

Expanding Horizons



Join Truth Be Told

*As We Host Our
6th Annual Fundraising Luncheon*

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

12 - 1 p.m.

*Westover Hills Church of Christ
8332 Mesa Drive, Austin, Texas*

We invite you to attend this free, informative, and inspiring one hour presentation about our work that helps women behind and beyond bars

Fall
2010

RSVP by Tuesday, October 12 to: info@truth-be-told.org or 512 292-6200

TBT 2011 Goals

- "Plant" the program at Gatesville by establishing a good working relationship with TX Dept of Criminal Justice administrators and staff, and a good reputation among the inmates.
- "Graduate" the facilitators in training at Gatesville to become co-facilitators in the spring semester, then start two more trainees in the fall.
 - Build depth at Lockhart with more facilitator trainees
 - Recruit a bilingual trainee for Lockhart.
 - Plan to expand to another prison in the Gatesville complex in twelve months.
- Institutionalize assessments (make assessments and data-driven analysis part of TBT's culture).
 - Continue growing the Board.
 - Increase fundraising by 50% at the Spring Event, Waco Event, and at least one more grant awarded.
 - Substantial advance on "Train the Trainer" module for facilitators.
 - Associate with a credentialed psychologist to help the "Let's Get Real/Short Timing" class develop family reunification skills.

Expanding Financial Horizons

By Lesa Sofhauser, TBT Treasurer

The annual fall luncheon provides the core of Truth Be Told's financial strength. Most donations to TBT originate at the event. The funds we receive are instrumental in expanding our horizons.

With your support, we achieved a long time goal of creating a Model Program to formalize our curriculum. In 2010 we completed the editing of a training video for the Behind Bars program. 2010 also brought the opportunity for our founders, Nathalie and Carol, to take their compassionate hearts north to Gatesville and begin classes there. In addition to the many dedicated volunteer facilitators at Lockhart prison and Del Valle jail, there are now two facilitators in training at Gatesville.

Your continued financial support allows for further expansion. Future plans include:

- A commitment to nurture and train our most valuable resource: our dedicated volunteer facilitators.
- Explore options to make the Truth Be Told model program available to other prisons.
- Develop a process to objectively assess and evaluate

our programs.

- Refine our programs to foster the development of family reunification skills in our graduates.
- Build the "bones" of our organization through Board development and increased fundraising efforts.

There are several ways to make a contribution to Truth Be Told.

- A one time "on-the-spot" donation the day of the luncheon, either by check or credit card.
- A pledge to make a future one-time contribution by the end of the tax year.
- A pledge to make monthly contributions throughout the year. There are several ways to make monthly contributions. Donors can have TBT charge their credit card monthly through PayPal; they can set up monthly automatic debits with their bank; or they can mail monthly payments to the TBT P. O. Box address.

Thank you for your continued support of Truth Be Told's transformative work. We look forward to seeing you as we celebrate Expanding Horizons!

TBT Wish List / Current Needs

1. Volunteer Coordinator to recruit, place, and organize volunteers
2. Events Planning team members
3. Facilitator trainees and volunteers in the Temple/Waco/Gatesville area for Spring 2011 classes/events
4. Facilitator trainees for Lockhart classes (bilingual preferred, but not required)
5. Individuals/organizations willing to host Truth Be Told presentations
6. Media Volunteers to assist with creating newsletter twice yearly, and maintenance of TBT website.



In the words of a TBT graduate... Margie Stone

Margie Stone (left) celebrated three years of freedom in February, and was given a hand-made quilt as part of Truth Be Told's quilt incentive program.

I received your newsletter a couple of days ago, and it put a smile on my face. The memories of Carol and the Short Timers class came flooding back, but I really think they never left me. The lessons I learned in the class and while in prison are forever parts of me and for that I am extremely grateful.

The lessons I have cherished the most were to value myself as a person, to remember that by going to prison I paid my debt to society, community building, and to always tell the truth about who you were, who you are, and where you are going.

I returned home with nothing left except clothes that did not even fit me anymore, but my family was there for me, and quickly purchased all my necessities. I did not have trouble finding a job, but I was worried about passing a background check. I submitted to having my background checked and much to my

amazement I passed. I truly believe it was God's will for me, because the job was to care for my 90-year-old grandmother. So this put me off to a great start. From that point thru my first year, and into my second, I was busy rebuilding my life, finding a place to live and obtaining all my basic necessities.

Upon my return I also returned to a relationship that no longer suited me, because I did not come back the same person that left. I was determined not to fall into my old habits, but instead of getting out of the relationship, I struggled to try to change my partner. After a couple of years of struggling, it was either him or me, so he had to go. It was a hard decision, but the best one for me.

I went into my second year stronger and more determined than ever to succeed and not to return to prison. It was at this time that the parole board made a decision to send parolees to some kind of treatment group. At first I frowned, but started attending various meetings in my area. I was also reminded about community building. I became active in Christians against Substance Abuse (CASA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Alcoholics

Anonymous (AA). The local Church of Christ sponsors the CASA program. This is where I found so much unconditional love. I became a member of this church and was baptized. They knew my background and still accepted me. I did not feel that I had to keep my past a secret. The more I became active within these groups, the more people called me for information. I finally felt a part of something positive; I had built myself a community.

Into my third year, I purchased my parents old car. It was not new but it gets me where I need to go. It was during this time that I needed to supplement my income, since I had decided to live alone. I started cleaning houses in my area. I started with one home a year ago and now I have a full schedule, meaning five houses a week, on top of my home health job. I always share my truth with clients and have never been refused a job. I now have a sponsor, I am a sponsor, and I am active in service work in my area recovery groups. I wish I could say that I have been clean and sober since I left prison, but I cannot. I was trying to please my significant other and was drinking. I am pleased to say that once I made the decision to work a program, I will celebrate

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Carol's Column

by Carol Waid, Co-Founder of Truth Be Told

Truth Be Told set a vision six years ago to expand our programs into other women's prisons in Texas. I am excited to announce that our vision is now a reality. On August 27th, 2010, we had our first orientation at the Hilltop Unit, in Gatesville, TX. We started two new programs on that day and we have two volunteers participating in the class as students, in the hopes that they will be our next facilitators, which will enable us to further our expansion. The writing below was inspired by my first day at Hilltop, as we awaited the beautiful women that we would soon know in a very intimate way.

"They're coming! They're walking up the sidewalk right now."

My heart pounding, I rushed to the window to grasp a peek of the twenty-two women, dressed in white cotton v-neck tops and white cotton pants, walking single file in their white shoes through the two-story barbed wire chain link fence and into the stark white historical concrete building where they will be welcomed by me and three other "free-world" women.

These twenty-two women have made a conscious decision to embark on a journey of speaking their TRUTH and telling stories about their lives, in particular the stories that led them to a life of incarceration. For the next fourteen weeks,

they will form a community and will learn the tool of respectful listening.

The listening, for me, begins with seeing their faces. Some are hiding behind a friend, some stand behind an invisible barrier; some are standing tall and smiling. I am drawn to one woman that darts to the corner of the room. Sitting alone, her energy speaks to me the loudest. I approach her and say, "Looks like you need some time alone."

"I'm shy," she replies.

"Can I sit?" I ask.

She nods her head and I tell her how happy I am that she is in the class. She keeps her head bowed and I say again, "I am happy you are here and you made a courageous decision to come and use your voice to speak about yourself."

She looks at me, "I am almost forty-years-old and I know I need to do something different." Now she is talking through her tears.

Enough is said and I move on to another young woman, and another, and another.

I read a Hispanic woman's nametag and say, "Esmeralda, I am so happy you are here." She approaches me with her hand over her mouth, so I lean in to hear her whisper, "No one has called me Esmeralda in four years. No one in this room knows my name. I am known by my number and my last name."

I look into her maple brown eyes and asked, "Is it okay if we call you Esmeralda?" Her smile was all the answer I needed.

In our closing circle, a young girl, probably twenty-five-years-old, leans her head onto my shoulder, "You smell good. Do you use Gain soap?"

"Not sure, but I think so," I replied. "You smell like my mother." I hug her, and see her tears holding tight to her bottom lashes. No time for emotions, not right now.

Listening is my life's purpose, as it is what has saved my life and is why I have chosen to spend the last ten and a half years with women in prison. We may never know the ways that we have listened and heard what may very well be unsaid.

Thanks to Our Spring Artists!

Truth Be Told would like to thank the following Spring artists and musicians for contributing to the success of the Spring 2010 fundraiser.

Molly Emerick

Djembabes

Billy Wilson, Latin at Heart
Kathryn Hume, Sister Katrina

Grace Pettis

Sara Hickman

Watch for an even bigger performance next spring at the TBT Spring 2011 Fundraiser!

TBT Welcomes New Board Members

Alisha Burrow

Alisha Burrow has over ten years of experience in Marketing, Tourism, and Event Management. She is currently the Director of Tourism for the City of Buda, focusing on community-based marketing and strategic planning. Previously, Ms. Burrow worked as a corporate event planner at The American Red Cross Dallas Area Chapter and also as the Director of Tourism for the Lufkin Convention & Visitors Bureau. Her professional experience also extends to the Entertainment industry, working at Thoma Thoma Creative and Terry Hines & Associates. She has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Phoenix, and a BA in English from Hendrix College. Alisha says, "My involvement with Truth Be Told is to assist the organization as they grow and share their program with other prisons, volunteers, and potential donors. By contributing my efforts as a board member, I am able to connect with the women through their journey of hope and healing."

Bijal Thakkar

Bijal Thakkar brings over ten years of expertise in strategy development, growth initiatives, and operational excellence. Her passion is in driving company growth through development and execution of innovative solutions, building strong teams and effectively utilizing resources. These skills will be a strong asset to TBT as it expands its horizons and reach to other areas. Bijal said she was drawn to TBT due to her desire to empower women and facilitate the tools they need to rebuild their lives.

Cassandra Thomas

Cassandra Thomas has ten years of accounting, human resources, and finance experience. She manages the finance and HR departments for EnviroMedia Social Marketing. She holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. Prior to joining EnviroMedia, Cassandra worked at Keep Texas Beautiful as the assistant to the executive director. Cassandra says, "I understand and truly believe that strong women are the building blocks for a stable and productive society. I believe women behind bars can take the transformational tools provided by Truth Be Told back home to make positive contributions to their children and families. Truth Be Told is changing lives for the better and I can't wait to contribute to that effort."

Laura Strausberg

Laura Strausberg is passionate about helping organizations and individuals successfully manage transition and change through identifying the vision for the future, identifying gaps, and helping facilitate the transformation. She has over twenty years of professional experience and currently works at Dell as a consultant to customers on transition management and communications. Her background includes roles in organizational development, HR, business development, and social science research. Early in her career she worked at Stanford University Center for Research in Disease Prevention, where her responsibilities included training, curriculum development, and implementation. She received both a Bachelors and Master of Education in Health and Human Development from University of Texas at Austin. Laura says, "I am very much looking forward to utilizing my organizational development, social science, communication and curriculum development skills to assist with Truth be Told's ongoing growth and development, as we support women who are serving or have served time in prison."

New Look for TBT on the Web!

You can always find information about Truth Be Told online at www.truth-be-told.org. Now this website will have a new and improved look! Watch for a new website design at www.truth-be-told.org coming this fall!

Six years of the Quilt project by Carol Waid

I am sitting in my office, thinking of my mom, and ruminating on her answers to this mornings interview. I am feeling so much gratitude for her continuing dedication to making quilts for Truth Be Told's released graduates. To receive a quilt, these women have been living in the world for three years without re-incarceration, and they have remained in contact with TBT.

Peggy Chandler, my mom, started making quilts for our released graduates back in 2003. Teri Dyer, who graduated from Nathalie's very first class at the prison in Lockhart, TX, back in early 2000, inspired the project. Teri was approaching her third anniversary of release, and we wanted to do something to celebrate her for her dedication to living in the world and continuing to live in her TRUTH, as well as using the TBT tools that she embraced while incarcerated. My mother, whose gift of service is in quilt making, said, "I will make a

lap quilt." She did, and she has for the last six years.

To date, twenty-two women have been blessed with a hand-made original quilt – no two quilts are the same. I asked my mom why it was important to her to have each quilt be different and how she came up with the design. She said, "Every one of these quilts came to me in a dream. I wake up with the pattern all laid out. I get up and go to my sewing room and draw out the pattern, and then I just sew." She continued with a humble response, "It's important to me that each quilt is different, because no two women are the same. They are all special and unique in their own way, so I want their quilts to be like them. When I make these quilts I don't ever think of them as women that have been to prison. I think of them as women that are trying really hard to make something of their lives." She ended our interview with this: "I am passing on my love to them."

Thanks Mom, I love you.

(continued from p. 3), Margie Stone

my one year of being clean on June 12, 2010. Not only did I feel like I had found myself, I felt like I had found my calling in life. Beginning now with my fourth year I am a student at Texas State Technical College studying to become a Chemical Dependency Counselor. In May I started my second semester and am blessed that a Pell grant has thus far paid for my schooling. I have applied for more scholarships this semester, and for one of the scholarships, I needed three support letters. Because of the community I had built for myself, people gladly stepped up to write letters for me. God has blessed me abundantly, and for this I am determined more than ever to become a productive member of society. My life has not been without conflicts, but I have learned to handle them properly. Most of all I know that no matter what I never have to drink or do drugs again. I get up every day and smile, knowing that some days I am so tired, but also knowing I can do this, that God has chosen me to help others. Thank you Truth Be Told for giving me the tools to succeed.

TBT Thanks Facilitators

Truth Be Told would like to recognize an exceptional group of volunteers: our trained Program Facilitators. These remarkable individuals dedicate their time and energy to serving the women in our classes. They spend many hours preparing for classes, traveling to the prisons, and reviewing assignments and homework. Their most important contribution, however, is the connection they form with the women in their classes. Our facilitators listen respectfully, build trust, and use their own life experiences as they offer their class participants creative tools for personal growth.

These facilitators are currently serving our women in Lockhart, Del Valle, or Gatesville:

Carol Waid
Donna Snyder
Julie Wylie
Kathleen Littlepage
Katie Ford
Mary Gifford
Natalie Weinstein
Nathalie Sorrell
Peggy Lamb
New Facilitators in training: Janith Jenson-Elbert, Meg Cooper

We honor and sincerely thank these volunteers for the work they do, helping women behind bars!

One Woman's Journey

by Nathalie Sorrell, Co-Founder of Truth Be Told

September 11, 2010, 6:53 a.m.

Almost 24 hours ago, I had the privilege of kneeling beside my Daddy's bed, and helping him move through his death and onto something much bigger than ourselves. I will never stop thanking God and my family for getting to be there, to witness and share in his transition. My horizons are expanded as well as his. I hope someday to have the look on my face that I saw on his, though I hope I will never have to suffer as horribly as he suffered just before he died.

My father was a scientist, a geologist. His fascination with rocks and the formations of the earth were the groundwork for the stability of our family. At least that is how I see it today. He loved God and practiced his spiritual beliefs religiously. And his commitment to living by scriptural guidelines did not interfere with his desire to reason and understand the Truth that lay beyond the ancient writings of others throughout our Judeo-Christian history. He taught his children and others to ask "Why?" of God and our teachers, but also to obey the Truth that would set us free.

Mom and Dad's 68 year marriage was based on a love affair that included sanity and structure and sacrifice that led to security, both material and spiritual. In my youth, I did not

always appreciate that. I thought it could be boring, or limiting, or just too restrictive.

When I came to prison in 2000, I began to see for the first time how devastating a passionate love affair that does not provide stability could be to the ones involved – children, extended family, friends and



communities. Then I saw how powerful a force for good a marriage like Mom and Dad's could be.

This morning I awake to the purest gratitude I have ever known, for Dad's deliverance from his suffering, and for my family. This afternoon we meet to celebrate him with barbeque

(his favorite) and the stories four generations of family will have to tell about him. (Well, the great-grands are a little too small, but some of them will remember his deep, rumbly voice and attempt to educate them about rocks!).

I will be back in Gatesville's Hilltop Prison on Tuesday, listening while the last two women in my tiny first class at that prison tell their stories to the Toastmasters who are helping turn sometimes horrific, sometimes redemptive stories into effective speeches.

This is the work I love passionately – and the work that won me my Daddy's respect. His foundation was solid rock. Mine is the treasure of human life stories that we mine, bring to the surface, polish off and share with the community. In the telling, in the listening, in the respectful acceptance of each person's attempts to transform themselves and their lives, we provide stable ground for our sisters to move through their pain and into another realm, of freedom and choice. I am purely grateful for each of you, who contribute to our ability to offer expanded vision and horizons for the women we serve, and for each volunteer so privileged to be involved in this work with Carol and me.

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 the address below.

Board of Directors

Jonathan Eddison, Board Chairman
Amber Vasquez Bode, Legal Counselor
Tina Dayton, Beyond Bars Coordinator
Lesia Sofhauser, Treasurer
Ruth Talbot, Public Relations Chair
Bijal Thakkar
Cassandra Thomas
Alisha Burrow
Laura Strausberg

Calendar of Events

October 1: Talk to Me Class Graduation, Lockhart Prison

October 19: 12-1 p.m., Expanding Horizons Fundraising Luncheon

November 19: Discovery Class Graduation, Lockhart Prison

TBA: Graduation at Hilltop Prison, Gatesville, TX (late November or early December)

**E-mail office@truth-be-told.org if you want to put your name on the guest list for any of these events!

Staff

Shannon Holtzendorf, Executive Director
Nathalie Sorrell, Founder and Director of Behind Bars
Carol Waid, Founder and Director of Beyond Bars

www.truth-be-told.org

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