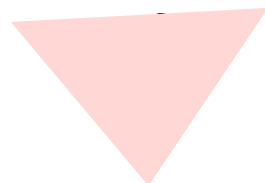


Truth Be Told

Fall 2009

# The Truth Teller



## Light of a New Day

Education Service Center: Region XIII  
5701 Springdale Road  
Austin, Texas

RSVP by Wednesday, September 30, 2009

To email: [office@truthbetold.org](mailto:office@truthbetold.org)

Or call 512-292-6200

Truth Be Told

Is hosting its

5th Annual  
Fundraising  
Luncheon

Wednesday,  
October 7, 2009

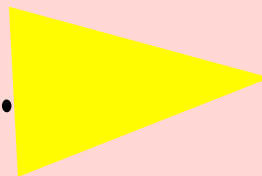
12 - 1 pm



We invite you to attend this  
Free, informative, and inspiring  
One hour presentation  
About our work.

Ray of Truth	2
Ray of Strength	3
Ray of Opportunity	4
Ray of	
Perserverance	5

Ray of Hope	6
Ray of Mystery	7
Upcoming Events	8



Since 2000  
**1350**  
women served

## Truth Be Told's Financial Position by Lesa Sofhauser, TBT Treasurer

### Our Current Needs

*Truth Be Told is looking for individuals to contribute to the transformative work that is being done with women in prison. If you have a desire to help with the mission of Truth Be Told in one of these areas, please contact TBT at [office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org).*

**Volunteer Coordinator** to recruit, place, and organize volunteers.

**Events Planner** to assist with special events.

**Media / Public Relations Coordinator**

**Grant Writer**

**Donated auction items** for our Spring 2010 Arts auction event

**Individuals or Organizations willing to host Truth Be Told presentations**

**Sponsors:** Businesses, Churches, and other organizations

### **The annual Fall Luncheon is the primary source of vital funding for Truth Be Told.**

In 2008, we collected \$14,090 on the day of the event and an additional \$16,000 was pledged to support our programs from November 2008 through November 2009.

Many donors choose to make "on the spot" one time contributions on the day of the luncheon. We rely on this large influx of cash to boost our financial position. This year, we also encourage donors to consider sustained giving by pledging a monthly amount to be charged to the donors' credit cards through PayPal. We currently have donors choosing to support us through monthly pledges in amounts ranging from \$10 to \$83 a month. **Every dollar contributes to the financial strength of our transformative work.**

Our fundraising goal for the 2009 Luncheon, Light of a New Day is \$40,000. We hope to achieve this goal through a combination of money collected that day, along with monthly pledges to support us through 2010 and beyond. With these funds we plan to expand and serve more women Behind and Beyond Bars.

Specifically, in 2010 our goals include continued work toward the implementation of the Truth Be Told model program and the expansion of the

Beyond Bars program to include a retreat for graduates. Our vision for the model program is to have the Truth Be Told program available to all women's prisons in the state of Texas by 2014. The model program formalizes our curriculum into a tool kit that volunteers at other prisons can use to organize and conduct our classes. This is important to us because it gives our tools unlimited potential to transform lives.

Truth Be Told also has a vision to expand and enhance our Beyond Bars program with an annual reunion retreat. This retreat would be for the purpose of coming together to celebrate the graduates' lives in the world and revisiting the tools they learned in our programs-the 3 C's: Community Building, Communication Skills and Creativity. We are connecting with more and more graduates than ever before, primarily due to our Beyond Bars Commitment Program. This program invites the women to connect with TBT throughout a 3 year period of time following release. Follow up and reconnection is important. You must water seeds to keep them growing. Our goal is to provide travel, meals and lodging as well as the meeting space and programming for a 3 day retreat hosting 30 graduates.

**Thank you for your continued support of our vision!** We look forward to seeing you as we celebrate the Light of a New Day!

## Helping People See

by Jennifer Scott

Social Services Coordinator  
Travis County Sheriff's Office

**“Truth Be Told helped me to see who I really am.”** That single sentence said by one incarcerated female at the Travis County Correctional Complex needs no further explanation to me. To others it might. As coordinator of the women's re-entry program located within the sheriff's office, I have heard numerous incarcerated women talk about how Truth Be Told staff and volunteers helped them see that they are more than just inmates - that they are women who can transform their own lives.

Of course, changing one's life comes with much fear and pain. The support that they receive from Truth Be told provides the guidance and motivation that the women might not find outside of the jail's walls. **The women use the following words to describe Truth Be Told volunteers and staff: kind, compassionate, inspiring, and motivational.** Only individuals with those traits could lay down any previous judgments to assist women who are mothers, daughters, and sisters, who may have lost everyone and everything. These are usually women who feel “broken” by drug addiction, violence, and/or spiritual loneliness.

Since Truth Be Told volunteers and staff began speaking with women in our correctional complex, **they have touched the lives of 281 women.** As opposed to women housed in the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC), women at the Travis County Correctional Complex will serve very short terms (if any at all). Only twenty-four percent will go on to serve time in prison. TBT Co-founder Carol Waid worked diligently with me to learn and accommodate the needs of the women here in our facility.

I know that the logistics and rules may be different from TDC, but from what I see the needs are the same. I witness women in both who long to just have someone believe in them. They yearn for someone to say that they can be the mommy they want to be or the daughter whose parents can trust them. They desire to know what the reason is for their suffering or the suffering they have caused.

Most of all, the women want to find something to hold onto when the future is rough again, know how to keep hold of that something, and have someone around to remind them that they can hold on. **From the bottom of my heart, I am grateful that Truth Be Told does that here.**

*I was incarcerated at Lockhart and was released 10-19-05. I was involved in the TBT program. I was in Carol's class more than once. This program gave me the strength to not only continue living day by day positively, but it gave me the strength to forgive myself and others. I would love to volunteer to go back into Lockhart and talk and listen to the girls there. I regret the decisions I have made in the past, but if I wouldnt of got into trouble and went to prison, I wouldnt be the person I am today. Carol made me feel loved and important and if I can do that for just one of those women, then its all worth it. Sometimes we just need someone to listen to us. Prison is hard and you have to take it one day at a time, but if you have someone standing in your corner saying, "You can do it," it makes it so much easier.*

*-- Heather P.  
TBT Graduate*



## Truth Be Told's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraiser - Light of New Day

### Did you know...?

Truth Be Told **volunteers dedicate between 900 – 1000 hours annually** helping with fundraisers, attending graduations, and contributing often behind the scenes. This does not include time spent by the staff, board members, and volunteer facilitators who keep the organization running smoothly and provide the classes and resources to women behind and beyond bars. In total, **Truth Be Told benefits from over 300 hours a month** of volunteer time. Wow! Without the dedication, time and energy of these loyal volunteers, TBT would not be what it is today. Thank you!

Truth Be Told's Annual Free Luncheon is the main fundraising effort that sustains our organization year after year. While the event is to inspire faithful volunteers and donors to offer financial support, we also encourage people to attend who want to learn more about the about the transformative work TBT is doing behind and beyond bars. The free luncheon will include a video about TBT and testimonials from several graduates of the program who have since been released and who want to continue their service and connection to TBT. This

year, our volunteer table captains are aiming to bring 200 friends to network and learn about Truth Be Told. YOU, too, will have a place at a table if you RSVP ASAP! Our theme this year is Light of a New Day. Come, and we will all bask in Rays of Hope, Strength, and Perseverance. We hope you will join us **Wednesday October 7, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.** at the Region XIII Service enter for this inspirational and informative one hour program. Please call 512 292-6200 or Email your RSVP to [office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org) by September 30.

### Truth Be Told in the news and online!

Truth Be Told is happy to be receiving publicity in magazines and blogs! Read the Truth Be Told article in the **Austin Woman Magazine** online at [www.austinwomanmagazine.com/Articles/2009/09\\_SEP/WEB\\_truth\\_be\\_told.html](http://www.austinwomanmagazine.com/Articles/2009/09_SEP/WEB_truth_be_told.html).

Then check out **Diane Beeler's blog "It Dawned on Me"** for reflections of a Talk to Me Speaking class modeled on Toastmasters at [itdawnedonme.wordpress.com/2009/09/05/truth-be-told-by-women-in-a-texas-prison/](http://itdawnedonme.wordpress.com/2009/09/05/truth-be-told-by-women-in-a-texas-prison/). Diane writes, "I felt a real sense of joy of being with these women who...though they have made real mistakes ...are now trying to better their lives."

Read these and other reflections, including a blog entry by Katie Ford, featured in our Spring 2009 newsletter, at our new "In the News" page in the About Us section of the Truth Be Told website at [www.truth-be-told.org](http://www.truth-be-told.org). Keep watching for more writing about Truth Be Told as we spread the word about our transformative work behind and beyond bars!



Find us on Facebook and become a fan of Truth Be Told! Keep up to date on events and happenings with women behind and beyond bars!



## Carol's Column by Carol Waid

Denise has been out of prison for 5 days and she tells me that freedom is overwhelming, but she also says, "I am feeling like a real person today." This was after she had a breakdown of tears, being able to voice her pain and fear and discomfort of being home. This friend gave her the gift of Respectful Listening.

Denise recounts her journey through her closet that she hasn't been in for two years. The clothes that no longer fit hang in limbo, as she remembers the time that she could wear them. She digs deeper and finds empty cans that once held the liquid desperation, and now lay as a reminder. "I am seeing the true alcoholism." I hear her choke up when she says, **"I just need my TRUTH bracelet, so it can help me remember."**

Denise is referring to the handmade bracelet that we send to all of our graduates, upon their release. The bracelet is made of beads and spells out the word TRUTH. The bracelet is symbol of our community: behind and beyond bars. This small symbol has become so important to the women that we serve.

When graduates of our program are released from prison, they can participate in what we refer to as our Beyond Bars program. If the women choose to participate, they are given a time frame to connect and re-connect with us, throughout a 3-year period of time. Upon their first contact with us, which is to be done within two weeks, we send them a Welcome Home Packet, which has a letter to welcome them

home, a TRUTH bracelet, and a magnet that has our Truth Be Told logo. It has surprised me how important this packet has become and I have such joy as I fill each packet.

In response to each contact from a graduate throughout the three years, we send them a token to celebrate their accomplishments, their perseverance to continue living life in the world. When they have reached their three years without re-incarceration, they are gifted with a hand-made quilt, made by my mother. To date, we have given out sixteen quilts.

Women who have lived years in a concrete vault of imprisonment, seeking to "feel like a real person," are my heroes and my mentors. I have known my own imprisonment, in the "free" world, given the gifts to have a car, a phone, church, my children, my yard, my rocking chair, my refrigerator, a mirror -- the gifts are endless. I frequently take for granted and forget the gifts that I have been bestowed. But when I visit the women who live in the concrete vault, with 499 other incarcerated women, and when I talk to them upon their release during the months that are beyond that life, they remind me to be grateful and persevere.

**I give thanks to the women that I have shared the last 9 ½ years with.** My daughter expressed it best at a Talk to Me graduation that she attended, "I know that my mom has helped a lot of you, but I want to thank you for making my momma better mom."

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*[What helped me most was] to be accepted by people who had more things like me than I realized. To paint words and release the power they had on my mind. To reach up and love myself, not beating myself changed my hopelessness. Slowly I came to see that it was my choice to heal, no one could do all the work for me, but there was people who wanted to do anything to help me.*

*-- Mary S.  
TBT Graduate*

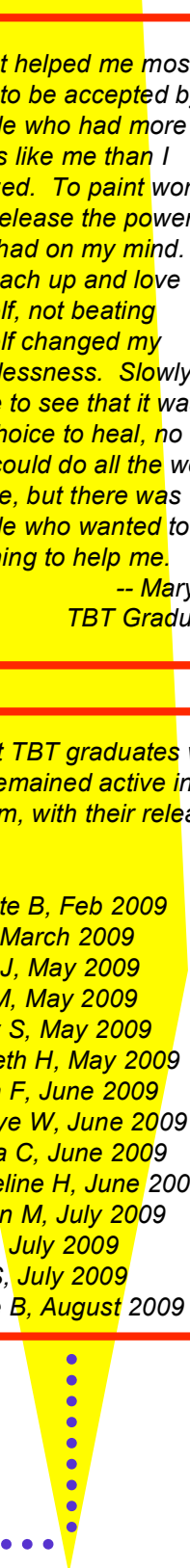
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*Recent TBT graduates who have remained active in the program, with their release dates.*

*Jannette B, Feb 2009  
Joy T, March 2009  
Sheila J, May 2009  
Terry M, May 2009  
Shelby S, May 2009  
Elizabeth H, May 2009  
Angela F, June 2009  
Tommye W, June 2009  
Marsha C, June 2009  
Jacqueline H, June 2009  
Carmen M, July 2009  
Lisa C, July 2009  
Mary S, July 2009  
Denise B, August 2009*

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## The work that TBT is doing behind bars

Each spring and fall, we hold the **Talk To Me Series** orientation at Lockhart prison, where the women come and hear about the classes being offered: Talk to Me Speaking, Talk to Me Circle (writing focus), and Talk to Me Movement. The women decide which TTM Level 1 class they want to take, with the understanding that all three eight week classes have the same goal - to teach them how to tell the story of what brought them to prison.

At the conclusion, there is a Level 1 graduation in March and September where we are allowed to bring in an audience from the outside to serve as respectful listeners for the women sharing their stories. ***The graduation is a powerfully moving and inspirational experience for both the women and the guests.***

After graduation, the women have the choice to continue to the **Discovery Class** (Level 2) which is six weeks long. Talk to Me Speaking, Circle, and Movement combine for Discovery Class. In this class, the women form a larger community of support and focus on how to use their story for good in the world after their release. There is a Level 2 graduation at the end in May and November. This is a joyful, creative experience for graduates and our guests from the outside. Graduates of both programs may then apply to become **Mentors** for next semester's classes, which is at Level 3 of the Talk to Me program. This gives graduates an opportunity to practice the tools of the program and be of service to others.

**Exploring Creativity** workshops happen three times a year. These are two hour workshops held on a Friday afternoon, where guest facilitators demonstrate ways to channel emotions and energy into creativity. Usually the guest facilitators are musical or visual artists, writers, movers/dancers, or creative thinkers/performers. The general population of the prison may sign up to attend these workshops. They do not have to be in our other classes to attend a workshop.

The **Let's Get Real ~ Lockhart** class is designed to give women the tools they will need in their daily lives once they are released. We bring in guest facilitators to talk to the women about different topics like parenting, anger management, and life skills. There is no requirement that they take our other classes first.

**God in Human Form** happens each December. It is a one-time event where several guest artists, performers, ministers and/or musicians use their art to demonstrate their encounter with a Higher Power to the women at Lockhart Prison.

**Let's Get Real ~ Del Valle** is the name of our program at Del Valle Jail. This class is a requirement for women to complete the PRIDE program at Del Valle, and the class meets weekly to discuss various topics, including many of the emotional hardships surrounding incarceration.

*[What helped was] the commitment and support. Encouragement, regardless of what I did or thought. Public speaking and just walking through that fear and finding freedom. The nurturing, that confidence afterwards and helping others find and look for that "moment". It's a moment and its so important and to be still enough to embrace and experience it. Everyone has their own and I pray that they get to experience it as well. I hope that I can lead someone along this journey, to see, hear, feel, and touch that. It's all possible, even with touch, because that comes from the hand of a friend...which has been said is God's hand on lend.*

*-- Elizabeth H.  
TBT Graduate*

## One Woman's Journey by Nathalie Sorrell

Along with all the other rays of sunshine that light up a new day, there is a mysterious light that I heard a National Geographic photographer name **God rays**. Apparently most photographers at that level of excellence recognize a particular light that is the very best for photographing natural beauty. You have to be willing to wait for it to get a uniquely revealing photo. I've seen those photos - haven't you?! They make me take a deep breath and feel inspired.

Carol and I were at the Table Captain training last night, after a particularly meaningful and difficult day at the prison. It was a special joy to us to have Mary Reynolds there. She's a former board member who did enormous tasks for TBT when we were new and needed so much help. Mary created our first database and our first newsletter. And when we were down to 3 Board members just before our 2nd fundraiser -- Bobby Miser, Keith Ford and Mary Reynolds-- Carol and I were still feeling **held in a particularly warm ray of light** through their faith in our work with women in prison.

This year, Bobby Miser, who always drives from Houston to participate in our activities, will be bringing with him several Teri Fund Donors, staff members from his insurance office. Keith has been a table captain for several years and continues to be of support. These people, along with YOU (you know who you are) who offer your financial support, attend gatherings, bring others, and go into the prisons to facilitate programs are **God rays** for us. Your commitment and support brighten those darker times at the prison which come unbidden, usually because Prison Officials who value TBT have been transferred and there are difficult transitions for us to learn from.

For those of you who, like me, find *personality typing* useful – I am an **ENTJ** and a **1** on the Enneagram. (If that makes sense to you, you know what I mean; if it doesn't, please just keep reading.) I work with a daytimer and lists to plan ahead for a year. I am a perfectionist. I prefer to anticipate, rather than be surprised. If there are good things coming, I want to savor every moment of the planning and preparation. If there are bad things ahead, I want to know it, start praying and thinking about how I can embrace the inevitable and start turning it to good NOW, or even possibly head it off at the pass.



**GOD  
RAYS**

My Truth Be Told experience has taught me more than any other aspect of my life how CRAZY I can become when I depend upon this trait (admirable in its best light, but truly destructive in its extreme control factor). The truth I have learned from working in prison is that **accepting the mystery** is sometimes the healthiest, sanest way of getting through the dark times and still having some energy for the next day's light.

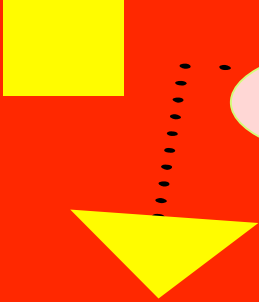
There's a 12 step phrase: "Accepting Life on Life's terms." It means noticing *before* I start beating my head against a wall that *it is a wall* – of bureaucracy, of fear, of resentment over changes I can't control – and not a door. My head is not an effective battering ram. Guess who will get hurt if I use it that way?

In our first, very successful year, we were suddenly told we could no longer have our graduates speak to juveniles on probation because of something that happened in another prison. Nine years later, last week, we learned that the Short-timing program (created by a warden's request) can no longer be called Short-timing or advertised to that specially needy group of women getting out in 6 months or less. Both of these are examples that a wall is a wall. A decision of TDCJ or a Warden is "life on life's terms."

The loss of the women's opportunity to speak to juveniles led to the current Graduation audiences where many of you became respectful witnesses of our graduates and now are involved in our program. Eventually the Mystery: **WHY can't we have Short Timing as it has been, so helpful for so many for so long?** will be resolved. The Mysterious **God Ray** nearly always shows us that crisis somehow has created a new opportunity.

So let the **God Rays** shine! We live the adventure of being part of a bigger world than we can figure out. THANKS TO EACH OF YOU who are showing up. Please keep showing up to share your gifts. Let's all reach for each others' hands in the dark, when we must wait for the Light of a new day to dawn!



Truth Be Told  
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[office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org)  
[www.truth-be-told.org](http://www.truth-be-told.org)

**Staff**  
 Shannon Holtzendorf  
*Executive Director*

Nathalie Sorrell  
*Founder and  
 Dir of Behind Bars*

Carol Waid  
*Founder and  
 Dir of Beyond Bars*

## Upcoming Events

### September

**Sept 25, Fri** - Talk to Me Class Graduation, 3-5pm, Lockhart Prison. RSVP by Sept 10 to [office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org)

**Sept 30, Wed** - BABB (Behind and Beyond Bars) meeting, 6-7pm, Journey Imperfect Faith Community

### October

**Oct 7, Wed** - Light of New Day Luncheon, 12-1pm, Education Service Center Region XIII, Springdale Road. RSVP by Sept 30 to [office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org)



## 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](http://www.truth-be-told.org) or mailed to Truth Be Told, P.O. Box 500112, Austin, TX 78750. You can reach us at (512) 292-6200 or by e-mail at [office@truth-be-told.org](mailto:office@truth-be-told.org).

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## Truth Be Told

P.O. Box 500112  
 Austin, TX 78750