

# REACHING OUT *from Within*



## From Co-Founder SuEllen Fried

Dear ROFW MEMBERS:

I wish you could have been with Roger Werholtz and me when we gave a workshop at the American Correctional Association conference in Florida recently! The people who attended the workshop were so inspired by the amazing work you do for yourselves and others.

I talked about the many ways you Give Back within the prisons to the families of offenders and to your communities. We passed around copies of the Blue Book and Newsletters so they could grasp the essence of Reaching Out From Within.

But what really captured the moment were the comments of former KDOC Secretary Werholtz. He spoke about our program from the perspective of the Administration. He told about the influence you have on the correctional facilities, how you foster a sense of calm and set an example for the prison population.

He related the support that you have deservedly received from the staff liaisons over the years. He recounted that every staff member that has ever been assigned to ROFW has had such positive regard for the power of your meetings and actions.

I hope you can imagine how remarkable it was for a former Secretary of Corrections to travel to a national meeting to pay tribute to you. It was a profound experience for me, and I wanted to share it with you because of everything you do to have earned this extraordinary praise. ■

**W**ith this issue of *Inside & Out*, we welcome a new ROFW group—the Larned Mental Health Correctional Facility-Central Unit. That brings the total number of ROFW groups to 15!

Members of the LMHCF-West Unit played a key role in launching the new group (see pages 6-7). We congratulate all the members involved in this wonderful new venture, and we offer a special thanks to sponsor Lana Hopkins.

### Among the other highlights in this issue...

- Members at El Dorado Correctional Facility sponsor Character First classes for the general inmate population (page 3).
- Members at the Topeka Correctional Facility-Med/Max Unit perform a powerful play attended by more than 50 outside guests (pages 3-4).
- Members at Lansing Correctional Facility-Minimum Unit sign up 22 new members at a special summer summit (page 5).
- Co-founder SuEllen Fried reports on a ROFW workshop at the American Corrections Association conference in Florida (page 1).
- Pres. Russ Thompson presents a recidivism study that shows ROFW members do much better upon release than the general KDOC population (page 2).
- And, you'll find the Annual Recognition Banquet schedule on page 8.

It's great to hear from each ROFW group.

Paul Showalter, Executive Director

## Message from President Russ Thompson

I have been studying the impact of ROFW participation on recidivism. Recidivism is measured in the percent of offenders who return to prison.

Looking at data from two ROFW groups, both male, we have determined that anyone who attends 4 or more meetings is less likely to return to prison.

Those who had attended at least 4 meetings had a recidivism rate of 19% for one group and 24% for the other. Both rates were much better (lower) than the rate for the general KDOC population, which was 44% in FY2007 (down from 55% a decade earlier).

But some ROFW members did even better. Members attending 20 or more meetings had a recidivism rate of only 15% to 18%.

The message is clear for those who want to get out and stay out—ROFW group participation makes a difference. The more meetings you attend inside, the greater your chance for success on the outside.

### Expanding the study to all ROFW groups

We are committed under a new grant to expand our recidivism study to all ROFW groups. Group sponsors are collecting attendance data from the period June 1, 2010--May 31, 2011 and providing names of members released June 1, 2011—July 31, 2011. Your help in collecting that information is appreciated.

### Volunteer contributions

Volunteer contributions for the first and second quarters (January-March and April-June) were:

<u>1st Qtr</u>	<u>2nd Qtr</u>	
2365	3294	Miles driven
359	327	Hours served

Thanks to these volunteers for providing data for the 2nd quarter: Judy Beiriger, Gary Duncan, SuEllen Fried, Lew Goetz, Martha Lavan, Helen Nelson, Paul Showalter, Russ Thompson, and Janet Weiblen.

For the other volunteers, it is not too late to get me your data for the first and second quarter. Please keep track of this data for us. We use it in our grant applications. ■

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## News and Views from ROFW Groups

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### Hutchinson Correctional Facility- Maximum (Central Unit)

We have been busy as of late. We recently had a successful fundraiser which allowed us to make some generous donations to some very worthy organizations. The receiving organizations were very grateful and we are already planning for future donations.

We have welcomed four new members into our group at the Central Unit and we wish all of them luck and inner peace. We are teaching the new members, and continue ourselves, to believe in the Optimist Creed and all that Reaching Out from Within stands for and means to us. Until next time,

Leslie Keith, Jr.

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### El Dorado Correctional Facility

Greetings from ROFW here at the El Dorado Correctional Facility.

We had the fourth annual cancer walk on June 4, 2011, for the American Cancer Society. We teamed up with the Excel Jaycees and various inmates to help raise a total of \$3,930. Thanks to all the inmates that helped make this a success. We enjoy helping the American Cancer Society with this worthy cause. Just think about the people's lives that are saved each year.

Back in June, we had Mr. Paul Showalter come down from the Kansas City office to sit in on one of our weekly meetings. The ROFW El Dorado chapter was very pleased with what Mr. Showalter had to say about the Kansas City office and all the good things that are to come in the future. It sounds like Reaching Out From Within is going to grow even bigger this year.

## Where I Used to Be

By Khalani Britt

*So, here's the thing.  
I'm no longer where I used to be.  
Broken down like shattered glass, jagged  
edges. Be careful not to touch. Might cut your hand if you  
come too close.*

*Weary from long days and scattered nights.  
Demons from my past tormented me. Each  
Failure replayed in my head. And nightmares  
Are disguised as dreams.*

*Promises broken over and over. Fear of what  
I could be chokes me, until my will is  
turned over. I drown my soul with drugs &  
alcohol like a country song. It's numb behind  
my eyes. I'm a shell of a woman. My  
Spirit doesn't fight anymore. I think it  
finally died.*

*Driven to a bathroom with a pipe and  
A knife. Believing there was no reason  
To live, I prepared to take my own  
Life. The fear that once consumed pushes  
me to resume. The Spirit within me  
is alive, but it's very small whispering  
in a still small voice saying, "This isn't the  
end at all."*

*I run from that moment believing maybe  
There's something better.  
I pull up from the ground. Day for day  
finally making progress. Oh shit, I've fallen back down.*

*Though my prison is physical and the  
Walls try to push in and crush me,  
I'm committed now to what I am and  
can be. I'm not so rough around the  
edges. You can come closer. My spirit  
is stronger now. Alone I do not shoulder this cross that I  
bear.*

*With God's help I will prevail.  
So here's the thing.  
I'm not where  
I used to be.*

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### El Dorado, cont.

We at El Dorado would like to congratulate Mr. Russ Thompson and Paul Showalter on their new positions.

I would like to take some time out to talk to all the Reaching Out From Within members. If we look back on the past, we will see how much our organization has grown in each facility since we started. And let's not forget Mrs. SuEllen Fried, because without her none of this would be possible.

Starting in January 2012, our organization is going to start a new class for the general population called Character First that will take seventy-two weeks to complete. There are thirty-six traits, and it takes two weeks to complete each trait. At the end of each trait, a certificate will be given to each member that completes a full trait. This is a very powerful class that will teach you a lot of things that will be helpful in the future. The Character First class is in addition to the weekly ROFW meetings based on the Blue Book.

On Mar. 9, 2011, we gave refreshments to the patients in the infirmary. The members of ROFW enjoyed going back to the infirmary and talking with the patients. The patients enjoyed their company and refreshments. Every time the members go back to the infirmary to visit with the patients, they get the feeling of satisfaction and know that one day it could be one of us back there. ■

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### Topeka Correctional Facility- Med/Max Unit

ROFW has a new facilitator and co-facilitator. The new facilitator is Von Voner. Co-facilitator is Tashee James. Staying the same are Dana Flynn, secretary, and Tabitha Adams, treasurer. We look forward to the year ahead, so let's support our board with enthusiasm and new ideas to meet the challenges of the upcoming year.

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## **Topeka Correctional Facility-Med/Max Cont.**

The new facilitators replace Khalani Britt, who moved on to the compound, and Michelle Ellis, who went home to a full-time job at a dental laboratory after working the Greenbush Dental Laboratory Technician Program. Michelle has made a great impact with her success both inside and outside, giving us all encouragement. (Editor's Note: Michele was recently featured in an article on her post release in The Salina Journal and on the Kansas Health Institute Website.)

We were privileged to have Sharon L. Sullivan from Washburn University come to T.C.F. to work with ROFW to put on the play "Any One of Us: Words from Prison." The cast included seven ROFW members.

The play evolved from writings of women inmates who were dealing with the abuse and the violence that brought them to prison. The August 3 performance was a huge success. More than 50 people attended from outside the facility and the Topeka Capital Journal gave it a major write up in the Sunday edition. Among the outcomes:

1. There is the possibility the play will be performed again because a number of attorneys, who could not attend the original production, would like to view it.
2. Miss Sullivan is returning to start a writing program which will allow women here to tell their stories.
3. Sen. Laura Kelly, who attended the play, was presented with a proposal from ROFW members that rules be changed to allow one-time offenders with long-term sentences to be evaluated for the possibility of early release after serving ten years. This would give women a positive frame of mind to rehabilitate instead of just doing time.

We would like to thank ROFW sponsor Dave Ranney. Without his support and dedication to our group, none of this would be possible. ■

*The play evolved from writings of women inmates who were dealing with the abuse and the violence that brought them to prison.*

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## **Topeka Correctional Facility-Minimum Unit**

**Hello to all.**

We are engrossed in the Blue Book. We have covered Domestic Violence and have moved into Conflict Resolution. We have had a lot of great discussions within our group. It has become a great learning experience for me, as well as others.

We spent some time learning how to construct "I statements," which contributes to more effective communications between ourselves and our families. The role playing brought much laughter; however, several members have put the information to work by applying it in everyday situations with great success.

Since we began working the Blue Book, we have seen tremendous growth and cohesiveness among our members. We plan to continue moving forward. We plan to start implementing leadership skills by allowing all members the opportunity to facilitate meetings and discussions. We want everyone to achieve great things.

We would also like to give our appreciation to our community volunteer, Skye. She provides us with extra material that adds to our discussions. Thank you for all you contribute!

Heather P., Newsletter Editor

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## No More Abuse

By Larry Coleman, Secretary

*As we sit to learn  
of violence and abuse  
It is these classes  
we must put to use.  
Denying the problem  
only makes it worse.  
Application and direction  
is how we step first.  
Reading books on violence  
seems to help our cause,  
since it was us  
who were breaking the laws.  
So how come  
it took us so long  
to figure out what we did  
was so, so wrong.  
We didn't see it  
because we didn't want to.  
So now the sincerest apology  
is being offered to you.  
So I hope you accept  
this apology to you  
as it is sincere and heartfelt  
and so honestly true.  
We are but individuals in a group  
trying to find a way.  
So thank you for understanding  
and blessing our day.*

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## Lansing Correctional Facility- Minimum (East Unit)

Greetings from the Hill! I hope all our groups are doing great things across the state. Here at the minimum unit we held our summer summit and food drive at the end of July. The theme of the summit was "Getting Out and Staying Out." SuEllen Fried and Andre Carson were the speakers.

SuEllen shared many inspirational testimonies of ROFW alumni who achieved the goal of getting out and staying out. Among these was Greg Musselman, who co-founded ROFW while at this facility.

Andre Carson explained how he was a very active member of ROFW while he was incarcerated and how it changed his view point on life. He was released in the early 2000's and has gone back to school and is currently working on a Masters Degree. I truly hope that all alumni of ROFW can follow Andre's example and Get Out and Stay Out.

We would also like to note that food collected the evening of the summit was donated to Gracious Promise, an organization that helps ex-inmates in Kansas City, Kansas.

In closing, we signed up 22 new members the night of the summit. Recent membership growth means we don't have space for more members at this time.

Jason Landreth, Chairman

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## Lansing Correctional Facility- Maximum Unit

### HOPE IS

Hope is the force which springs and gives us power to be resilient, as it gives us power to believe that things will always get better.

Hope is the force which gives us strength to get back up after we have been knocked down by feeling that things are hopeless. Whenever we see a story of some

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child lost or missing, the first emotion we feel is that of hope, hope that he/she will be found unharmed and safe. When we hear that someone is terminally ill, the first emotion we feel is that of hope, hope that they will get well and not suffer. The hope we feel and experience is normally a stirring in our spirit when we hear of pain and troubles occurring in other people's lives, even as we find our own conditions in shambles.

As we serve time for the things we have done partly because we lost hope and partly because we made terrible choices, we constantly hope that we will be released. Is it the hope we have for ourselves or is it what we have for someone else?

Whatever the reason may be, that feeling of hope—that force which springs up giving us power to be resilient—is an all-embracing force and it washes over us in such a way that it doesn't allow us to look at the negative but the positive, and this is a wonderful thing.

Keep Hope Alive, Keep Hope Alive!

This is one of the best-coined phrases for many generations to come.

Ronnie, LCF Max

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## **Larned Mental Health Correctional Facility-West Unit**

The Larned-West group, with thirty active members, is slowly winding through the busiest part of the year—summer. With the regular activities, such as softball, volleyball, horseshoe tourneys, dominoes, card tourneys, darts, and other activities, the members have been keeping the Larned-West population busy, even with the 3-digit heat wave outside. On top of that, we had monthly and holiday activities, such as the watermelon feed, popcorn and a movie weekends, bingo and much more.

One goal for this summer was to organize a new group within the Central Unit. With the help of four members from the West group, the goal was

achieved by signing 25 Central individuals. The elected officials of the new group reported that all the members are eager to participate and have had some intense and informative topic discussions. We applaud their eagerness and wish them continued success.

Another achievement is the "Facing Your Giants" program that is offered to our members. It is a program designed to help a person change the course of his life course by changing his outlook on life. A person learns to set goals, prioritize personal and social activities, and to function smoothly by working with others in order to reach common goals.

This program is taught by ROFW sponsor Raymond Law. Mr. Law is a well-respected member of the Larned community and is an ex-inmate who changed his whole life by changing his method of thinking. He set personal goals, and through hard work and diligence, accomplished those same goals. We congratulate Mr. Law for his many achievements and offer our sincerest gratitude for all the time spent in assisting us in achieving our goals

The last group to complete the course in April had 18 members. Another class is scheduled to begin in September, and our goal is to have 20 or more students in the class. ■



*One goal for this summer was to organize a new group within the Central-Maximum Unit. With the help of our members from the Minimum group, the goal was achieved by signing 25 Maximum individuals.*

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## Larned Mental Health Correctional Facility (Central Unit)

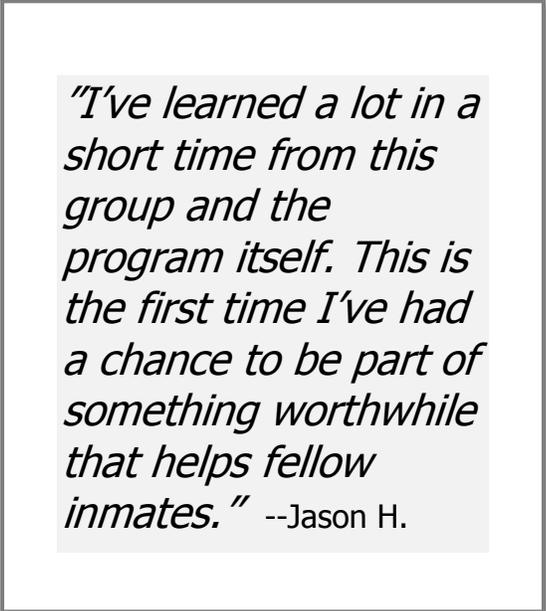
We have started a new adventure at the Central unit. After a shaky start with 4 inmates from the Central unit and 3 ROFW members from the West unit, we are growing steadily. At our last meeting, our 17<sup>th</sup>, we had 25 in attendance. We are looking forward to growing even more since the unit teams have started to allow some of the inmates in special programs to attend.

We have had some great discussions. We started with communication. We went outside the Blue Book a couple of times, and our Co-Chairman Travis R. led us. One week we discussed the effects of loss or separation from our life partner. Give hurting a voice.

Another week, Travis led a great discussion on the effects that hatred and anger have on inmates. The last three weeks we have been doing the Blue Book unit on RESPECT. As mentioned--some great discussion groups. Three weeks and we have only got through one and a half pages, not parts...pages!

I was sentenced to serve 54 months. I am getting close to my release date. I've been part of this group since it started in the Central Unit. I've learned a lot in a short time from this group and the program itself. This is the first time I've had a chance to be part of something worthwhile that helps fellow inmates. In that short time you form a certain type of bond that's very positive and refreshing. And I am very luck to say I'm a part of the ROFW organization. I hope to see and hear it flourish.

Jason H., Central Unit Editor



*"I've learned a lot in a short time from this group and the program itself. This is the first time I've had a chance to be part of something worthwhile that helps fellow inmates."* --Jason H.

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## Norton Correctional Facility-Medium Unit

I want to thank our sponsor, Sharon. She's been a real trooper to us and for us. We are thankful for all she does for our group. I'm glad to report our numbers are up since our last letter was sent out. Each week, we have at least one person who checks our group out. We've been learning about prison mentality and our core beliefs, as well as other things.

As a group, we are working hard to change ourselves and to help change the lives of others. We get 100 percent input from our group discussions. I'm proud of the progress we are making. We all have a long way to go. One of our visitors gave us this quote: Gossip stops at the ears of a wise man. Take care and God bless you all.

### Changing for the Better

The dedicated men that attend Norton's Reaching Out From Within group have shown they are passionate about changing for the better. One of the most helpful tools that we employ is conflict resolution.

Unknown to most of us in our own perceived conflict with others is that the true nature of our conflict is actually within ourselves. At the center of our core belief system, we are constantly dealing

with issues that challenge that belief system in healthy and unhealthy ways. Our belief system incorporates beliefs about judgments or rejections, self-esteem or self-worth and shame or guilt. When one of these areas is challenged, we seek to validate our beliefs.

In a positive exhibition of conflict resolution, one seeks a healthy way to validate the beliefs we have about our self, so not to cause harm to ourselves or others. The skills we are learning to put into practice help to transform the life of each man, making him a more productive person inside and outside of prison. When the conflict within ourselves has been resolved, the end result is peace, and we all need more peace in this world.

Melvin Frierson "Tune"

## Annual Recognition Banquet Schedule

Each year, ROFW friends, volunteers and Board members show their appreciation to the membership by co-sponsoring a banquet with each ROFW group. This ROFW tradition, which started more than 20 years ago, is one of the highlights of the year. It is a time when we reflect on group accomplishments, recognize individual achievement and set our sights on new goals.

This year's schedule...

<b><i>Facility</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>
EDCF	12/7	6:00 pm
HCF-Max (Central)	12/1	1:30 pm
HCF-Med (East)	12/1	5:30 pm
HCF-Min (South)	12/1	7:00 pm
LCF-Max	12/19	6:00 pm
LCF-Med	12/17	5:00 pm
LCF-Min	12/17	6:30 pm
LMHCF (Central)	12/15	6:00 pm
LMHCF (West)	12/15	1:00 pm
NCF-Med*	12/14	5:30 pm
NCF-Min*	12/14	5:30 pm
TCF-Med/Max	12/5	7:00 pm
TCF-Min	12/5	6:00 pm
WCF	12/3	6:30 pm

\* Combined event

## Invictus

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

**William Ernest Henley**  
(English Poet—1849-1903)

## Inside & Out

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**Next Submission Deadline—Dec. 20, 2011**