

REACHING OUT *from Within* *Empowerment for Positive Self-Change*

Spot Light

- EXPANDING ALL OVER THE WORLD?
- A MESSAGE FROM SU ELLEN FRIED
- ALUMNI CORNER
- REPORT FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, JASON MILES

A Message From SuEllen Fried

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I always look forward to December when I visit each and every ROFW group across the state. My soul feasts on the time I spend with you and it stays with me for the rest of the year.

Lynn Hinkle, our first full time staff person, and I took to the road and we were awed by your resilience, the special bonding that you exhibit, and your deep desires to give back - in many different ways. The Volunteer Sponsors and the staff liaisons that embrace you are such an important part of the ROFW aura and we loved connecting with them. Warden Doug Waddington attended both banquets at Larned, Deputy Warden Robert Vierya attended all three banquets at Hutchinson. The Warden, Sam Kline, who has been with us in the past, was ill and could not be with us. Deputy Warden Mary Nelson was present at Oswego and Carolyn Graves, Classification Administrator, joined us at Ellsworth. The Awards that you give to each other and the Attendance Awards that you receive from us are a beautiful part of the ritual that is such a shining portion of the Banquets. Your expressions of appreciation for me are lovingly given and received. I am blessed to be the symbol of Greg Musselman's vision. Those groups that are permitted to conduct fund raising have been very generous to our organization and we are so very grateful for your support. The talent in our groups is a joy to behold. There were a number of skits and performances that took our breath away. We are hoping that some of our playwrights will share their scripts so you can use them with your own groups.

One phrase that was shared by Scott Buie in El Dorado could well be our Mantra. "We are raw, we are real, we are relevant." That says it all! Warmest wishes for a spectacular 2015!



Inside this issue:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	2
OSWEGO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	3
LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY-MIN	4
BROWN CREEK - MED	6
WINFIELD CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	6
HUTCHINSON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	8
NEWS FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT	11

Reaching Out From Within

NEWS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A road trip of 2,200 miles in early December to visit every Reaching Out From Within group in Kansas with co-founder SuEllen Fried was transformative for me. We experienced laughter, tears, and inspiration at every stop.

So many men and women shared their hearts and souls with us. At our first day in Hutchinson, one of the recipients of a Double Century Certificate (200 meetings) said: "This tells me that this is the first thing I've stuck to that is good." Another member said, "We'll have this badge of honor when we get out."

I heard several members tell SuEllen that this program has literally saved their lives. Several wardens and deputy wardens told us that ROFW has had a positive impact in their facilities and that our members are role models who help improve public safety behind the walls.

We distributed 430 gift boxes that were lovingly prepared by ROFW board members and alumni members. Donations from a number of individuals and the United Steelworkers District 11 made this all possible.

SuEllen and I felt loved and appreciated everywhere. Each group gave us a gift: a powerful skit, an inspirational talk, a magic trick, a song, a certificate, a delicious meal. Several groups where fundraisers are allowed were incredibly generous. We received thousands of dollars to support ROFW in 2015.

One of the ways we will put this generosity to work this year is to prepare for the national expansion of Reaching Out From Within, and to formalize the Kansas program so that it continues to create positive change for our members. Your individual

success inside and out will be the key to our efforts to share the Blue Book with as many incarcerated people as possible in 2015.

In the words of one young man, Dustin, who came to prison at 16 and is leaving soon after serving 14.5 years: "We are all a work in progress. I'm going to take this program out of here with me."

Happy New Year to each and every one of you, and thank you so much for the warm welcome to ROFW.

Three words that Scott B in Eldorado said best describe our program: "Raw. Real. Relevant."



Reaching Out From Within

OSWEGO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

To our fellow ROFW members, we here at OCF hope and pray that your holiday season went well for you and your families.

Our recognition banquet was a grand affair. We as usual were blessed with the presence of our co-founder, SuEllen Fried and our new Executive Director, Lynn Hinkle. Also in attendance this year were: Mary Nelson, Deputy Warden; Kristi Miller, Unit Team Manager; Mrs. Beck, Behavioral Health Professional; and CO1 Brill, Institutional Sponsor. Their presence was welcomed and well received and a great time was had by all.

Mary Nelson spoke on behalf of the institution. Lynn passed out certificates

recognizing all members who had attended at least 50 meetings. SuEllen spoke on the state of affairs for our organization, including the progress of our interstate members. The most exciting part was the possibility of our organization going international!

Our banquet was catered by Uncommon Hotel & Gallery and the food was exceptionally good. We made donations to both the home office and also to the Safe Haven Outreach Mission. We are currently gearing up for our next fundraiser which will benefit the dog program.

We are doing very well and with the continued support of the administration we expect thing will continue to get even better.

With the New Year comes a new commitment: to work the program—and with the Blue Book we can't go wrong.



TOPEKA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Happy Holidays!

Greetings to all of our members, sponsors and volunteers. The past month has been very exciting and memorable. For the first time we had a speaking engagement. "That's Right"... Central unit is now involved in speaking engagements. Our first speaker was led by our facilitator C. Starr,. Taking the stage with C. Starr was Pooh, and J. Robinson. When asked how it went in our meeting, the response was overwhelmingly positive,. So the stage is set and we're excited about it.

Also, we're getting geared up for a play that has been written by Kira Miller, It is to be preformed in January 2015.

Our blue book is, and always will be, group therapy for us all. We are challenged weekly and discover the value of who we are. As members we're reminded that we do make a difference.

Our candy fundraiser made 1,325.59 "Good Job Ladies!" The money will be used to adopt families for Christmas. Donations will also be given to our area shelters. Our intention is to make a few families very happy this holiday season. After all this is what we do; we give back and reach out from within.

TCF IS NOW
DOING
SPEAKING
ENGAGEMENTS

Reaching Out From Within

LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY-MIN

What an amazing year we have enjoyed. We watched our group grow in membership and expand in brotherhood like never before. Men who were once content with taking a place in the background have come to the forefront as leaders. The torch of leadership was passed and continued to burn bright with the great enthusiasm of accomplishment. It would fill the pages of this newsletter to list the individual goals that have been achieved by our group members in 2014. It is a list filled with hope and possibility. On December 13 we held

our annual appreciation banquet. We were fortunate to have three outstanding alumni present at our banquet: Jason Landreth, Paul Posch, and Ronnie Rhodes. Each have successfully completed more than one year of their parole. It was a great opportunity to hear first hand accounts about the reentry experiences of each alumnus. We wish them continued success.

Our annual food drive was a success. The men really came together in the spirit of giving. Giving to others reminds us that we have

something worthwhile inside us to share. Giving with nothing expected in return frees us from our past burdens.

So as to not leave anyone out, I thank each member, volunteer, and anyone directly or indirectly involved with East Hill ROFW for their part in making 2014 a great year.

M. Mims
Chairman

“WE HAVE
SOMETHING
WORTHWHILE
INSIDE US TO
SHARE”

ELLSWORTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

We are all farmers in this world either planting good seeds or bad ones. The seeds we plant are seeds of wisdom & profitable knowledge or that of evil & destruction. At ROFW we have chosen to plant seeds that will grow into beautiful human beings worthy of praise. Let us not uproot the good we have sown & replace it with weeds. We all know we reap what we sow.

Isaac A.

Words of Wisdom

Time is not always on our side, but when it is we need to take full advantage of it.

By E.S. Craghead

LARNED CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Greetings from Larned.

Gods peace..... Good meeting Friday night Many thought that we would see a drop off in attendance (have faith) but we had 52 present,

We would like to introduce our new chairman, Alex Graham and our newest staff member, James Jackson. Welcome gentlemen

Reaching Out From Within

LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY-MED

Hello Fellow Reachers and greetings from the medium LCF chapter! This year concluded with a lot of excitement and accomplishment for our chapter. In November we had an amazing turnout at our Winter Summit. We had a bevy of guest speakers including Gwendolyn McNair, former Kansas City Royal's player Willy Aikens, as well as former inmate members of ROFW, Ronnie Rhodes and Reggie Pennington. It was an excellent platform to get the word out about ROFW's message and goals and recruit some new members. All Together it was a great night of positivity. The month of November also brought forth our second

annual General Population Art Show. It was a tremendous showcase of some exceptional individuality, creativity, and artistic talent in a variety of different categories. The winners are as follows:

- Models:
1st Lumley 2nd Rhodes
3rd Pickerill
- Drawing:
1st Barnes 2nd Neal
3rd Menelly
- Painting:
1st Cooper 2nd Drown
3rd Bledsoe
- Needlecraft:
1st Cogle
2nd Florentin 3rd Reed
- Hobby Craft:
1st Rodriguez
2nd Yardley 3rd Menelly

Congratulations to all of the winners!
The year topped off with the annual year end recognition banquet. We celebrated the year's accomplishments and achievements with a wonderful meal and a lot of awesome guests. We want to thank all of the members, inmate and otherwise, for all of their hard work and dedication throughout the year and we look forward to another wonderful year of progress in contributing positive enlightenment to the group and anyone else we can.

“EXCELLENT PLATFORM TO GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT ROFW'S MESSAGE”

LANSING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY-MAX

We enjoyed a wonderful holiday party—with our very own Santa Claus, Richard Sack, our co-facilitator. Doesn't get much better than that. Our meal was catered by Johnny's and was delicious, as always. But what many of us liked best were the crème puffs! Our other facilitator, Janet Weiblen, brings them in each year and we look forward to them. It is our “special treat”—along with different kinds of candy kisses.

Our wish for all the other groups is the brightest of New Years and each of us can help make that happen. Each of us can be a Light to someone else. A Light for some who, like us, want to be better, growing in ways we never thought possible. We've been studying the SELF Unit and it helps us realize that knowing yourself—honestly—can be the best gift we can give ourselves, our families and others around us. Our bodies may be imprisoned, but our minds and souls can soar to unimaginable heights. No one can imprison our minds unless we allow them to do so. Let's not!



Reaching Out From Within

BROWN CREEK - Med (North Carolina)

Please excuse our absence from the past two newsletters. Unfortunately we had a bit of a misunderstanding concerning Article Submission versus Poetry Submission. However, we are still here, and we are still “Reaching Out”.

The holiday season has passed and we hope that you have used the lessons taught in your Blue Books to lift yourself, and others, above the incarceration. We hope that you all start 2015 with a definitive plan for “Reaching Out” to others, and making our world a less violent place.

Our group here at BCCI (Medium) just finished the unit on Self, and will be moving on to Anger next. We intend

to find the ability to conquer Anger, and teach others how to do the same.

This is a new year. We challenge you to find new ways to impact the world around us. Staying in one place is not an option. Reaching Out From Within was brought to North Carolina in order to expand. Expanding geographically is only the tip of the spear. We must also expand our vision, reach, and scope.

It is up to each one of us to find new ways and means to stop the violence that is choking society, our society. Each of us has our own gifts and talents to use. You were not given these things to waste them.

If you are committed to our program and committed to our mission, let 2015 be the year you “Implement the Change”.

Look deep within. Find your gifts. Reach Out and hand them to the world!

by T.D. Russell

“EACH OF US
HAS OUR OWN
GIFTS AND
TALENTS TO
USE”

WINFIELD CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

On Saturday, December 6th, 2014 we had our annual banquet for ROFW. Darrell Ballinger, John Traylor, and Brandon Anderson, all alumni members, came back and spoke to us and gave us words of encouragement. David Gilkey was also present and encouraged us as well. There was good food and great company.

Many awards were given out and our chairman, Michael Saville, was given member of the year honors for leading by example. In the face of tragedy, with the health of his wife on his mind and heart, he continued to show up, be positive, and do “the next right thing.”

SuEllen introduced our new Executive Director, Lynn Hinkle, and shared with us that people from a prison in Japan have expressed an interest in ROFW. Wow! We must be doing something right for our organization to reach around the globe.

Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Lopez were also in attendance and we would like to express our gratitude for everything they have done and continue to do for ROFW Winfield. It is an honor to be a part of this organization and to be allowed to touch lives and change hearts. I would like to thank all of the members of ROFW for their hard work and dedication and encourage you to continue to look inside yourselves. Change begins with us and flows outward to the rest of the world.

REACHING OUT FROM WITHIN EXPANDING AROUND THE WORLD?



A Japanese delegation exploring innovative prison programs flew to Kansas to learn more about our program. We met in the conference room of Warden Rex Pryor at Lansing Correctional Facility.

The Japanese visitors seated L to R in photo:

Riyoko Azami from the women's prison in Sapporo; and Kuniaki Shiraishi from Okinawa Prison; and far right their translator, named Left, from the US State Department.



HUTCHINSON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Holiday Greetings and Best Wishes to all of our ROFW Brothers and Sisters.

This was a wonderful year for us at HCF-Cental. We accomplished many of the goals we set for ourselves this time last year. We boosted our membership in general and in our Blue Book classes. We were finally able to get a volunteer sponsor in Mary and she's been an invaluable asset and resource, plus she's such a genuine and warm person that we are proud to have her.

On Dec. 4, 2014, we hosted our year-end banquet. To sum it up in one word: WOW! We had an amazing afternoon. To kick things off, six members from our Blue Book class performed a short skit written and directed to reflect the ROFW principles. Everyone in attendance said they enjoyed the skit and SuEllen surprised us all when she asked us to send headquarters a copy of the script for "Revolving Door" that we performed, as well as the skit, "Disrespect vs Respect".

As always, SuEllen almost brought us to tears when she spoke to the membership and we almost brought her to tears when our chairman presented her with our donation of one thousand dollars for headquarters. Our Chairman introduced our new theme for the 2015 year, Fellowship, with the three concepts of: Partnership, Participation and Communication.

Although some would say the skit was the highlight of the afternoon, I would say there were several. One that stuck out and really hit home with our members was when the executive director, Lynn Hinkle, spoke and said something that really resonated with all of us. She told us that during a discussion with SuEllen, she told SuEllen that she was her inspiration, and every day she tries to be a little more like her. SuEllen then told Lynn that we, the ROFW family, inspire her, and that she tries to be more like us.

Wow! The humility and compassion in that statement absolutely floored me. To hear that a woman as caring, giving and selfless as SuEllen would look to us, incarcerated men and women of ROFW, for inspiration, swelled ever member's heart with hope, pride and joy. It's people like SuEllen, Lynn, our sponsor Mary, and the other sponsors who volunteer their time along with all of you, my Brothers and Sisters, who stand for and represent the Reaching Out From Within ideals in your everyday lives, who make being a member of this extraordinary organization truly a blessing.

From all of your ROFW Brothers at HCF-Central, have an excellent, goal-accomplishing 2015.

Sincerely,
Mark Hankerson Jr.
Newsletter Editor
and the Men of ROFW

Alumni Corner-Growing Our Group

Happy 2015 to everyone.

We have had a great year at our alumni group in KC. We have connected with the Wichita group via Skype and the alumni in Wichita have been joined by offenders that are currently in Wichita Work Release.

We had great alumni support in packing all the gift boxes this year. We packed over 425 gift boxes. Please stay in touch with us once you are released and we very much look forward to seeing you on the other side.

May 2015 bring you many opportunities to grow!

Jason Miles
ROFW KC Chairman



Great New Ideas from Across the State

One of the benefits of a two-week road tour to visit every facility in Kansas was the enthusiasm and wealth of new ideas generated from members that we wanted to share with all of you. Here is a recap of what we heard and wanted to share.

RESOURCES:

Some facilities allow the use of videos that have either been downloaded from the internet or are available on DVDs.

Larned group leaders recommended the TED Talk Series of 20 minute talks at TED.com. There are many thought-provoking presentations which help reinforce Blue Book units. The Larned members liked “Vulnerability by Brene Brown” and “Son of a Terrorist by Zak Ebrahim”. There are also 5 talks on “Standing up to Bullying”, and an excellent presentation on social justice and the environment by Majora Carter.

Ellsworth shared the movie “Unforgivable”, a DVD from Lifeskills International in Denver, during their domestic violence unit and highly recommend it.

Hutchinson Minimum group members asked if there could be a way to attend funerals of loved ones through virtual attendance via Skype or FaceTime. They were aware of a chaplain who used this technology to allow an inmate to watch the funeral he was unable to attend, and it was beneficial to the grieving process.

At Eldorado, Scott M has created a comprehensive Attendance tracking and reporting record that includes overall attendance, number of meetings attended, number of meetings missed, a quarterly and year-to-date total, and what certificates or units completed that member has earned. This will be especially helpful to headquarters as we design better data collection methods and analytics to share with future funders who are interested in evidence-based programs like ours.

Norton suggested our gift boxes next year include a plastic bowl and spoon, as these are needed by indigent inmates who cannot afford to buy them from the commissary.

RECOGNITION:

Hutchinson Central is planning an Appreciation Week in March to honor their volunteer sponsor and create a celebration. Their plan is to have cookies, donuts or some treat and a card for their sponsor signed by all of the members. “We feel that if this can become a yearly display of recognition of our sponsors. We can all show them how much we truly appreciate their help and support and how much they truly mean to the ROFW organization and the individual groups,” said Mark Hankerson, Jr., Newsletter Editor for HCF-Central. “We hope this is something that you and everyone at headquarters and all of our ROFW brothers and sisters are willing to get on board with.”

RECONNECTION:

In order to stay connected to our members when they get out, we at headquarters want to explore the development of a tool that might be used on our website to keep track of our members and help them reconnect with our program through Alumni Groups. As Mike at Ellsworth said, “This is real men, real struggles, seeking real solutions. You can’t find this on the outside.” If we can help our members find each other so they can continue their work with the Blue Book while building a positive network of support, we will strengthen the program and improve the recidivism rates for Reaching Out From Within.

Report from Board President Jason Miles

2014 was a great year for us here at Reaching Out From Within. At the end of 2014 we had much to celebrate and look back on with pride. In August we celebrated one year of being in North Carolina and in October we hired Lynn Hinkle as our full time Executive Director. We worked really hard in November to get all the gift boxes packed up and this year we packed a record 425 boxes. Lynn and SuEllen made the mad dash marathon around the state to make it to everyone's Recognition Banquets.

As 2015 starts I want to remind all our inmate groups about the importance of getting your weekly attendance to us. Please be mindful that everyone's name and prison number is legible and easy to read. These can be sent directly to our PO mailbox. Also please continue to submit newsletter articles. The newsletter is bi-monthly, coming out January, March, May, July, September and November. We very much want to hear from all our groups. Please keep in mind that we can't always use all articles

submitted and some must be edited in order that we can get everything to fit. Thank you all for the hard work you do. I look forward to all the great things 2015 is going to bring.

Jason D Miles



Like us on Facebook!

ROFW has a new Facebook page (www.facebook.com/reachinmates) For those of you who receive this newsletter as alumni, volunteers, or supporters, and who have internet access, please visit our Facebook page and click the button for "like it." By getting more "like it" entries, our status gets elevated. If you have content for our Facebook page please submit it to rthompson67@kc.rr.com.



Inside & Out

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