



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

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

Hi Folks,

“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.” - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

This quote is a great way to start off this newsletter because it helps to exemplify those who we share about...and this quote also applies to all of you receiving this because of the good works that you are doing in your respective lives to help those who have been impacted by trauma, abuse and mental health concerns. Awards and recognition are indeed a wonderful thing, especially when it comes from our peers, but that does not diminish or minimize the work that so many do, who may not be the recipient of such things – but as we like to say – “the unsung heroes of life”...there are many and yet they still persevere in their endeavors to help others – good for you & good for the world!!! That in of itself helped to bring about some of the ideas and the thoughts behind the creation of the Surviving Spirit. Thank you for all that you do.

The Surviving Spirit has been very busy recently with our Speakers Bureau, events and working on several grant opportunities...along with some changes in our Board of Directors. We are sorry to see John Angelo who served as our Secretary and Keith Thomas our Treasurer, step down – but they have been so helpful and important these past few years in the development and the growth of our Mission and the Vision of helping others. We are also sad to hear of the need for our Volunteer Coordinator, Linda Downing to step away to deal with some health concerns – our thoughts & prayers for good health and deep gratitude for all of the wonderful scarves she has created that we gave away to those struggling and also for her creative expressions that are available in our [web store](#) [Crafts & Quilts]. Thank you so much John, Keith & Linda!!!

And now....drum roll please....we are excited to introduce the latest and most valued members to our ‘team’ [i.e. our Board of Directors].

1] Rachel Grant, M.A. Counseling Psychology, writer, advocate, survivor, Trauma Recovery & Relationship Coach – & a bundle of energy and caring.
www.rachelgrantcoaching.com

2] John Mark Clubb, author [“boys cry too”], pilot, advocate, survivor & passionate in his quest to help others. <http://johnmarkclubb.com/> John and I first met as guests on the Oprah Winfrey Shows that focused on males sexually abused as children.

3] Lynn Tolson, wife, author [“Beyond the Tears, a True Survivors Story”], advocate & survivor who has been in the trenches a long time in helping others and I’m proud to have known her all these years as a dedicated advocate and friend.
<http://beyondthetears.blogspot.com/>

4] Mary Murray, mom, musician, advocate & survivor who brings her many years of dedicated service to helping those impacted by childhood traumas & abuse and its effects from substance abuse.

Welcome aboard...and now, time to share on some more good people and organizations helping to make the world a better place.

[1] [The VOICE Awards](#) – Celebrating Those Who Make a Difference for Behavioral Health - complete listing – TV shows, films, documentaries & more

[The VOICE Awards - Consumer/Peer Leadership](#) – please visit to learn more

1] Tonier Cain “excelled after someone finally asked, “What happened to you?” rather than “What’s wrong with you?” *Addressing the cause rather than the symptoms enabled her amazing spirit to shine.*” [And this is what we try so hard to share via the [Surviving Spirit – stop blaming people for what they have experienced in life](#)]

[“Healing Neen”](#) – a powerful film/documentary on Tonier’s life showing hope and inspiration

2] Athena Haddon, director - [Everyday Miracles, a Peer Recovery Support Center](#)

3] Heidi Kraft, [“Rule Number Two”](#) – a memoir of war and trauma

4] Luis Montalvan - [“Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him”](#) - New York Times bestseller.

5] Pat Risser – [article on Pat’s award – Times- Gazette](#)

"I've been a champion for people for more than 30 years," Risser said. *"I'm almost surprised I'm receiving an award from the government in some ways because they usually don't reward outspoken people."* [Pat is indeed outspoken and for all of the right reasons, [Surviving Spirit](#)]

[2] Deb Trueheart, [Consultant – National Empowerment Center](#) was the recipient at the NY Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services of The FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

AWARD - presented to an individual who has been an extraordinary source of kindness, caring and devotion to people within our mental health community. [*“kindness, caring & devotion” certainly fit the bill here*]

[3] Harvey Rosenthal the executive director of the [NY Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services](#) was recently given The MHA Lifetime Achievement Award by the Westchester Mental Health Association of Westchester, NY.

[*Well deserved and very cool!!! I recently performed/presented for the 10th year in a row for the NYAPRS Annual Conference and remember all too well some friends telling me so long ago that I “would get to see some real advocacy in action from this organization” & they were right*]

PEACE: It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of these things and still be calm in your heart.

Cheryl Sharp recently shared this inspiring quote via a list service of those addressing the concerns of trauma – I thought it was great and was motivated to find the author, alas, they are unknown, but it brought me to this incredible website.

[4] [Living With Heart](#) – *A website about adversity & healing*

Who is the website for? It is written for adults who:

Have had the bottom fall out of their world

Are overwhelmed by adversity and are struggling with the prospect of picking up the pieces and moving on

Have become stuck in the process of working through adversity

Are supporting someone who is going through adversity

Here is a powerful story on a subject matter that still too many don't want to talk about, but it needs to be - suicide

[5] [“In Her Wake: A Child Psychiatrist Explores the Mystery of Her Mother's Suicide”](#) is a rare thing: the story of a psychiatrist analyzing her own psychological drama. Nancy Rappaport was just four years old when her mother-a prominent Boston activist and socialite-committed suicide. Decades later, Rappaport, a child psychiatrist with three children of her own, pieced together a complex mosaic of her "mama." In Her Wake sheds light on the nature of hurting and healing, and is a potent reminder that love outlasts death.

[6] Our good friend, valued Board member and fellow advocate shared these thoughts on this book from her Blog – [Beyond the Tears: A True Survivor's Story](#)

“Nancy Rappaport was four years old when her mother committed suicide in 1963. The question anyone asks of someone who has taken his/her own life is “why?” Why would a mother of six take her own life? After years of not speaking about their mother's death,

Nancy takes on the task of talking to her siblings to determine the answer to the question “why?” Nancy’s children want to know about their deceased grandmother. A saga of generations of complexities evolves that reads like an unsolved mystery.

What would make a mother who seemed to “have it all” kill herself? Nancy relies on interviews, articles, and photographs to discover the woman behind the self-destruction. Nancy reads between the lines of court documents and personal diaries to reveal decades of secrets, and she narrates the unfolding story like an emotionally charged archeology expedition.

Nancy carefully constructs the story of a life, death, and the aftermath with continuity, clarity, and originality. This is a book well-written within the confines of tough subject matter, and without the full approval of her family members. Nancy unearths the conflicts within a prominent family, as well as the details of custody battles and financial settlements. She faces the differing perspectives and memories of her family members regarding the same events. These are challenges for anyone seeking the truth.

It seems fitting that Nancy chose to be a child psychiatrist. She includes relevant cases in the book, weaving her past with their present, their personal with her profession. There is no cover of denial, and no evidence of self-pity. Her purpose must be to help others who have lost someone to face reality.

[In Her Wake](#) is recommended to anyone trying to understand a variety of aspects of suicide. It’s also recommended as an example of the work it takes to develop a sense of self in the wake of suicide.”

“My father committed suicide when I was 19. He left no note; just a mess of emotional debris. I attempted suicide for the last time when I was 25. After taking 300 pills, I had to be resuscitated. I was left with psychological wreckage, and I’m still picking up the pieces.” Lynn C Tolson)

[“Each of us has the right and the obligation to make our own decisions. It is character-destroying to usurp that right.” – One Day At a Time book](#)

[7] October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic Violence occurs when one person uses inappropriate power and control over an intimate partner – it is a pattern of abusive behaviors. These may include some or all of the following, Verbal, Sexual, Physical, Economic & Emotional abuse.

Some helpful resources - [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(NCADV\)](#)

[“Recovery can involve as much unlearning as learning. My security cannot be based on learning “the rules”, because once I truly learn them, they change.” - Courage to Heal](#)

[8] From our good friends at [Gift From Within](#) - An International Nonprofit Organization for Survivors of Trauma and Victimization – a subject matter that some don’t want to talk about either – men being abused. But, just because they refuse to recognize the abuse of males, it does not mean it is not taking place – we still have a long way to go in breaking down some old myths, stereo-types and disbeliefs.

["Domestic Violence Against Men: Bryan's Story"](#) by Dr. Angie Panos

This article explores domestic violence against men. Like women who are victims of domestic abuse, men can begin to believe that they are to blame for the abuse.

["It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men and women."](#) - Frederick Douglass

[9] [Honor Our Voices](#) presents information on child exposure to domestic violence by engaging participants with the voices and stories of children who have experienced domestic violence firsthand.

[10] In Canada, October is Child Abuse Prevention Month - Protecting children is a community responsibility [Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies](#) [OACAS]

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies educate the public about the prevention of child abuse and neglect through the Child Abuse Prevention Campaign in communities across Ontario. October is an important month to underscore **the responsibility of the community to keep children safe and for the public to understand their responsibility to protect children.** [*We at the Surviving Spirit support these sentiments exactly*]

OACAS asks - [What can you do to help?](#)

Use your voice to report known or suspected child abuse and neglect.

Get educated. [Learn to identify the subtle signs of child abuse and neglect.](#)

Get involved. Learn more. Read the brochure on Child Abuse Prevention in [English](#) and [French](#).

Be a better parent. Read the [Positive Parenting Package](#) created by the Children's Aid Society of London-Middlesex.

Discipline without punishment. Learn how to discipline your child without using physical force from the article, [Yes, You Can! - Positive discipline ideas for you and your child](#) - from the Parenting for Life Series - Today's Parent, Canada's Parenting Magazine.

[11] [So You Want To Start a Peer-Run Respite?](#) – Options & Important Considerations Webinar – You Tube

[This webinar addressed specific issues around starting up, maintaining, and sustaining quality peer-run respites. Panelists provided practical tips and suggestions on advocacy, funding, core values and principles, and staffing issues, among others. For more info, see the \[National Empowerment Center\]\(#\) - Directory of Peer-run Crisis Services](#)

Presenters:

While researching at NIMH, Daniel Fisher was diagnosed with schizophrenia. To fulfill his dream of a humanized mental health system, he became a community psychiatrist. To transform national policies, he founded and is now the Executive Director of the National Empowerment Center and was a member of the New Freedom Commission.

Rigel Flaherty was born and raised in Santa Cruz, CA, and became familiar with the mental health system during a difficult time when she was 20. She started working as a peer counselor in Mental Health Supported Housing in 2003. Rigel became Program Manager for the SAMSHA funded [2nd Story Peer Run Respite House](#) in January 2011.

Daniel Hazen is a survivor of the psychiatric/penal systems. Currently, Daniel is the Executive Director of the peer-run [Voices of the Heart](#) in New York. Current projects include the Peer Respite, the Peer Support-line, and the Alternatives Healing Project. He is a Board Member with the U.S. Human Rights Network.

Steve Miccio is the Executive Director of [PEOPLE, Inc.](#), a peer-run organization in NY. Steve is considered an expert in peer operated diversion services and emergency service design. PEOPLE, Inc. has been delivering diversion services for the past 11 years and advocacy services for over 21 years.

[12] [October is National Disabilities Awareness Month - Straus Newspapers](#)

A nice article that is both informative and motivational written by Anna Szonyi – who also shares of her thoughts and concerns around the issues of disability and ability.

[13] The [20th Anniversary SASS Show](#) (Sexual Abuse Survivor’s Art Show) is taking place October 26 – 28, Long Island, NY. Please visit their website to learn more – a very powerful event offering Hope & Healing.

[14] For those in the Boston, MA area -

“You are invited to an evening of inquiry, connection and support on Wednesday, October 26 at 7pm, at the [WBUR](#) studios. WBUR and [Male Survivor](#) will be co-hosting this special event for male survivors and their loved ones. Please note that this event will not be recorded or broadcast.

The evening will include clips of Oprah Winfrey's Emmy-winning 2010 show featuring 200 male survivors, as well as a panel discussion with men who are learning, living and thriving as survivors. This event is intended for male survivors, supportive partners, friends, or family members they wish to invite. Space is limited, so please RSVP to events@WBUR.org, and join us for an unforgettable event!”

Finally, the holidays are approaching and for far too many who have been impacted by the issues of trauma, abuse and mental health, they are not the ‘fun time’ that others may experience – if you have any helpful resources and information to share, please send it along to share with others via our newsletter and website – Thanks!!

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

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Speakers' Bureau](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

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