



Sept 17- Jan 18

## REACHING OUT FROM WITHIN

### Dear Friends:

“Big Sonia” is a Documentary Film about a 91 year-old , 4’8”, concentration camp survivor who lives in Kansas City. She drives herself to work six days a week to her tailor shop.

Sonia Warshawski also speaks about her experiences in three death camps where her entire family was killed except for her younger sister who escaped into the woods. She shares her powerful stories with students - and with incarcerated men and women.

Sonia’s granddaughter, Leah Warshawski, is a filmmaker in California who began working on the film six years ago.

About three years ago, I read about Sonia in a newspaper article and learned that she reads the Optimist Creed that hangs on a wall in her shop daily - to maintain her positive spirit. I knew immediately that I had to find her and bring her to ROFW meetings to read the Optimist Creed with our members.

Her first prison visit was to Lansing Medium and the bonding between the men and Sonia was profound. Leah captured the connection on film and even went back to interview Brian Betts and Damien Windsor who are in the film. “Big Sonia” is the perfect title for a petite woman who makes such a big impact on her audiences.

Our ROFW Board of Directors sponsored a VIP screening of the film on October 8. Joe Norwood, Kansas Secretary of Corrections, and Todd Fertig, Public Information Officer, attended and realized why Sonia’s story has had such a powerful imprint on those who have seen the film in all of the prisons in Lansing and Topeka.

The Documentary has been shown in over 20 film festivals across the country and audience feedback invariably references Sonia’s work in prisons. We are currently making plans to bring “Big Sonia” to every Kansas prison.

We are also completing schedules to celebrate our annual Recognition Banquets. My excitement about being with with all of you is shifting into high gear.

Speaking of Recognition - I want to express infinite gratitude to Isaac Allen, a member of ROFW at Ellsworth, who accomplished his goal to translate the Blue Book into Spanish.

The five-year project will make it possible for so many more men and women to benefit from our extraordinary curriculum in a language they can understand.

ISAAC, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, from all of us with ROFW.

See you soon,  
SuEllen

## COURAGE TO CHANGE

### (Courage to) CHANGE

Change, like conflict, is inevitable.

We cannot avoid it. It happens whether or not we are ready for it. Sometimes we embrace change, yet most often I think we try to avoid it or run from it. We welcome what we know while we are apprehensive of what we do not know.

How we face change and what we do in the midst of it defines who we are. Is courage defined by someone's location? Is courage different for people who are in prison? Is it easier or harder to have courage in certain circumstances? How do we "find" courage?

Courage – strength in the face of pain or grief – has many synonyms: bravery, nerve, valor, audacity, mettle, resolution and guts. What does courage have to do with ROFW?

For those who do not know, the cover of the Blue Book states that Reaching Out From Within is "A Self-Help Source Book Created By Inmates & Others Who Believe We All Have The Courage To Change".

Changing who we are and what we do is the only way to improve ourselves. If change can be so good, why do we often try to avoid it? Is it because we lack the courage to change? Are we afraid of failure? Are we simply unsure of what change may bring?

My question for you, as members of ROFW, is how, or where, do you find the courage to change?

Gregory Winship  
President of the Board

## Inside & Out

Published for the benefit of ROFW members  
by  
Reaching Out From Within  
P.O. Box 8527, Prairie Village, Ks 66208  
greg.rofw@gmail.com

### SUBMISSIONS

Want to share an article, story, poem, or group update? Please do!

Newsletters are bi-monthly. Newsletters for 2018 will be published in January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The next issue will be March. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please submit to [greg.rofw@gmail.com](mailto:greg.rofw@gmail.com) for consideration by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

### From the President of the Board and Acting Executive Director:

My name is Gregory Winship and I am the President of the Board of Directors for Reaching Out From Within. I have served on the Board since 2014 and became President in April 2017 when Jason Miles stepped down. Some of you may know that I have been a KDOC Volunteer since 2012 mostly at the Lansing Correctional Facility and a Mentor in the Mentoring4Success program since 2014. Since September, I have also been filling in part time as the Acting Executive Director of our organization. This is a temporary position only until we can hire a full time Director later this year.

In my full time job, I work as a Restorative Justice Strategist and Training Manager for the Center for Conflict Resolution, a nonprofit organization in Kansas City, MO. I work in area schools and in the Kansas City community helping others resolve differences without resorting to violence. My job also allows me to teach conflict resolution, trauma awareness and resilience and restorative justice in prisons, halfway houses and reentry centers in Missouri and we just completed a program at the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, KS.

In December, I was fortunate to be able to travel to fourteen of our seventeen ROFW banquets. I met many of you along with our volunteer sponsors and KDOC staff who support ROFW as I do at the events. While attending each banquet, I got to learn a little bit about those who were there and what ROFW means to them. I am convinced that our members and volunteers are the heartbeat of ROFW.

That is why, as acting Executive Director and also as President, I pledged to revisit some of the group meetings to listen to your stories and find out what you get out of ROFW. I also want to share my experiences and my journey and tell you more about why I believe in ROFW. So, I look forward to seeing many of you again in the next few months, as my schedule allows, to connect with you and hear more about what you do and plan for the future of Reaching Out From Within.

Gregory Winship  
President of the Board



Photo by Howard Zehr

# Group Updates

ROFW Winfield

**INSIDE&OUT**

Sept 17- Jan 18

Greetings and Salutations from ROFW Winfield. The heat is upon us. So be aware of what your body is telling you. Stay hydrated and cool if you can.

## ROFW making the World a better place!

Mr. Shaffer, our current Chairman, has been avidly crocheting for some 2 ½ years now. He picked up the hobby as a way to pass time in a constructive manner. It allows him to contribute something of himself, his newly discovered talent, his creativity, and is a reflection of the nature of the person that he is to his family and friends.

He expresses his talents through the many hats, scarves and afghans he has created. At the end of last year, our group agreed to spend some money on yarn to make an afghan for our 1st annual "Relay For Life Cancer Walk," to be held in June of this year. June is Cancer Awareness month. Along with our groups efforts of design and creativity, Mr. Shaffer agreed to put in the labor of crocheting the afghan. Upon completion, the afghan was donated to the American Cancer Society, which was auctioned off for \$70.00 at the Winfield Annual Relay for Life event on the 18th of June held at Southwester College in Winfield.

As you will see from the picture, the afghan is composed of the following: there were 63 squares total. Sixteen were made with the cancer ribbon in the center in varying designated cancer colors. Forty-seven were accent colored squares.

There was ten different colors used. The colors and their meaning are: **Lavender** – All cancers, **Purple** – Pancreatic cancer, **Dark Blue** – Colon cancer, **Yellow** – Sarcoma/Bone cancers, **Teal** – Ovarian cancer, **Pink** – Breast cancer, **Gold** – Childhood cancers, **Green** – Gallbladder cancer, **Light Blue** – Prostate cancer, **Burgundy** – Multiple Myeloma.

It took 275 working hours to crochet. There are well over 102,000 single crocheted stitches through-out the afghan. The finished dimensions including the multiple colored border worked out to be about 6 by 8 ½ foot. The 16 cancer ribbon squares were arranged in the shape of the cancer ribbon. Needless to say, it is beautiful. This is just another example of ROFW members donating to the local communities and worthwhile organizations. Many thanks go to Mr. Shaffer for his selfless effort to sacrifice his time and talents to such a worthy cause as cancer research.

We also held a our 1st annual "Relay For Life Cancer Walk here at WCF on the 17th of June. Inmates donated from their personal accounts a total of \$140.00. In total between personal accounts and the afghan auction we generated \$210.00 for cancer research.

# Group Updates

## ROFW Winfield

(Continued from previous page)

Although the turn out was a bit less than we hoped for, we will look forward to next year for more robust participation.

Currently, our numbers are low here in Winfield. This situation is due mostly to the nature of the facility. We have a lot of traffic moving through WCF and off to work release. This situation allows for limited permanent residence which comprises most of the 12 or so members. Small but persistent, we are providing resources to the community as well as offenders per our mission statements.

We have started the Blue Book section on "Spirituality" this month (June). While in Oswego, I had written a small dissertation on the "Properties of Spirituality" but was transferred to WCF before I got to share it. This small dissertation has turned into a major work which I will be sharing in a future newsletter.

The very best to all the ROFW members worldwide from your brothers in Winfield.

**ROFW making the World a better place!**

Respectfully,  
Henry H. Lippincott  
ROFW Newsletter Editor  
Sept 17

# INSIDE&OUT

## Sept 17- Jan 18

### LCF Minimum

July 1, 2017

Salutations from the East Hill. We've had a great time here this summer (if that's possible in prison)! Marc S. took us on an in depth journey regarding "respect:" what we think it is and why. We were privileged to host a few visitors who got to see what actually goes on at ROFW meetings.

Our main event in August was our Summer Summit. The theme of the summit was "Prison Did This To Me." The focus was perception. While some of the men incarcerated with us believe prison is the reason life is bad, ROFW group members believe prison can contribute in a positive way to necessary change.

Greg Winship, the president of our parent organization, spoke about his transition from prison to freedom and his accomplishments. Larry H., an alumnus, made it quite clear that even though you may not be able to pick your family you get to choose who you hang with. Group member Danny P. gave testimonial to his radical transformation from the person he was when entering prison to the person he is today: an example of a man who works continuously to improve his social skills, while striving to achieve the goals he set for himself that will lead to regaining his freedom.

Much love,  
J. Dubb

# Group Updates

ROFW LCF Minimum

**INSIDE&OUT**

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July 1, 2017

Here at LCF Minimum ROFW we recently celebrated our Victory Day, where we enjoyed refreshments and a shared dialogue about a variety of topics.

We would like to thank members of the Missouri Department of Corrections from Joplin who visited our group with SuEllen Fried in order to experience firsthand how ROFW works. These women informed us of their similar line of work with incarcerated men in Missouri, and how they are interested in starting ROFW at their facility. We also want to thank ROFW volunteer Mitch Crane who visited with us, coming all the way from North Carolina where he sponsors a medium custody ROFW group.

Over the last couple of months we have been proud to welcome three new members. These men have already added valuable input and an enormous amount of experience in dealing with many of the issues we address in our Blue Book discussions. It has been an honor getting to know these men and we look forward to their continued participation.

We are holding our annual election of officer positions in accordance with our group bylaws during the last meeting in June. All positions will be filled.

We are preparing for a bike-a-thon on July 22nd where incarcerated men will be given the opportunity to ride a bicycle for a small donation to Harvesters. This will be a great event for all involved and will serve an even greater cause. We are also planning for our Summer Summit in August, which is an informative and entertaining event. We will have inspiration speakers from both inside and outside, musical performances, and we will present a skit.

I would like to give a special thanks to all LCF Minimum ROFW members and staff who had anything to do with celebrating Mother's Day. ROFW members put together a Mother's Day banner and posted in visitation, then gave roses to all the women who attended visit that day. This selfless and generous act by ROFW members was greatly appreciated by all of those present that day. We would also like to continue to thank our volunteers who join us faithfully every week: Mr. Head and Mr. Thompson. Thank you so much for your time and effort. You guys are greatly appreciated.

Naazir J.

# Group Updates

Lansing Minimum

**INSIDE&OUT**

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Lansing Minimum ROFW GED Program

“Even though we are incarcerated we can still help those in need.”

When I was asked to write an article about our ROFW GED program at Lansing Minimum, I felt the timing left something to be desired. A few hours earlier I had received news of my 3rd PRB pass and everything that meant to my life hadn't quite sunk in yet. In reflection, however, I've realized how much being a GED tutor has meant to me.

I began tutoring in December of 2014. At first I was as much a student as everyone else, helping where I could and trying to find my place in the fabric of the class. At that time there were a number of capable tutors and I was able to work with people primarily one on one. The student I had been working with passed the next GED test. I could see the positive impact this had on the new GED graduate, although he may not have realized it himself. It wasn't just about a piece of paper or a passing grade, it was knowing that he could accomplish something he had set his mind on and fully applied himself to. I know from personal experience how important believing in yourself is and, once you have it, how powerful it can be.

I believe all of my peers who participate in the GED program gain something in this regard. Sometimes the best lessons can come from not passing and digging deep to find the perseverance to continue on and try again. I find myself caring more than I ever thought I would about the outcomes of everyone in the class.

Sometimes my role consists of pushing people, encouraging their attendance at class and dedication to passing the test. It's for their own good. I think once they have accomplished their GED goal it can propel them towards knowing they can have a better future. Our belief that “even though we are incarcerated we can help those in need” can be modified to “because we are human we can help those in need.”

More than one third of the people incarcerated with KDOC have not completed their high school education and they need our help. Our ROFW group has taken on helping our peers with their need for a high school education by providing a facility-supported GED program. I am thankful that I've been able to work with and get to know so many people through the program and I hope I've been able to help them along the way.

Greg B.  
Sept 17

**NOTE: The GED program at LCF Minimum produced 15 GED graduates in fiscal year 2016.**

# Group Updates

## ROFW Larned

Every month the Larned ROFW group holds a "Bulletin Board" contest where members submit their poems, art, or other writings. This is one of our entries:

### **Life, Spirit, Respect**

According to Native American Traditions, everything that the Creator made, whether animal or not, has a Spirit.

Therefore, all things are related and all things are sacred. Relationships between humans, Mother Earth, all creatures and the Ancestors are well defined. The Earth provides for the people and all others put on this planet by the Creator.

People are therefore EXPECTED to RESPECT the Earth. Many animals willingly sacrifice themselves to feed and clothe the people, who in consequence, are obliged to show respect for them. The Ancestors, who dwell in the Realms of the Sprit World, gave life to those who now live, and the living in return their respect their Ancestors.

Humans must also respect their living kin and must provide and care for each other in order to survive.

This complex system of mutual respect is expressed not only in daily life, but also in ritual and ceremonial practices.

Every traditional rite and ceremony celebrates the spirit that unites all things on Earth and reaffirms the sacred Relationship.

Member – Neil Avery  
Sept 17

# INSIDE&OUT

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### **DONATION OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE**

To the men and women dedicated to preserving our country's freedom.

In the spring and summer of 2017, ROFW members, staff and residents of Larned Correctional Facility donated their money to purchase a small token of appreciation for the current and future residents of "Passageways."

We, as a community of believers of healing and second chances presented Passageways with the book "Portraits of Courage: A Commander in Chiefs Tribute to America's Warriors" by George W. Bush.

This book helps us to see some of the brave men and women who valiantly fought for the freedoms we enjoy. This small donation does not amount to even a fraction of what we owe them.

Even though we are incarcerated, we can still show our appreciation to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

ROFW – Larned Correctional Facility  
Sept 17

# ROFW December 2017 Newsletter

**INSIDE&OUT**  
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## Ellsworth

Greetings fellow members!!! We at the Ellsworth Chapter wish you and all of the members nationwide many Holiday wishes. This year has been filled with many delightful accomplishments and activities as we continue to spread the message of Reaching Out From Within here at Ellsworth.

Earlier this year, we were fortunate that SuEllen and our other volunteers were able to coordinate the showing of the Big Sonia documentary here at the facility for the entire population's viewing pleasure and as you can imagine it turned out to be an inspiring and uplifting event. It received great reviews from staff and inmates alike and really touched home with a lot of people throughout the facility. For that, we are truly thankful for Big Sonia and all of the people at ROFW that were able to make that happen.

Much like all of our many chapters we just finished up with our Holiday banquet and without question, everyone had a wonderful time. We were lucky to be able to hear from all of our volunteers as well as SuEllen and our new president, Greg Winship, and get the rundown on many of the fresh and exciting opportunities that are upcoming for the New Year and beyond. The food was great and the company was even better. It was a great ending to a great year here at the Ellsworth chapter. We hope that the upcoming year will provide just as much inspiration and optimism so that the message of nonviolence can continue to create change in so many people's lives. To all of the members out there, we hope that you had a great year and that it carries over into 2018 as well!!!!!!

Until next time...



December 7, 2017 - Reaching Out From Within Banquet

# Group Updates

Oswego

**INSIDE&OUT**

Sept 17- Jan 18

We at the ROFW organization at Oswego (the best geriatric prison in Kansas) have been busy. In November we had board elections. Currently our executive board is made up as follows:

Chairman – L. Sanders

Vice-Chairman – J. Crocker

Record Officer – S. White

Treasurer – J Blalack

Sgt. At Arms – D. Williams

Reporter – D. Morris

On December 2, we had our annual banquet. Our special guests from headquarters were: Greg Winship, ROFW President; SuEllen Fried, ROFW Co-Founder and guest speaker; along with Special Volunteer Marti Resch. Our local guests were Mr. Peter Cook, C.I.I. Brill and Mrs. Brill. SuEllen spoke about the creation of the Blue Book and the importance of everyone participating in the discussion questions. Everyone enjoyed the banquet and no one left hungry.

Every week we work on a topic to promote our understanding of the ideals from the Blue Book. While it is important to the understanding why other people do what they do, it is also necessary that we understand ourselves. A recent article from The Wall Street Journal, by Dan Ariely, points out an interesting behavior that may be helpful when studying perceptions (Blue Book 5-13).

A behavior described as the “fundamental attribution error” is when we see the good things that happen to us as the product of our own doing and bad things as the result of outside circumstance. I was successful because I worked hard. I failed because I didn’t have the breaks that other people had.

Conversely, we tend to attribute good things that happen to other people to external circumstances and bad things to their own doing. Of course he was successful; his parents gave him every break. He failed because he was lazy.

We believe that we can learn from our own mistakes because mistakes aren’t really about us. We think they involve external circumstances that we can learn to handle better.

We need to think about this when we look at other people’s failures, and maybe even limit the blame we assign to them, as we would with our own failures.

# Group Updates

Larned and EFC

**INSIDE&OUT**

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## What ROFW means to me

Reaching Out From Within is a positive place in a very negative situation. The people that are involved want to be better, to do better than they have been and done. That attitude, in and of itself, is hard to find in prison.

Our meetings are supposed to be in confidence. No one, outside of the members, should hear anything of what is said during a meeting. This makes it a safe place to express or address things more freely than in any other situation here.

As a group, it allows us, as inmates, to do something positive for the community outside. The actions may not change any opinions, but they are things that each member can look at and be proud of. They can think to themselves, "I helped someone today".

In a cavern, even a candle can seem very bright. This group, for me, is providing that candle in the darkness.

David E. McClure  
0115182  
ROFW Larned  
Jan 2018

## Spirit

Spirit, it cannot be broken and it cannot be stolen away.

A victim in the throes of despair might feel otherwise.

But in truth the spirit remains, sometimes buried but never fully removed.

The physical power of the body cannot be separated from the rationale of the mind and the emotions of the heart. They are one and the same; a compilation of a singular being. It is in the harmony of these three: body, mind, and heart, that we find spirit.

How many have tried to steal the loves, the religions of the people. They seek to steal the spirit, but ultimately they fail. This I must believe, because without spirit there is only death, but it is a resilient thing the flame of spirit; indomitable and ever striving. In some at least it will always survive. It may come to be buried but never stolen.

Spirit in every language; in every time and every place; the word has a strength and determination to it. It's a hero's strength, a mother's resilience, a poor man's armor.

It cannot be broken, and it cannot be taken away.

This I will always believe.

Written by Vernon Gilliland  
ECF  
Jan 2018

# Group Updates

**INSIDE:OUT**

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United we stand – Divided we fall

“A tribute to Reaching Out From Within”

Locked up behind this fence,  
Surviving in this prison.  
Yes my body is incarcerated but my soul does my heart's bidding,  
Before I found myself, I felt something missing.

Since I discovered my purpose, crystal clear is my vision.  
My mind is finally free on the inside, now that reaching out from within has  
Become my mission.  
I know we can break the cycles of violence and all its evil living.

Striving with each other's help, I believe we can get it.  
We choose to eliminate hate and induce change,  
Look deep within ourselves and really start digging.  
We must forgive those that hurt us and ask to be forgiven.  
For united we stand and we fall with division.

It is not easy but if we want to change, want to become the best person we can become, we need to start within ourselves. We need to plant the seed of change in our own minds and heart. Cultivate our character with love, compassion, and understanding. Water and nurture our morals and principles with dignity. Be an example and reach out to others. Show integrity.

These are just a few of the many things that reaching out from within has helped me realize and put in to practice. Reaching out from within has helped give me tools and knowledge to be able to strive to be the best me. Has helped me realize I must take responsibility for my own life and hold myself accountable for not only my actions, but my thoughts and reactions in response to situations.

Reaching out from within” has helped me accept the fact that it is okay to let people help me. I now realize and understand that everyone has something to teach us, and, United we stand – Divided we fall.

David Summers  
Jan 2018

# Group Updates

Winfield

**INSIDE&OUT**

Sept 17- Jan 18

## Community agency receives equipment donation

Angels in the Attic, a thrift store and assistance pantry located in Arkansas City, and long supported by WCF ROFW, received a brand new hand truck during a delivery made on November 15, 2017. Previous fundraising permitted purchase of the gift.

The foldable equipment serves as either a two- or four-wheel transport for loads up to 300 pounds. This improves the safety and efficiency of moving large or heavy loads across the agency's expansive building. That was a need noticed by ROFW to be at the organization once a month; the group plans to continue this practice.

Brady Degnan, chapter public liaison, has been to the Angles in the Attic facility multiple times. He observed volunteers straining or struggling with numerous, substantial boxes of food product, for example.

"These are people who, because of their demographics, were having to work overly hard to accomplish what they were doing," Degnan said.

Consequently, the group was inspired to provide practical equipment as opposed to a cash donation. Contacts with Fastenal Representatives, nurtured by chapter secretary Briant Smith within his job on the WCF maintenance crew, assisted with the item selection and purchase.

Kim Baughman, WCF pre-release counselor and ROFW sponsor, attended the personal delivery to Angels in the Attic. Ms Baughman stated that the folks at the agency were overjoyed and quite emotional about the presentation.

Billy Downs, ROFW member, represented the group during the presentation. He remarked that, "I have several children and have been around many others, so I recognized deep, true joy on someone's face. I saw that from the volunteers when they received it [the hand truck]."

Downs continued, "To me, this gave the clearest sense I've had of what ROFW really does and the difference and contribution it can make to the community."

Degnan summarized the purpose of this contribution by referencing the chapter mission and beliefs statements read aloud to begin each meeting.

"We were giving to the community through charitable works by donating to a non-profit organization. We believe that even though we are incarcerated, we can help those in need."

### Angels in the Attic Volunteers from ROFW

Mark Alvis

Billy Brown

Mitchell Bruce

Brady Degnan

William Downs

Kristopher Greer

Jeremy Johnston

Timothy Ledesma

Stephen Vanderlinden

# Group Updates

Winfield

**INSIDE&OUT**

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## Speakers conclude busy fall semester

During the fall semester of the school year, Reaching Out From Within at the Winfield Correctional Facility provided insight to many high school students. The ultimate intent was to steer listeners away from destructive decisions. Students and staff from Wichita East High School, Winfield High School, Wichita Heights High School, and Rose Hill High School comprised recent audiences.

Mark Alvis, ROFW program director, believes the speaking engagements program continues to take major steps in the right direction.

“We have had many speaking engagements in which we have had a chance to make a difference in the lives of many students who have had the opportunity to hear the speaking participants give their personals,” Alvis stated.

In a personal, a ROFW member presents major elements of his life from the earliest significant memory to the beginning of the current incarceration. Presenting patterns and connections among events and decisions in life receives emphasis; the desire is to alert students about how trouble starts, and to encourage listeners to avoid the mistakes and consequences of the speaker’s past. These speeches typically last 12-15 minutes.

“We were also able to speak on a variety of topics that range from drugs, gangs, and friends. We also talked about being able to talk to the school counselor, Resource Officer, as well as any other adult or friend about any issue the student might be faced with,” Alvis said.

“There were many great questions asked that we tried our best to answer. The most asked question that we came across was what were we doing different to prepare for our release back into society,” Alvis revealed.

Many of the speaking engagements take place onsite at WCF. As part of those, students take a short tour of the facility so they may see a bit what life is like here on a daily basis.

Speakers at these engagements have met qualifications for the “speaker’s bureau” as outlined in the chapter bylaws. These requirements include being an active member, participating in a public speakers workshop coordinated by the program director about every three months, remaining free of disciplinary reports for 30 days prior to a speaking engagement, and avoiding summary judgments for the previous 15 days. Further, for off-site presentations, the speakers incentive level must be three, while onsite opportunities are to open incentive levels one and two.

Leading up to an engagement, speakers are permitted multiple practice runs during regular chapter meetings. At these times, confidence grows, and encouragement and constructive feedback come from fellow members.

Alvis believes speaking participants went above and beyond to give back to the community.

“The speaking participants represented ROFW with class and would make the ROFW members proud in every way possible.” -Mark concluded.

Speakers this year included Mark Alvis, Mitchell Bruce, Brady Degan, William Downs, Timothy Ledesma and Stephen Vanderlinden.

-Mark Alvis, contributing

# Group Updates

Winfield

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## Banquet Speakers provide Catchwords

Darrel Ballinger, a former Winfield ROFW chapter member, unknowingly stumbled upon a theme for the 2017 WCF ROFW recognition banquet when he stated that everyone had a catch phrase when he resided at the facility.

Messages offered by banquet guests can be summarized even more briefly by words instead of phrases. I present first the description that, in light of how they were spoken, can most easily apply to all ROFW members regardless of facility. May you be encouraged!

### **Influential**

Mr. Ballinger told of an experience he had when leaving a Sutherland's store.

In the parking lot, as he prepared to leave, someone yelled out Mr. Ballinger's name from a distance. The other person revealed his presence in a student group to whom Mr. Ballinger had spoken about five years earlier. The former student expressed gratitude to Mr. Ballinger for that presentation and confirmed it had altered the student's path and gave him direction toward success.

The lesson for those in ROFW, according to Mr. Ballinger, is that we can never be sure how, but we do have influence.

### **Redeemable**

Jennifer White, founded and directed ICT SOS. The Wichita-based agency supports victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking.

Ms. White reflected on how easily someone in her role could settle into a dismissive attitude toward criminal offenders in a victims versus perpetrator mindset. Her perspective, however, goes deeper.

"My work is with victims and on their behalf. However, it is groups like yours, because of what you do and what you are about, that demonstrate that people are redeemable," Ms White proclaimed.

She implored us to continue pursuing our personal changes to prepare us to provide additional good to society.

### **Special**

SuEllen Fried, ROFW founder, reminded attendees of the special place Winfield Correctional Facility has in the history of ROFW. Indeed, as you know if you have read the introduction to the Blue Book, Winfield was the second facility to develop a chapter after Greg Musselman brought the concept with him from Lansing.

### **Demanding**

Electra Knowles, WCF compliance coordinator, assured us that she means this label in the most positive and appreciative way.

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Winfield

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She clarified that the dictionary defines demanding as “making others work hard to meet high standards.” She also emphasized that to get things done, one has to be demanding in a reasonable, healthy and positive manner. This can be called assertiveness.

As a gatekeeper for proposals put forth by ROFW, Mr. Knowles affirmed that the group “stands out,” for what it does, and she is “blessed to be a part of this [what ROFW is doing].” Consequently, it is her plan to be a “huge advocate” for the chapter.

## **Honored**

Technically, this word was used in relation to a financial donation made to ICT SOS by WCF ROFW in 2017. Ms. White assured us that the organization felt honored by the contribution. Yet, the term transfers to a personal level as well.

“It may not be a big deal for church or business to make a donation given the amount of money they may have, but I understand the sacrifice you made for us with your gift,” Ms. White affirmed.

Consequently, she believes ROFW deserves to be honored. Her attendance and commitment to support not only the cause of ROFW but its individual members -as with all who banquet guests -certainly honored us deeply.

## **Chapter chairman reflects on 2017**

I would like to thank the WCF staff for a great ROFW year. I’ve been here going on four years, I feel the relationship we have is the strongest it’s been.

There have been several exciting things we have done in 2017.

We blessed inmates’ mothers who visited on Mother’s Day with a single carnation. Inmates presented these to their own mothers. Several inmates thanked us for providing this opportunity.

We participated in Sexual Assault Month activities. Consequently, we educated men on what ROFW is about by being able to inform them about lessons we do that provide understanding of the nature, consequences, and preventative measures of sexual assault.

We participated in the relay for Life Cancer Walk along with donating a cancer awareness afghan for auction then donating the proceeds.

Wesley Medical Center received more than 100 crocheted baby hats for preemies and full-term infants.

Many other entities received donations: Winfield Community Food Pantry, Community Learning Center, Working Men of Christ, ICT SOS, Angels in the Attic, Wichita Sexual Assault Center, Cowly County Sexual Assault Center, and WCF GED.

As a group, we are very proud and thankful for the opportunity to help the community as we have in 2017. None of it would have been done without inmate participation in fundraisers along with WCF staff. We thank you all and look forward to a great 2018!

Heather Shaffer, chapter chairman, contributing

# Group Updates

Lansing Minimum

**INSIDE&OUT**

Sept 17- Jan 18

## Bad Choices

The question was brought to me: “What would you tell yourself if you could go back in time before life went wrong, that may make a difference?” It is such an interesting thought, to be able to warn myself away from the many bad choices I made early on in my life. Kind of like a “do over”. You see, when you’re young you don’t really understand that choices have consequences. You believe that if you do something, if you make a mistake, that you can just apologize, move on, learn from your decision and then everything is okay. At this stage in your life it is difficult to imagine that there are choices that you can make that will change your life for the worse, choices that could land you in prison for a very long, long time. Losing your life before you are even developed enough emotionally or mentally to understand the consequences; losing 40 years over a bad choice you made as a child, and no amount of “sorry” or “I made a mistake” can take that back. From the moment you choose to act on the decision you make, there is nothing left but to endure. There are many days I wish I could go back and make myself understand this truth.

I would also tell myself how important an education is to my healthy development. Of course you can learn from your mistakes, but that’s often not the safest way to gain wisdom. I think the wisest man is the one who can learn from the examples of others. It’s very critical to learn to listen to your elders. They’ve walked the path before you and may be able to pass back information that can help you make a better choice. Be an observer. Pay attention to what happens around you. Listen more than you talk and realize that you will be a student for life. Always be willing to learn as much as you can and gain skills in a variety of different areas. If you do this I promise it will increase your chances of success in life. The world is a big place filled with many different perspectives. Be open-minded and remember that no one is born all knowing.

Another important bit of advice I would share is: “Value your time and be careful of the company you keep”. Time is precious. There isn’t an unlimited amount of it, so be very picky how you use it and who you share it with. There will be many people that come across your path in life. Not all will benefit you in your pursuit of happiness and growth. A rule that I use now to help determine if a person is someone I should interact with is from the Bible. I pay attention to the fruit that the tree bears. An apple tree cannot produce grapes. If a person’s words don’t line up with their actions it will be a bad choice to spend time with them.

Rather choose to spend time with people who are doing the things that you hope to one day do. People who exhibit the same type of character that you want to have. Those who will understand and support you in your endeavor to achieve the goals you have set for yourself.

Lastly, and I think most importantly, I would tell you that love is the greatest gift. For there to be anything worth knowing or worth having, there has to be love. First, love yourself. Understand your worth and never allow someone to misuse, mistreat, or abuse you. No one is above you or beneath you.

# Group Updates

**INSIDE&OUT**

Lansing Minimum/Winfield Sept 17- Jan 18

(Continued from previous page)

We are all created equal even though there are those who will try to teach you different. Circumstances in the world will try to make you believe that this is not the absolute truth, but you have to be stronger than the circumstances. Always treat people the way you want to be treated, even when they don't do the same. We are not all on the same level in our growth and development, but that does not excuse you from being the best example to others that you can be.

I feel like if I could have taken these few ideas and applied them to my life while young, my life would now be so much better. I believe these tips will make me a successful person. I am hoping that, even though going back in time to change my own life is only wishful thinking, these words will help someone else early in their journey.

Murice H.  
January 2018

## **“Individual development” milestone reached**

### **Winfield**

In November, an accomplishment was attained that long-time members say they have not experienced at Winfield. The final of 12 sessions of the “Advanced Individual Development” (AID) material was completed.

AID's primary goal is to help build a strong base of personal understanding in order to increase confidence, knowledge of better social development skills, and personal awareness. Techniques are learned for personal ego development and solid methods for maintaining better self-control and responsible behavior. The course helps to defeat and to avoid demoralization by promoting confidence, awareness, and responsible thinking.

Concepts in the course include the following:

- The art and skill of negotiating
- Self-control and anxiety reduction
- Prejudice and rational judgments
- Goal setting techniques
- Self-inventory methods
- Time management and productive behavior
- Forming beliefs about ourselves and others
- Developing our spiritual selves
- Positive mental attitude
- Techniques for self-evaluation and self-acceptance
- Examining our role in society

Responsibility for leading sessions weekly was spread to different members as much as possible. Because the AID documents do not include previously created questions, facilitators received the additional benefit of practicing active listening, creative thinking and questioning techniques to make discussion engaging and meaningful.