



Cristina Powell

I'm Cristina Powell. In 1988, when I was four days old, I was adopted from Lima, Peru. At fifteen months, I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and a movement disorder...not expected to walk or talk...thankfully, I do both!

I first started painting in sixth grade...my art teacher discovered my talent and made it come alive. When I look at each painting, I can't believe it's my very own artwork! I'm impressed to see how much I can do, including making others happy, like my friends at the retirement homes. I also like to write verses for my cards and special words to comfort people.

I like to reach out to people, especially in hospitals and the medical community, with my main focus on cancer, heart disease and pain. I do this through my art, a kind hello and a gentle smile with patients, their families/friends, and staff. This makes me feel good and people say it gives them hope and inspiration. I'm very thankful and proud of what I can do.

Please don't tell yourself, "I can't!" I just know there has to be **a better way** for you. All you need to do is **trust yourself and believe in yourself**. You may not know it, but it's leading you to... **a brighter way**.

I needed to learn in **a special way**, because I didn't fit the other way of learning, so...I needed to find my own... **brighter way**. We finally got creative...believed in ourselves...and opened my own school. This allowed me...to be myself...to learn my way...and helped me grow into a better person. My talents became more alive through home schooling.

Just to let you know...this is my painting, called... "**A Brighter Way.**" When I painted this in my art class...it took the teacher by surprise... and me, too! She said, "You have talent!" Can you believe...I now have forty paintings?...I can't!!!



I compare my life to a flower...blossoming and blooming...bright and cheerful...with lots of color, like my painting... "**A Brighter Way.**" My mom and I like to say...our lives are like a garden... **always changing and challenging**, but full of **color, love, and happiness**.

When you read this story, I hope you can see and feel... **my brighter way**.

Don't forget: We are all unique, but we are the same. I walk slower and I may talk slower, but I am really just like you.

 Cristina Powell
A Brighter Way