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One Woman's Journey into Raising Money

by Nathalie Sorrell, Co-Founder of Truth Be Told

In 2000, the first year of what would become Truth Be Told, Carol and I drove back and forth to Lockhart to teach the Talk to Me Class. My husband, Jim Walsh, footed the bill. Adding up our costs for gasoline and supplies, we found we'd spent about \$750. So I asked my church, Tarrytown Baptist (now called the Sanctuary*) if they'd donate funds to help us with this powerful work.

Tarrytown voted to give us \$1000, which got us through 2001. By December, we sent letters to everyone who seemed interested in our work, and a few we thought might help if they knew what we

were doing. Letters became our method of fundraising, along with donations from churches who contributed occasionally for the next few years: Riverbend Singles Group, Oak Hill Baptist, St Hildegard's and the Journey have all helped us out. In 2002, Suzanne Armistead joined Carol and me, and showed us the power of dance and movement for healing the women we serve.

Our classes expanded, and so did our need for a broader base of support.

The board we formed in July 2003 decided it was necessary to have more serious fundraising if we wanted to expand our program beyond a few women driving to Lockhart to help a limited number of inmates learn transformational tools. By November, we became a 501C3 non-profit.

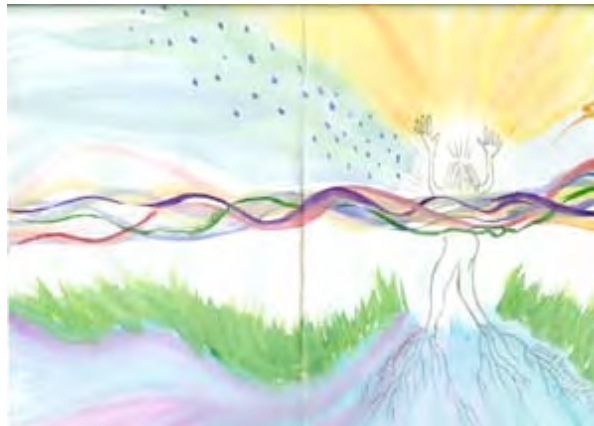
Early in 2004, our visionary goals included developing a Model Program that would become available to women in all Texas prisons by 2014. We wanted to provide coach/mentors for all graduates of our program, along with packets of information about the community into which they were released, to aid them in re-entering our communities as contributing citizens. We were raising money through sporadic, heart-felt letters and opportunities to speak in public, but we needed to raise more.

Bobby Miser, a Board member who drove from Houston to Austin monthly to support this work, became the donor who made it possible for 6 Board members to attend the Raising More Money (RMM, now called Benevon) fundraising training in Dallas. The RMM training required the "visionary leader" to be on the team. Our board determined that was me, though Carol and Suzanne prompted the vision by seeing what TBT could become when I didn't.

The rest is history. We learned about the power of evoking volunteers through a process that

involves NOT asking for money except once a year at a free lunch Fundraiser. We developed a creative program so effective, heart-felt and prompt (1 hour start to finish) that any busy person could attend and not miss much of their work, while their heart and eyes were being opened to the power of our work.

The Conductor by Celest Monet Blair



This has been Truth be Told's method up to now. It has made us able to do what we are gifted to do, and allowed others to come and participate using their unique gifts: behind bars with us, beyond bars with our graduates upon release, and building the bridge soundly that our women walk over to freedom. Our gratitude is HUGE for each of you who read this newsletter and support us with your prayers, your love, talents, and financial offerings, which have made it possible for this work to grow. You have become trustworthy bridge builders!

Truth be told, I can't wait to see your face light up when you witness our TBT graduates speaking their truth at our 4th annual free luncheon, October 14th.

** We are an open-minded and open-hearted service organization. Anyone can join us in serving women whether they are practicing Christianity, Judaism, Native American spirituality, Buddhism, 12- step spirituality or something that doesn't have a name.*

TBT Fundraiser Question & Answer

How do people find out about the fundraiser luncheon and about how many people attend?

People find out about the luncheon from emails sent out to our data base, newsletters, but mostly from the model that RMM set in place: Table Captains. Each Captain invites people to sit at his/her table with him/her, for the luncheon and to experience the one-hour event. The goal is to have the Captain bring 9 guests, so that there is a table of 10. Our first year we set a goal to serve and inspire 100 people. On the day of the event, we had 133 attend. We broke the RMM records by adding instead of losing committed people on the last days. In 2006 and 2007 we had about 200 guests. This year, we are aiming for 250 attendees.

What are the different sources of funding for the Truth Be Told organization?

Our primary source of funding is through private donations (individuals). We have the Voices of Truth Society, 12 individuals who have committed to give from \$1000 - \$10,000 per year for 5 years. And we have other individuals who donate each year when they are able, or when funds are sought for specific needs. We also seek funding from grants, foundations, and churches.

How is the fundraiser luncheon important in the overall fund raising goal of TBT?

The luncheon is our primary fundraising tool. We do not ask for money at any other event, although this year we added a Spring art auction, which we plan to hold annually. Our luncheon is crucial to the growth of our organization, and to

Plans for this year's raised funds include (in no particular order):

- ⇒ Training Film for Model Program
- ⇒ Fundraising Video
- ⇒ Volunteer Coordinator
- ⇒ Office Space
- ⇒ Written Curriculum and Training Module for volunteers that want to teach in other prisons.
- ⇒ Educational Video for schools with children whose parents are in prison, and for our graduates to take home and share with their families to aid in transition and communication

reaching the goals we've set to reach by 2014. We are having a "growth spurt" right now. Last year we were able to hire our first full-time staff member, Rutanya Pearson, Chief Operating Officer. Part of her job was to help raise money for her salary. With Rutanya in place, TBT has become better structured and more organized, and we are well on our way to reaching our goals.

What costs are associated with hosting the luncheon?

The past three years we have found volunteers and people that have blessed us with cheerful, excellent work behind the scenes, and cut-rate prices. Our first year, we served items from Sam's. We

had more people show up than we anticipated, so a run to the local Albertson's was made and a few guests got frozen chicken in their salad. (We're still embarrassed about that!) The Lockhart women behind bars made our decorations. The board and volunteers did the set up and take down. Our invitations and all of our printed materials were donated by a graphic artist and a local law firm and its printing company that comped the printing. We held our first event in a local church, for a total cost of \$1000.00. For 2006/2007 we had a caterer, more volunteers for decorating, set-up and clean-up, and our budget was \$2500. This year we are seeking donations to underwrite the cost of the luncheon. If you can help, please see the page 8 for more information about donations.

How have funds from the fundraiser luncheon been used in the past?

We have a 4-part program behind bars at one prison and a new program at one jail. The funding we raise goes to implement our programs; pay for supplies for classes and workshops, partial gasoline costs for the 1 hour drives back and forth from Austin to

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Day in my Life at Lockhart Prison.

I sleep on a concrete slab right on top of an air conditioner. In the winter, the heat is on and sometimes I feel like a rotisserie chicken. In the summer, it's very cold and I've had visions of maybe this is how the man I hit and killed laid in the morgue. On a cold concrete slab. Morbid thought? Yes. Haunting? Yes. But true.

Somehow, by the grace of GOD only, I can separate myself from my actions and reality of where they've led me, and sleep at night. For which I am very grateful.

... I'm not an advocate for prison. In fact, I've seen things with my eyes I wish I'd never seen. Reality of life and reality of where wrong choices of our own or of the company we kept have led us. It is what you make it. As stoic as it seems, it's true. Life is our perception of it. What was intended for my punishment has been my greatest awakening. Tightening bonds and securing relationships. Which, as I write this, comes the fleeting, take my breath completely away, pounding heart, break out in a misty sweat feeling ... of how truly blessed I am.

Would I have learned or kept the feeling of all these lessons I so tightly hold on to now had I not come to prison? In all reality I cannot answer that question ... I do know that every morning I wake up and set my feet upon cold concrete of this cell...is another day my family goes without my constant help and love ... Some things are just what they are. Prison can happen anywhere, physically or emotionally and freedom, my friend, can even be found inside a prison.

Written by E. H., whose goal is to share her story about driving while intoxicated in hopes of preventing others from following in her footsteps.

Layton Blaylock, local film producer, creates TBT video

Truth Be Told...a Story that's Worth Getting Out

Layton Blaylock, local director, producer and director of photography, is working with Truth Be Told to create an informational video that will help spread the TBT programs to other prisons. The two hour video, which will be completed this winter, will convey how the TBT classes are run and will be included in the model program toolkit for TBT. A DVD of the film and the manual of the TBT curriculum will be educational materials for volunteers who are interested in starting the program in other prisons.

A volunteer saw Layton's recently produced award-winning documentary, "Art From the Streets," and recommended TBT contact Layton for this project. Layton was impressed with the mission of TBT and the women that run the program. *"I'm excited to be working on this project that has a story that is worth getting out. The staff at Truth Be Told have been great to work with and I am happy to be involved on*

this film for a worthy cause." Carol Waid and Hope Malkan worked hard to get permission from prison officials to take a film crew into the prison. The project has scheduled six days of filming that will include scenes of classes in the prison and meaningful segments of what TBT does and how they go about doing it. An educational video for graduates to take home and schools to use will also come from this filming.

Layton is also producing a separate short fundraising video for the October fundraiser.

Layton's award-winning career as a filmmaker has spanned over 30 years and many films, videos, commercials, TV shows, and more. For more information about Layton and his work, visit his website at www.laytonblaylock.com.

Drab White Walls

by
Celest Monet Blair

Painting with watercolors
in the dayroom one day
craving better aesthetics than
the drab white walls provided

I peered across the room
and was overcome with inspiration

...one lady sat quietly with her nose buried deep in her Bible

...at another table two young ladies sat with school books before them
and although they were equals
one tutored the other with love

My senses tingled as GOD SHOWED ME
COLORFUL WOMEN
WITH BRIGHT FUTURES
only temporarily within
drab white walls.

Truth Be Told seeks Volunteer Coordinator!

Truth Be Told is looking for a Volunteer Coordinator whose duties will include:

- Acting as primary contact for people who are interested in getting involved with Truth Be Told
- Speaking with potential volunteers about their interests and how much time they are willing to give
- Ensuring volunteers are properly trained to serve in their area of interest
- Planning and organizing periodic volunteer training sessions
- Ensuring that volunteers complete all necessary legal documents
- Maintaining regular communication with our volunteer base
- Organizing groups of volunteers as needed for specific events or tasks
- Tracking volunteer hours by gathering data monthly from our volunteers

If you are interested in helping TBT in this way, please call the TBT office at 512-292-6200 or email office@truth-be-told.org.

TBT Fundraiser Question & Answer

Continued from page 3

Lockhart; pay staff who organize and support this work; and pay for the database and other expenses that are part of building a bridge from behind bars to beyond bars for the over 1009 women who have been served by TBT's volunteers.

How does more funding help the overall long term goals of TBT?

We cannot make our program available to volunteers in other parts of the state if we don't have a training program and materials to share with interested volunteers. We can't provide individualized packets of information all over the state without the funding to publicize our work and find volunteers or hire researchers to get information that is up to date and user friendly for our graduates. The same is true about finding and training coaches to work with our graduates as they are released into communities all over Texas.

We cannot stay in touch with our graduates when they are released without funding for staff and database to answer phone calls, collect information, provide reunions and transportation costs for our graduates to come refresh their tools, and to use the skills they've learned in our prison classes as volunteers building safer, saner communities on the outside.

Truth Be Told Welcomes new Board Member Susan Grosse

Susan was attracted to TBT after dealing with cancer for a year and a half and living a life focused on herself internally. Her husband, president of the Rotary Club, found out about Truth Be Told and they both attended a graduation at Del Valle prison. In Susan's words, the experience was *"amazing, goose bumpy and life changing."* Susan was impressed to witness women dealing with issues in their lives with hope and energy that doesn't exist in day-to-day life. It took her out of herself immediately and when Ruth Talbot, current board member, approached her to consider being a board member, she said yes right away.

Susan feels blessed to be asked to be part of the organization as the new Fundraising Chair. She has a background in real estate, training, and motivational speaking, and has worked on other boards of various non-profits, and has previously planned fundraisers. Susan brings experience in the business aspects of running an organization and will be focusing on helping TBT achieve their organizational and fiscal goals. *"My goal is to make the organization fiscally responsible so that the work in the prisons can*

continue and other folks can focus on the programs for prisoners. My strengths are in the organizational parts of the program," says Susan.

Susan is helping plan a Silent Auction Fundraiser scheduled for next March. They will be collecting donated art, jewelry and other items dealing with the theme of "Creativity", such as personal pampering, fine dining, etc. **Susan is looking for people to help with the auction planning.** If you are interested, please give her a call at 267-1808. The funds raised will help to create training manuals so that the TBT programs can be duplicated in other prisons. A video is currently being produced highlighting the message and programs of TBT.

"Every time I get together with the women of TBT, the energy and focus of these women really changes my perspective on life," says Susan. *"It's changing my life being in contact with the women who are organizing this group that changes the lives of prisoners."* TBT gladly welcomes Susan as she applies her lively energy, intelligence and unique skills to the board.



Melinda Cook with her handmade quilt commemorating 3 years since her release from prison.

Carol's Column

by Carol Waid, Founder and Director of Beyond Bars Program

"I hang out in jail and prison," is how I answer the question, "What do you do?" It does grab ones' attention. I am grateful and proud to share about the 8 years that I have spent walking into the Lockhart Prison Facility, sharing some of the most *real* moments of my life with women on a journey of healing.

This last week TBT has had the opportunity to film our classes, for the first time ever. Layton Blaylock and his crew came in to capture the uniqueness of each class' personality, as well as the different styles we use to teach the three C's: Community Building, Communication Skills, and Creativity. As I witnessed the facilitators and participants of the class move through a few minutes of awkwardness, with the cameras, sound and light equipment and the crew, and then right into opening their hearts and their vulnerability -- I cried and I laughed.

Each woman who chose to participate in the filming went through a process of signing documents and getting an understanding of how the film would be used, knowing that their stories, their lives, were going to be seen and heard by many. These women are not actresses and they were not reading a script, portraying others' lives. They bared their souls and their transgressions, not only being witnessed by strangers, but also being filmed. Why? Why would they "choose" to do this? Well, I wondered the same thing, until Amy approached me after the 2-½ hour filming session had come to an end.

"This is my second time in prison and the second go-round of being in a TBT class. I am not proud of this, but it has taken this time here to get me to where I am now." She continued to tell me that we could interview her and use her story to get the TBT programs into all prisons. *"This program is needed!"* she said. Her grief and her passion was dripping onto her blue scrubs, as she voiced how she wanted to live differently and would do what it took to continue her healing. I love her for her courage.

If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen.

--Loretta Girzartis

Over 40 women made a choice to be part of this filming, which will be used for 3 separate videos:

- to help train volunteers that want to take a TBT class into a prison near them;
- to be used as an educational tool for schools where children have parents in prison;
- and also as a DVD for our graduates to watch with their families, helping them discuss events in their lives that were never talked about before.

We see these films being used as a tool, just like those we use in our classrooms, to face the truths of the past and to look forward to the future.

Nathalie Sorrell took the nudge from God to enter the Lockhart facility in February of 2000 and 8 ½ years later Truth Be Told has 6 trained facilitators and two that are presently in training. We have a program at the Del Valle unit and requests that have been made, from other units and volunteers.

Nathalie reached out her hand to me, encouraged me to tell my story to the 15 women of her class. One of the participants came to me, whispered a word of encouragement to me, which would change the path of my life. That woman, among many others, made an attempt to understand a lonely person like me, and extraordinary things began to happen. The rest is history.

Board of Directors and Staff

Jackie Borcharding, *Chair of the Board*
Alison Brock, *Media and PR liaison*
Debbie Stover, *Project Manager*
Glenda Stover, *Beyond Bars team*
Ruth Talbot, *Public Relations Chair*
Susan Grosse, *Fundraising Chair*

Carol Waid,
Founder and Director of Beyond Bars
Nathalie Sorrell,
Founder and Director of Behind Bars
Shannon Holtzendorf, *Executive Director*
Rutanya Pearson, *Chief Operating Officer*

Upcoming Events

October 14, 2008 -- Fundraiser Luncheon

November 21, 2008 -- Discovery Class
Graduation at Lockhart prison

Truth Be Told Mission and Vision

Our Mission is to provide transformational tools to women behind and beyond bars.

Our Vision:

1. To create a Model Program that will be available to incarcerated women all over the state of Texas.
2. To provide an individualized packet of information and a coach for every graduate of a TBT Class upon her release into a Texas community.
3. To have TBT Graduates involved in every aspect of the TBT organization as both staff and volunteers.

Make a Donation or Contact Us

Truth Be Told is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, and your donations are tax deductible. Donations may be made securely on-line at www.truth-be-told.org or mailed to Truth Be Told, P.O. Box 161763, Austin, TX 78716. You can reach us at (512) 292-6200 or by e-mail at office@truth-be-told.org.



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