



The Surviving Spirit Newsletter – Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts -

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

Hello Folks,

I think ‘Spring has sprung’ in my neck of the woods....and it’s GREAT!! To be able to open some windows and enjoy the warm fresh air is nice. Hmnnn....only several weeks ago I was without power for close to a week & FREEZING!!...so this change is most welcome. And that explains why there was no February newsletter...the day I was set to put it together was when I lost power. Life...always not what one expects.... But, given the month of April is for Child Abuse Awareness & May is for Mental Health/Illness Awareness, I’ll either send out an extra make-up newsletter or just add more resources... we shall see.

Yesterday I had a really nice gig. I got to perform for the good folks up at NH Hospital... for both patients and staff. Music goes a long way in uplifting one’s spirit on so many levels. I have long shared of how music helped save my life... it helped me survive my childhood & teenaged years while living in a home of horror. To this day, just the simple act of listening to music does so many wonderful things. We need more of it in our lives, and I don’t say that because I am a musician...it goes much deeper than that. [please see this article - [Strike a Chord for Health](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2010/January/feature1.htm)
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Speaking of music...some great news to share – my song “Brush Away Your Tears”, is going to be used [while the credits are rolling] in the film documentary “Boys and Men Healing” from Big Voice Pictures. Please visit www.boysandmenhealing.com to see a film trailer of this powerful documentary. You can hear a two minute clip of the album recording at my website www.mskinnermusic.com & also a live version of this song at www.youtube.com/mcstrain

Next week I get to present at the Univ. of NH here in Manchester...always an honor to present where ever I am asked to...but this has some real special meaning for me. My dear friend Nancy Maguire is graduating with her Masters in Social Work and to be able to present to her class is both an honor and a privilege. I have long advocated for changing all that is wrong in how children and adults who deal with trauma, abuse, & mental health concerns are treated by society as a wholeNancy was one of those special people as a friend and an advocate who helped me through some of my darkest days back in the 90’s that enables me to do what I do.

And here's some more great resources and fellow Surviving Spirits doing wonderful things to help others...so please take some time to visit some of these websites, to reach out, share, and network with one another.

1] Vivian Farmery & the good folks at Just Tell have posted a new video at their site www.justtell.org/adult/aboutjusttell.html that has kids sharing of their experiences of sexual abuse...powerful testimony and advocacy. This site has both an adult and "kids" section.

2] Laura Paxton has a new book titled "No Warning Labels" – she shares the memoirs of her life diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and later Asperger's Syndrome, and "how I have broken free from the limiting definitions of these diagnoses in stages. Through the process, I outline a new method of personal inventory to help others to "break outside the box." <http://www.nowarninglabels.com>

3] Dreamcatchers Talk Radio was created by Author, Child Abuse Advocate and Founder of Dreamcatchers for Abused Children (Sandra Dawn Potter) and Author, Child Abuse Advocate and President of Dreamcatchers for Abused Children (Donna Kshir). www.dreamcatchersforabusedchildren.com

Listen live TUESDAYS 6:30 - 7 p.m. EST @ <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/dreamcatchers> ... or call in and voice your opinion @ **(917) 932-1132**

4] Lady J at www.myspace.com/ladyjztalkzone shared this quote with me recently –

"I have to remind myself daily though even for myself that even when the road is dark and lonely, to just keep going, and others will cross your path on their journey and brighten your road again."

How true...I've known Lady J for many years...and she has long been a staunch advocate in promoting the works of others who help to make the world a better place via her blogs, websites, etc. I'm proud to have networked & advocated with Lady J, Vivian, Laura, Sandra, Donna and so many others...seeing what they do helps keep me going. I'm simply in amazement at the amount of people out there trying to do "the right thing"...so I think it is important to share their respective creative and advocacy efforts.

5] Stefanie Jane uses her powerful and haunting music to reach out to not only survivors, but to the world at large www.stefaniejane.com – please take a listen. And she donates a fair amount of the proceeds back to organizations helping others – kudos to you Stefanie.

6] Zoya Vsemirnova's Fighting Depression website/blog <http://dodgedepression.blogspot.com> - has LOTS of helpful insight & resources for depression, another great example of Hope, Healing, & Help.

7] Simon Stevens over in England is doing some great things as well, realizing what he deals with, makes it all that more powerful. www.simonstevens.com

"winner of a 2004 Enterprising Young Brit award and a 2008 UK Catalyst Award, hasn't let cerebral palsy get in the way of running a successful business or two" Enterprise UK"

8] Well...while we're still visiting 'England'...please see what Kate Swift has been doing with her art and poetry for healing from childhood sexual abuse @ <http://www.thistangledweb.co.uk> - lots of hope and healing going on with her creativity.

9] Unveiling The Stigma – Depression & Mental Illness at www.unveilingthestigma.com has all kinds of information and resources...they share a tragic statistic – “Suicide takes one million lives a year.” – whoa!! – one life is too many....Having lost two brothers and two friends to suicide makes this work so vital...for all of us. They've got a great quote at their Facebook page – ““You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind.” ~Irish Proverb

10] Celebrating Those Who Make a Difference for Mental Health - SAMHSA Seeks Nominees for 2010 Voice Awards www.whatadifference.samhsa.gov/voiceawards -

The Voice Awards are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services. The Voice Awards recognize writers and producers of entertainment programming—television and film—who have given voice to people with mental health problems by incorporating dignified, respectful, and accurate portrayals of people with mental illnesses into their scripts, programs, and productions. The highest ratings are reserved for those productions that emphasize the positive journey of recovery from mental health problems released between 3/15/09 – 4/15/10

The Voice Awards also recognize the accomplishments of consumer leaders and advocates who have been instrumental in both raising awareness and understanding of mental health issues and promoting the social inclusion of people with mental health problems. Through their leadership and advocacy, they demonstrate that recovery is real and that people with mental health problems are valuable, contributing members of their schools, workplaces, and communities.

All entertainment industry nominations due by April 30, 2010 & all mental health consumer nominations by May 14, 2010

11] Last but not least!!! Michele Rosenthal of Heal My PTSD <http://healmyptsd.com> has a wonderful site full of hopeful healing help & a monthly call in show on the 3rd Thursday of each month - Time: **6pm PST/7pm CST/9pm EST** Duration: 45 minutes

Dial in: (712) 432-1699 Pin: 828726# [press the # sign after entering number]

Take care, Mike

ps. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know.

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A diagnosis is not a destiny.

www.mskinnermusic.com - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse, & Mental Health through music, resources, & advocacy

www.myspace.com/michaelskinnermusic - musical endeavors only

www.new.facebook.com/profile.php?id=635415804%20 Facebook - for friends, music, & advocacy!!

www.youtube.com/mcstrain - live performance of "Brush Away Your Tears" from TV show interview

mikeskinner@comcast.net 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

www.michaelskinner.net - new site for public speaking & music presentation on healing for trauma, abuse, & mental health.

"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi