the project discusses white privilege in literary form. Four short stories and seven vignettes, drawn from service learning experience over the course of three years, are used as a tool for academics beyond the classroom. These narrative pieces are directed toward any audience of students. Intended to move beyond what students learn in textbooks about statistics, the stories reveal the abstract ideas of white privilege in a tangible and personal way. These stories and vignettes, developed from the definitive ideas of Peggy McIntosh on the concept of white privilege in combination with real-life service experiences, introduce examples of the blindnesses from which most Caucasian students suffer. They then reveal what can be seen as examples of oppression within various situations, including those of education, child health care, poverty in relation to home environments, violence, financial stereotyping, and the titles children of color give to members of the white race.

Key words: White Privilege, Race, Service Learning, Story-telling

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For Donovan,
in hope for justice.