



THE TRUTH TELLER

Pathways

Truth Be Told

Spring 2008

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943
women
served

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Moving Along the Pathway

The following thoughts were shared by the Fall 2007 graduates of the Talk To Me Movement class.

In the words of Tiffany R.

What made your heart sing?

The movements made my heart sing. Our dance, "I could tell you a story" was from our hearts. To tell a story with your body is unexplainable. Moving to one's story is a song in itself. Speechless.....

What tore a hole in your heart?

The stories tore a hole in my heart. We all have so much in common. We were allowed to dig deep and open up. Embrace our own lives and be grateful for life as it is. I am no longer ashamed. I am whole.

In the words of Shari N.

What did you learn about yourself?

During this class I've learned that I am really not comfortable with the way my Mom raised me and that I hold a lot of anger inside just for that. Also, I hadn't really noticed how much it affected me that my Grandma treated me the way she did. And now it's brought this anger on me and I'm not sure how to release it. But, I guess it's the beginning of my change. They say you have to be torn down then it will build me up again.

What turned out just perfect?

The graduation and I wasn't expecting it to be so great. Then on our last day of practice I had a problem and didn't think that I'd even be able to finish. But, everything went together. We didn't have much time to practice but in the end everything was perfect, awesome. Everybody loved it.

In the words of Cathy B.

What made your heart sing?

When I danced Dianne's story . I was so into her story in my mind and heart. It went into my soul. It was like I was her and living her story myself.

In the words of Jennifer N.

What did you learn about the human heart?

That even though the "outside" portrays steel...the "inside" still feels. That my heart is the grounding for me. I don't want my thoughts, my remembrances to determine my emotions now. I want to lead with my heart and use my head as reins instead of the other way around. Analyzing, trying to
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Truth Be Told

Carol's Column

By Carol Waid,
Founder and Director of Beyond
Bars Program

I am often asked what I do in my classroom; "What do you mean when you say that you focus on community building? How do you do this?" My reply is always the same: my chin drops, my mouth falls open, and nothing intelligible comes out of my voice box. I am stumped every time I am asked to explain.

What I can do, and what I love to do, is share stories of moments to cherish and celebrate. I can share with you the experiences that I have witnessed, year after year, class after class, of women coming together in a circle and speaking their TRUTH. I can tell you that, without fail, transformation takes place within a community that is dedicated to making a safe place for everyone.

Within in an hour of my first class at Lockhart, a woman asked, "What does empathy mean? I have always acted like I knew, but I don't. I feel like I can say that in here."

One must feel safe to open up the hidden and isolated parts of oneself.

The stories, below, are the evidence that a safe community is present.

On the 3rd week of class, I brought in a very special guest, Rutanya Pearson., to share her experience, strength and hope, passing on to these women what had been passed on to her. Rutanya opened up a highway for honesty and hope.

As we approached the end of class, Betty, a brand new member of the community, was called out by an officer. As she gathered her new supplies we quickly said goodbye, while the rest of us formed a circle and began our closure, with a thank you to Rutanya and one word that best described our time together. Betty came rushing back into the classroom, quickly took her place in the circle and was just in time to do her check out. Breathlessly, she told us that she was on her way to her pod (which is where she lives), but she came back, because she had taken two composition books, instead of the one that was allotted for her. She said, "I do not want to be known as a thief. I do not want to go into the world like that." She handed over a green composition book and stepped back into her space in the circle. A second woman looked at her and said, "Last week I took some markers from a teacher and I couldn't sleep until I could return them back to whom they belonged."

As my turn approached, I stood with my head bowed, weeping. As I raised my head, I saw a glistening of joy, Betty's smile. Humbly, I said, "Betty, you have just given me the greatest gift. Your conscious

choice to return to class and tell the truth, no matter what the consequences, but choosing to take a new path, has touched me beyond words."

Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. says, "Sometimes simply being accepted as you are and cared about by others can affect people in very profound ways."

I agree. ■

One Woman's Journey

By Nathalie Sorrell, Founder and
Director of Behind Bars Program

Eight years ago, when I first followed Jesus's instruction to "visit the prisoners," I hadn't a clue that prison would become second home, learning center and obsession for me. Today, I feel humbled by memories of THEN and the astonishing life I have NOW.

From a blustery, sunlit February day in 2000 to February 2008: Inmates Teri D., to Angienette S., Mentors from Mary M. to Sissy P., prison officials from Wardens Anderson and Sinegare to Livingston to Barry and Hamlin, and ALL who have shown up in the form of volunteers and donors have become my teachers and guides.

Now, I have the privilege of guiding others who come with us to the prison as Graduation guests,

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One Woman's Journey

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Exploring Creativity facilitators, Toastmasters or Facilitators in training.

Carol Waid was my first volunteer. She came to tell her story to the women in our Speaking class ... and her beautiful eyes often brim up with tears and laughter when she tells how at home she felt. Carol's humility verged on invisibility ... she literally had to come to a place where she walked beside me proudly, instead of slightly behind.

Now she leads the way into Del Valle Jail, taking our newest volunteer, Kathleen Littlepage and creating a special class to fit this newest kind of programming need. Carol's open heart creates a safe place when she shyly enters the room. Kathleen has her entirely different personality and life skills, and we eagerly see how her gifts will benefit our program.

In January, 2001, my husband, Jim Walsh, and I calculated it had cost him (our only wage-earner) about \$700 to get me to and from the prison, with basic supplies needed for the classes Carol and I were co-facilitators. I went to my church, Tarrytown Baptist (now The Sanctuary), and asked the Missions team to support this work. They voted to give us \$1000 for the year. Seven years later, my husband and the Sanctuary are still our steady, reliable supporters. We need more like them as we enter 2008, seeking \$89,000 to do the work

that has benefited over 650 graduates in Lockhart's GEO prison. This year, we are preparing our Model Program tool kit so others like YOU can help thousands more in various women's prisons in the years to come.

In 2003, when we became a Non-profit, I recruited a dear friend from Houston, Bobby Miser, to our board. Though gregarious as any man I've ever known, he was quiet for 2 years, listening and observing while we all flew the Truth Be Told Ship of Dreams by the seat of our pants. In his 3rd year, we persuaded him to become our Board Chair. Still driving from Houston every month, he said *"I will do this for one more year ... then I want to resign and just bring in money for Truth be Told the rest of my life."*

Yes! Now in 2008, Bobby continues to generously support TBT, and remains on call when we have a special need, to recruit other givers that he knows.

We need donor/volunteers who believe in the work we have been called to do ... to fill a need we have ... and as they find new ways to use their gifts to support the work of the organization ... help us fly our ship into the future.

Our society is changing with every generation. One thing stays the same: Parents hand down their strengths and their weaknesses to their children. If those children grow up without encountering

effective role models, they usually pass on equally ineffective parenting and life skills to their children. Truth Be Told volunteers become role models to women behind and beyond bars ... and that effects the lives of generations.

I watch with amazement and gratitude as a new generation of Board members step up to the plate, and take on the team work of a new season of Truth Being Told. Thank you to Bobby, Mary and Keith who helped us when we were weakest – to our present great Board of Directors and to the newest members: Ruth Talbot and Glenda Stover who now bring us their perspective, experience and ideas.

SPECIAL THANKS to you for supporting us with your prayers, from Margaret Simpson, who started our Prison Prayers in 2001, to the newest one of you who will start praying for us today. Truth be Told, without you holding the Light for us, who knows when our ship might have crashed? ■

Opportunities Recognized

By Rutanya Pearson, Chief Operating Officer for Truth Be Told

I first met Truth Be Told's founders Nathalie and Carol while they were attending a class called Faded Blue Jeans at Hobby Prison in Marlin, Texas. The class was a twelve-step program based on scrip-

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Opportunities Recognized

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ture. They told their stories and made a lasting impression on me because of the way they overcame their fears and the tragedies in their lives. I saw strength and a love for GOD that I had never experienced before, and gratitude for everything that was going on in their lives. I was so close to being released after 5 years of incarceration, and knew that I needed to adopt some of their practices into my life, especially since I'd made a commitment to change my life.

In the years that followed I stayed in touch with Carol and Nathalie. They would send information about retreats and self-care events. I would attend and get the healing and centering that I needed to continue with this new life. I also went to family counseling with my four children. Our family therapist was instrumental in rebuilding the relationship that I have with my children today, but Carol and Nathalie encouraged me to stay with the counseling, and I am so glad I did.

Once I was released, all that I could think about was getting my children back and making a home for us. Little did I know that finding a home and employment would be one of the hardest things I would ever have to do in my life. Thankfully, Carol and Nathalie

would always send me an encouraging word or a reading they thought would uplift me.

I have always dreamed of calling Austin home. I think that it is a healthy city and the people are friendly. Seven years after my release, I got the opportunity to come to Austin. I knew it was time to make a change and I came to Austin to get real clear about what GOD wanted me to do. I knew that it was time that I did the work that I was called to do. When I got to Austin Nathalie was looking for help, an assistant in her home office. The Truth Be Told Board approved for her to have an assistant and I needed a job. I started working for Nathalie for 10 hours a week, and around that same time, Carol needed help with the Beyond Bars program. I started working for Carol about 15 hours a week. One afternoon Carol and Nathalie gave me a job description and said to me, "How do you see these tasks being done?" I went down the list of job duties it dawned on me that I could do the job. The position was for Chief Operating Officer of Truth Be Told.

Together, we envisioned the possibility of me coming to work for Truth Be Told, fulfilling a part of the organization's vision to have graduates involved at all levels, as volunteers, paid staff and board members. The vision did not come to reality until November 19th, 2007. Thanks to the financial support from our 2007 fundraiser,

I was asked to become TBT's first full-time paid staff member. I know that I was born to do this job. I deeply believe in the work that these women are doing Behind and Beyond Bars. They are giving hope to the hopeless, and I know this because I once was hopeless. They are rekindling dreams and desires and changing lives.

In the time I spent working part-time to help Nathalie and Carol, I learned more about the program, and decided that I wanted and needed to complete the program myself. I saw that I needed to become a graduate of this program. I was using the tools to improve my life on the outside already. I went through the program just as if I was on the inside of prison. I did the homework and Toastmasters evaluated my speech. It was a very hard process because I still had to do my job and keep up with my volunteer hours as well, but the most rewarding part of going through the class was graduating Behind bars with the other women that were going through the class at the same time. I am the first graduate to complete the program from BEYOND bars and I got to graduate with the women BEHIND bars...encouraging, supporting, and motivating them for possibilities in their own lives!

My goals for Truth Be Told are to continue with the vision of offering the program in every

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With Pain There Is Hope

By Petra Montoya

Truth Be Told graduate 2005

A battered eye, a shattered dream and most of all, piece after piece of heartache.

Peel off one strip of pain at a time. For each strip that's peeled, a ray of sunshine lies beneath waiting to surface and make itself known by introducing its joy.

A joy which cannot be seen by the confusion of pain and struggles.

A battered eye, a confused mentality an upside down smile are all pieces of heartache and "unbelievably" pieces of hope.

There is no room for tears nor is there room for a ray of sunshine. Too many heartaches and too many strips to peel. Too many hurtles to jump along with too many downfalls to get so much as a glimpse of hope.

Where is "Hope" I might ask?

Truth Be Told, it has always been right here!!

Peel the aches off one pain at a time.

Hope is where the heart is. Find that ray of sunshine. Let your pain lead you to that which lies beneath waiting its introduction.

Find your joy, peel off what does not belong to you and claim what does, with HOPE. ■



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Opportunities Recognized

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women's prison in Texas. I would like to speak to lawmakers about incentives for employers to hire our women. I want to continue to offer my experience, strength and hope to the women behind bars and let them know that no matter where you have been, you have the power to change the course of your life. ■

There's a Hug in Every Stitch

By Carol Waid, Founder and Director of Beyond Bars Program

This month marks the 4th year of the Quilt Project, created by Peggy Chandler.

I asked Peggy (my Mom), what inspired her to want to make quilts for the women of our program. She said, "I love them, even though I don't know them, because Carol loves them."

She went on to say, "In 2003, when I went to a graduation, at the prison, I was just recovering from a stroke. When I walked into the big gym, I was greeted with smiles and hugs, and the women were saying 'I want to hug 'Carol's Momma'. They didn't know me, but they loved me, because they loved Carol. I remember I stood in that circle of love and wanted to make sure I did not miss one hug. As I sat through the graduation and heard their stories, I realized that they were

New Quilt Presented



Pictured above (left to right) is Peggy Chandler and Yvette Davis.

just women, just people, who got in trouble and it could have easily been me."

I asked Peggy what message she wanted to pass on to those that have been blessed with a quilt and for those that have yet to come. Thoughtfully, she replied, "When I make my quilts there is a hug in every stitch. Every time you look at the quilt let it be a reminder that someone is thinking of you and pass this love onto someone else."

Since early 2004, twelve women have received a quilt, celebrating their 3rd year of being released back into the world. ■

Moving Along the Pathway

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figure everything out first is not as satisfying as just allowing things to be as they should at that exact moment to just feel.

What made your heart sing?
The unity within this entire group (all three classes) is awesome, overwhelming... to know that outside this place, before where we are now as individuals, we would have shown envy, jealousy, retribution and even hate towards some of those women. But as a whole,
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Art with Heart

A celebration of Truth Be Told with an Artistic Flair

May 18th from 3-5 p.m.

The Sanctuary

2600 Exposition Boulevard

Austin, Texas 78703

Silent art auction, food, music/entertainment

A free event to celebrate everyone involved with Truth Be Told

Donors, volunteers and graduates are invited to attend this free event.

We Need Your Help

Your help is needed with entertainment, food, and especially silent auction items for our Art with Heart event on May 18th. Please contact us at (512) 292-6200 or office@truth-be-told.org if you can help!

Our Top 5 Needs

1. Assistant for our Volunteer Coordinator (6-8 hrs/month)
2. Donated office space for TBT to establish a working office location (please call us to discuss details/possibilities)
3. Secretary/Treasurer to serve on our Board of Directors
4. Office Helpers/Administrative Assistants to work with our two co-founders
5. Event Coordinator and team members to assist in party planning

For additional information about any of the above, please e-mail office@truth-be-told.org, or call us at (512) 292-6200.

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now, we come together in love and compassion proves that we can live in harmony regardless of who we are or where we've been. It's such an overwhelming joy to my heart. ■

Behind the Scenes

Truth Be Told welcomes Glenda and Ruth to the board of directors and looks forward to their good ideas and work.

Glenda Stover retired in 2007 after spending 46 years in public education. She taught in secondary

schools for 12 years, but became a school psychologist after earning a master's degree from The University of Texas. Glenda is a fervent believer in the power of prayer and looks forward to the unique challenges and rewards ahead.

Ruth Talbot comes to Truth Be Told as a result of an article published in "Texas Woman" last winter. She served as a chaplain before officially retiring. Previously, Ruth started resort ministries and Bible studies in Texas, Minnesota and Florida. Though she has retired, Ruth has not retired from serving a loving God. ■

Calendar

MARCH 2008

- 26 Behind and Beyond Bars meeting: 6-7 p.m.
505 E. Huntland Dr., Suite 600, Austin

MAY 2008

- 18 "Art with Heart": Free event
The Sanctuary from 3-5 p.m.
- 23 Discovery Class Graduation
Lockhart prison from 3-5 p.m.
- 28 Behind and Beyond Bars meeting: 6-7 p.m.
LCRA Board Conference Room, Austin

JULY 2008

- 30 Behind and Beyond Bars meeting: 6-7 p.m.
Location to be announced.

If you are interested in attending, or need more information about any of the above events, please e-mail office@truth-be-told.org, or call us at (512) 292-6200.

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 online at www.truth-be-told.org or mailed to Truth Be Told, PO Box 161763, Austin, Texas 78716. You can reach us at 512-292-6200 or by e-mail at office@truth-be-told.org.

Board of Directors and Staff

Jackie Borcharding, *chair of the board*
Alison Brock, *media and PR liaison*
Chris Close, *director of strategic planning*
Robert Doyal, *director of communications*
Debbie Stover, *treasurer/project manager*
Glenda Stover
Ruth Talbot
Kim Vincent, *volunteer coordinator*

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*

